



European Initiatives for Family Carers

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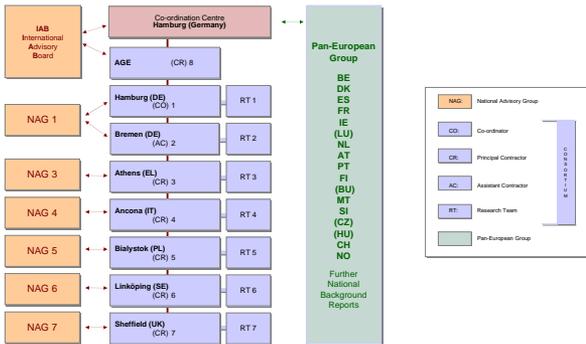
on behalf of the EUROFAMCARE group*

Introduction to the European Network, Charter and Carers Day

The EU-funded project EUROFAMCARE aims to ensure that the issue of family care for older people is on the political agenda in all European countries, and to raise awareness of the situation, needs and circumstances of family carers and highlight differences in and between European countries. Consequently, the project members are contributing to several initiatives including a European Network for Carers, a European Carers Charter, and a European Carers Day.

European Network for Carers

In 2003 EUROFAMCARE established a Pan-European Network for research on family care in 23 European countries.



In November 2004, members of the EU funded project CARMEN launched an international non-profit and non-governmental organisation for informal carers supported by EUROFAMCARE-members: "EUROCARERS – A European Association Working for Carers". This organisation will be registered in Brussels by the end of 2005.

EUROCARERS
Objectives and main tasks



The members of EUROCARERS are
➤ representatives of carer organisations of national significance
➤ nationally acclaimed experts on informal care issues

The final EUROFAMCARE conference in Hamburg on November 18th, 2005, provides a platform for linking the members of EUROCARERS with the Pan-European research network established in the course of EUROFAMCARE.

International Carers Day

One important mechanism for raising wider awareness of family care is an International Carers Day. Due to the considerable amount of preparation and support required, the International Carers Day is planned for 2006 under the patronage of EUROCARERS.

The Challenge for a European Carers Charter

- To identify and include the needs of carers from different national backgrounds and welfare systems
- To integrate different views on the role of family carers
- To identify the kind of financial support and possibilities to combine care and employment
- To identify the interfaces between a Carers Charter and existing declarations, conventions and policies
- To adopt the rights formulated by carers for use with policy makers and service providers in a common partnership approach

European Carers Charter

The need for a European Carers Charter emerged in different settings simultaneously. To integrate and to harmonise differing approaches, a EUROFAMCARE working group initiated the development of a European Carers Charter:

- Literature Research and Expert-Interviews: all 23 Pan-European partners provided information on Carers Organisations, Carers Days and Carers Charters in their own countries.
- Content analyses of the existing national Charters
- European Conference "Carers Charter - A European Challenge!" organised by Caring for Carers Ireland in 2004



Only a few countries have a national Carers Organisation, national or regional Carers Charters as well as Carers Days / Weeks.

- Carers Organisation
- Carers Charter
- Carers Day / Week

Aims of a European Charter for Family Carers

- Recognition of the crucial role of carers in our societies and "the value of caring"
- Awareness of the potential burden caused by care-giving
- Highlighting the discrimination many carers are facing
- Defining carers' rights and ensuring carers become aware of their rights.
- Bringing family care onto the political agenda, as a reference for all policy makers
- The European Carers Charter will incorporate the spirit of *The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and The European Social Charter*
- EUROCARERS will take the lead in the further development of the Charter

Issues for the Charter

- Recognition
- Information
- Choice (to care or not to)
- Support (training skills, emotional, technical, practical support)
- Financial support (income replacement benefits)
- Possibility to combine care and employment
- Time off (leisure, time off, respite care)
- Social inclusion (participate in society, activities)

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EUROFAMCARE is an international research project, funded within the 5th Framework Programme of the European Community, Key Action 6: The Ageing Population and Disabilities, 6.5: Health and Social Care Services to older People, Contract N° QLK6-CT-2002-02647 "EUROFAMCARE"
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