To:

- Commission Vice-President for Demography and Democracy, Dubravka Šuica
- Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas Schmit
- Commissioner for Equality, Helena Dalli

CSO Coalition on long-term care: the EU Care Strategy must align to the demands of the European Parliament

13 July 2022,

Dear Vice-President Šuica,

Dear Commissioners Schmit and Dalli,

We write on behalf of an ad-hoc coalition of organisations representing persons in need of care, informal carers and care workers, care providers (public, not-for profit and cooperative), not-for profit insurers and public health and health promotion actors. The members of this civil society coalition are all positively mobilised to ensure that the upcoming European Care Strategy is a success and leads to the development of universal and better-quality long-term care systems, rooted in the right to independence, people's preferences, dignity, affordability, accessibility, and universality. We also believe that improved working conditions for care professionals and better recognition and support for informal carers and families are a prerequisite to ensure universal and quality social protection against long-term care risks.

We highly recommend to you the resolution of the European Parliament, adopted on 5 July 2022 on "a common European action on care." The fact that this resolution has been adopted by a large majority of MEPs shows both the high levels of interest and support for the approach to care that we are promoting. In particular, we welcome the following elements of the resolution:

- The focus on long-term care to realise the right to dignity and independence;
- The affirmation of long-term care as a right that is universal and a service that should be affordable and universally provided, integrated into national social protection systems, with equal access to quality care services;
- The emphasis of freedom of choice for the person in need of care and support for the type of care wanted (residential, community-based or home care) and a call for increasing access to home care and community-based care to enable substantial and genuine choice;
- The dire need in member states to increase public investment into care services and regular social dialogue in order to ensure with adequate staffing and to improve the attractiveness of care occupations and of the integration of care;
- The call for informal care provision to be a personal choice and not an obligation imposed by the lack of access to quality care and the assertion that informal care should supplement formal care, rather than the other way round; the call to work on supporting parents and other informal carers with pension entitlements, income support and low-threshold support

services, that encourage and substantiate equal participation of women and men in unpaid care work;
- The awareness of the strong gender dimension of long-term care, as most people in need of care, care workers and informal carers are women, while gender differences are still vivid in many European countries;
- The role of mobile, migrant and ethnic minority workers in providing residential, community- and family-based care and the need to ensure decent work for all, regardless of residence status;
- The intersectional approach and the commitment to fight discrimination on all grounds, also mentioning the challenges that many vulnerable groups, including racialised communities such as the Roma, face in accessing care (including early childhood care), or providing care professionally or informally;
- The recognition of informal carers, including young carers, and the call to support them in the form of services, income support and social protection;
- The affirmation of the role of the social economy to provide quality care services, where profits are reinvested back into the care sector;
- The call for investment in and provision of integrated care with a rights-based approach;
- The priorisation of prevention of and rehabilitation from physical and mental health issues, the well-being of care givers and users, health promotion, health education and health literacy and independent living;
- The call on the Commission to actively engage in the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing and on member states to draw up healthy ageing plans that cover access to health and care services.

We therefore want to express our hope that the suggestions and the framing of the European Parliament's resolution will be fully reflected in the upcoming European Care Strategy and Council Recommendation on Long-Term Care.

We stand ready to support the Commission in the process of elaborating the Strategy and steering it through the legislative process, as well as for the implementation and longer-term assessment of the Strategy's impact and future initiatives that will stem from it.

Yours sincerely,

The undersigned:

AGE Platform Europe

Maciej Kucharczyk, Secretary-General, AGE Platform Europe

Alyna Smith, Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants

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Juliana Wahlgren, Director, European Anti-Poverty Network

Heather Roy, Secretary-General, Eurodiaconia

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