

Press release:

Social Services Europe presents new report: *Recruitment & Retention in social services: Unlocking the Sector's Job Creation Potential!*

Brussels, November 2017

On 22 November 2017, Social Services Europe presented their research report [Recruitment & Retention in Social Services: Unlocking the Sector's Job Creation Potential](#), at a European Parliament Debate hosted by MEPs Romana Tomc (EEP), and Brando Benifei (S&D). The debate took basis in a Europe-wide challenge: recruiting and retaining sufficient staff to meet the needs of the social services sector, now and in the future. Social Services are already one of the biggest job creators in Europe today, with more than 1.7 million new jobs created since 2008, employing over 10 million people. However, as the demand is growing due to Europe's changing demographic, it becomes increasingly challenging to recruit and retain enough trained workers, to provide the much needed quality services. **Conny Reuter, President of Social Services Europe**, stressed that there are several challenges we need to overcome, but that **Social Services Europe sees this as an opportunity to create new jobs in the social services sector, which would contribute to both social and economic growth.**

The debate was opened by **MEP Romana Tomc**, who emphasized that *the field of social services is currently not balanced, and we therefore need to invest more in the sector to ensure that we have enough staff for the future.* **Jane Lethbridge, author of the report**, highlighted the *importance of State authorities to promote the value of social services workers and their important role in a social and economic sustainable society.* The conclusions of the report also calls for holistic recruitment approaches, and cooperation with training and education providers, to provide working experience and encourage young people to pursue a career in the social services sector. Some of the effective local interventions which have been used to solve the challenges related to recruitment and retention, were presented by **Romana Bélová, from Slezska Diakonie**, who also contributed to the report; their organisation have used an interconnected HR system approach, with a focus on *promoting the value of their work, and supporting their staff members to be able to provide high quality services under good working conditions.*

Frank Sioen, from ENIL underlined that, there is a *need for upskilling, and training of staff in cooperation with the social services users, in order to meet the needs of the future, and provide high quality, person-centred services by people in quality jobs.* **Patricia Scherer from Nexem**, explained how *recruitment only based on having a diploma, not necessarily ensures that you get motivated staff, with the right qualifications –and that this can lead to challenges retaining staff.*

MEP Brando Benifei emphasized the importance of *advocating for more formalisation of jobs in the social care sector – ensuring that the workers are recognised as professionals, and valued for their work.* **Mathias Maucher from EPSU**, also argued that it is necessary to look at the profile of the social services workforce, and make sure we use the opportunity from the increased digitalisation, to upskill and train the staff in the sector. He also underlined, that it is *important to continue the social dialogue in this sector, not only on EU level, but also on national level.*

Anita Vella from the European Commission (DG Empl) stated that, *it is important that social partners believe in - and support the European Pillar of Social rights. Luk Zelderloo, from EASPD* (and board member of Social Services Europe) highlighted that *half of the principles in the Pillar, require social services in order to be implemented, and that we see this as an important task for us, but: we need appropriate funding and staffing levels.*

Overall, the discussions during the debate made it clear that there is a need to bring innovation and investment into the social services sector, to meet the needs of the changing requirements of the sector and adapt to the future of work. We need quality jobs, which attracts new workers, and sufficient and sustainable funding for social services in order to ensure quality of life, social cohesion and inclusive growth across Europe.

Read Social Services Europe's recommendations in order to meet the needs of recruitment and retention in the social services sector [here](#).



Note to editors: Social Services Europe is the largest European umbrella organisation representing non-profit social and health care providers. Our members are at the forefront of ensuring accessible, affordable and quality services for all people in Europe and believe that investing in people brings both social and economic returns. Social and health care services enable people to live with dignity and care but also support people to engage in economic activities that contribute to growth.

Related links:

Download the report [here](#).

Download Social Services Europe's recommendations [here](#).

Find more information about the event [here](#).

Learn more about Social Services Europe, by visiting our website: www.socialserviceseurope.eu

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