

1



2



3



4



5

**A Call for Dignity for  
Domestic Workers in the EU**



**EFFAT**

**EU Elections 2024**

**EFFAT calls for a Fairer  
Europe for Workers #CallingEU**

## A Call for Dignity for Domestic Workers in the EU



### What are we talking about?

Domestic Workers are the backbone of the European households and families.

Domestic workers in Europe compose an army of almost 10 million people representing 5% of the total EU employment, of which 90% are women.

The sector is set to increase in coming years due to an ageing population and growing care and households needs.

Domestic workers are the backbone of our households. They allow individuals to balance their professional and private lives and ensure the continuity of care and well-being of families.

A vast majority lacks recognition and access to fundamental workers' rights, social security and collective bargaining.

Nonetheless, domestic work is often perceived as an unpaid, informal female activity. The diversification of service provisions increases reliance on undeclared work and exacerbates their vulnerability. Many domestic workers are documented or undocumented migrants – thus more exposed to exploitation.

Despite being an essential workforce, it is estimated that at least 3.1 million are working undeclared, lacking recognition and access to fundamental workers' rights, social security and collective bargaining.

### Why is EU action needed ?

Up to this point, the EU has overlooked the significant challenges faced by this vital workforce.

When it comes to the protection of health and safety of European workers, domestic workers are explicitly excluded from the EU legislation.

Domestic work involves various risks, from exposure to harmful chemicals to ergonomic challenges, psychosocial risks, stress at the workplace and musculoskeletal diseases.

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**EFFAT calls for a Fairer Europe for Workers**

## A Call for Dignity for Domestic Workers in the EU

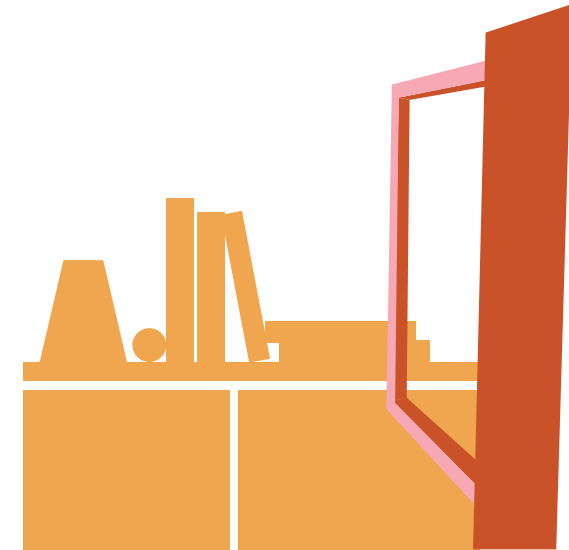
The EU has explicitly excluded domestic workers from the EU legislation on health and safety.

Keeping the exclusion of domestic workers from a crucial part of the EU social acquis is not defensible and it is ethically unacceptable.

At the international level, ILO Convention 189 establishes a global legal framework for domestic workers' recognition and protection including collective bargaining, safe working conditions, social security coverage, and protection against abuse and violence. Thus far, only 9 EU Member States have ratified – let alone fully implemented the Convention.

In the EU Care strategy, the European Commission recognizes that Domestic Workers are subject to the poorest working conditions and call on EU Member States to promptly ratify and implement ILO C189.

Domestic work is work. The EU holds the capacity to address the pressing issues affecting millions of domestic workers and families in Europe ensuring their dignity by including them in all EU legislation and providing them fundamental workers' rights.



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### How can the EU act?

There are two actions the EU can take to improve domestic workers conditions promoting their recognition, value and professionalisation:

#### 1. Extending Health and Safety Protections:

Extend the scope of Directive 89/391/EEC on Health and Safety and related individual directives to "domestic servants", today explicitly excluded.

#### 2. Pushing Member States to ratifying and implementing ILO Convention 189:

The EU must push its Member States, also through a Council Recommendation, to promptly ratify and implement International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 189 on domestic workers.

**EFFAT is the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions, also representing domestic workers.**

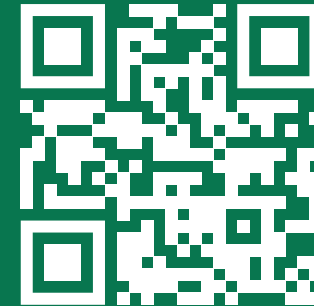
As a European Trade Union Federation representing 116 national trade unions from 37 European countries, EFFAT defends the interests of more than 25 million workers towards the European Institutions, European employers' associations, and transnational companies.

EFFAT is a member of the ETUC and the European regional organisation of the IUF.

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**EFFAT**

**European Federation of  
Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions**

**Avenue Louise 130a, 1050 Brussels, Belgium**

**www.effat.org**