



Promoting the needs and added value of informal carers at EU level

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The Eurocarers Network



European network of carers' organisations and relevant research & development organisations

65 member and partner organisations from 25 countries

Who are the (informal) carers?

Eurocarers defines a carer as any person who provides care - usually unpaid - to someone with a chronic illness, disability or other long lasting health or care need, outside a professional or formal framework.



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WORKING FOR CARERS

Our Mission

- Contribute to sustainable social protection systems and recognition of informal carers
- Prevent carers from falling into poverty and social exclusion
- Stimulate and support the development of carers' organisations in EU countries and regions

Data collection and production

- Evidence
- Share good practices among Member States
- Recommendations

→ Implement/Document

Advocacy

- Partnerships
- Solidarity and economic argument
- Inform policy makers
- Communication (newsletter, websites)

→ Raise awareness

Socioeconomic backdrop



- Boost jobs to make the EU social model future-proof
- Adapt the welfare state to the new context through innovation
- Budget Cuts and cost containment, doing more with less



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The Situation of carers in Europe

The Personal is Political



Across Europe, unpaid family carers and friends are the largest providers of health and social care support

As demographic change increases demand, the 'balance of care' increasingly shifts to informal care

Women are disproportionately affected and are more likely to give up employment to care

The “economic” value of informal care

Estimates on the economic value of unpaid informal care in EU Member States range from 50 to 90 percent of the overall costs of “formal” long-term care provision

Estimated value of contribution made by carers in the UK: 140 billion € per year

Estimated value of contribution made by carers in Ireland:
5,3 billion € per year (27% of Dept. of social protection’s budget)

Source: www.carersuk.org/media/k2/attachments/Valuing_carers_2011_Carers_UK.pdf

Carers are indispensable for our welfare systems!

Carers are an indispensable component of our health and social care systems:

→ Without informal carers, formal care provision would simply be unsustainable, and many care needs (in all age groups) neglected!

And even more so in the future, due to the growing care needs following population ageing and the increasing prevalence of frailty and chronic disease.

But availability of informal care is under pressure, too!

This is due to a number of demographic and socio-economic developments:

1. Lower birth rates/smaller families
2. Greater physical distances between relatives
3. Rising number of women entering the labour market
4. A prolonged working life
5. Shortages in some health care professions

Impact of caring

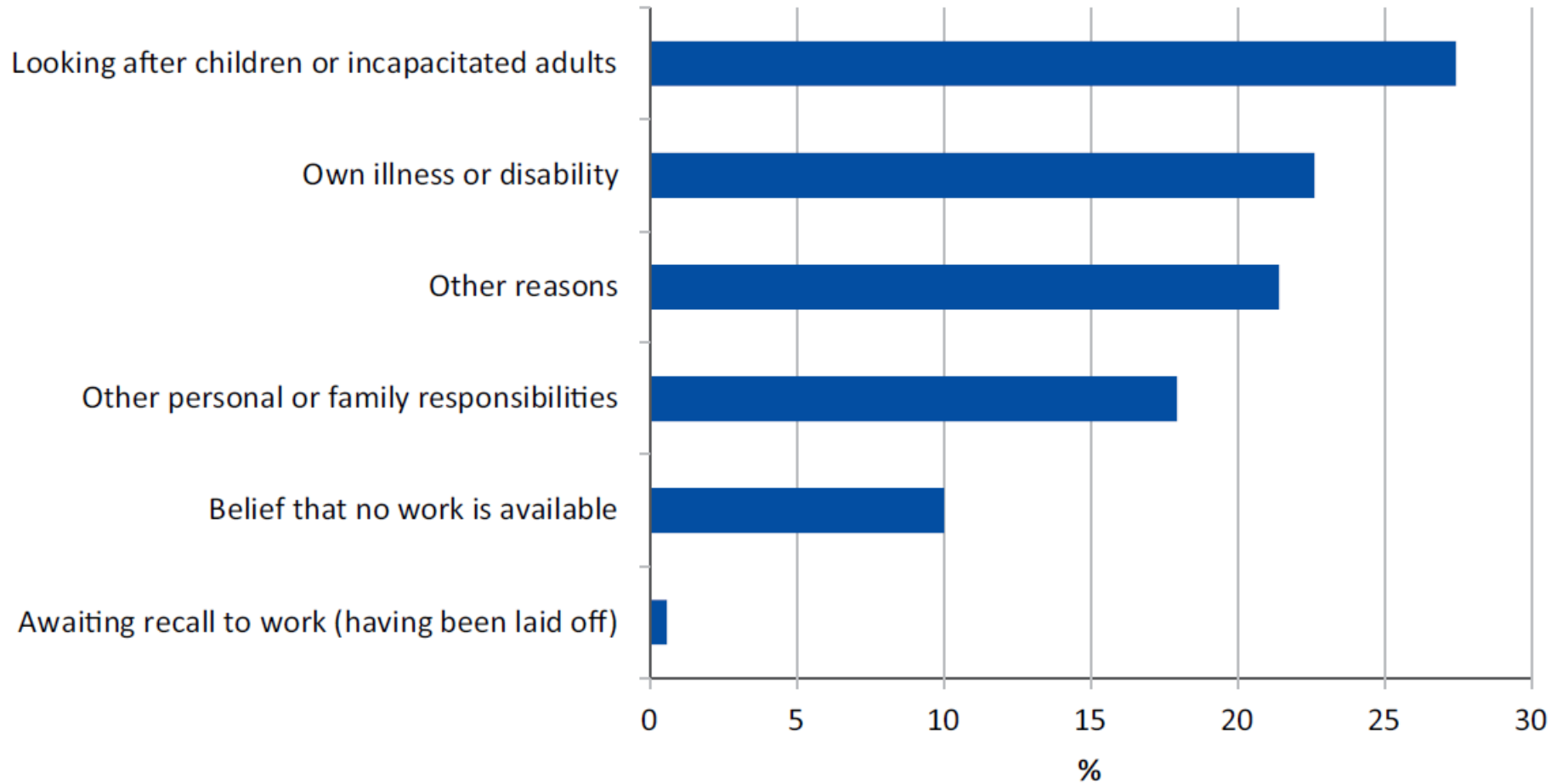
Clear correlation between caring and:

- Work-life/care balance and employment
- Social exclusion and poverty
- Health and well-being



“As a carer, you have no social life whatsoever. I have been an unpaid carer for 20 years. I do not feel part of society at all. I feel a complete outsider”

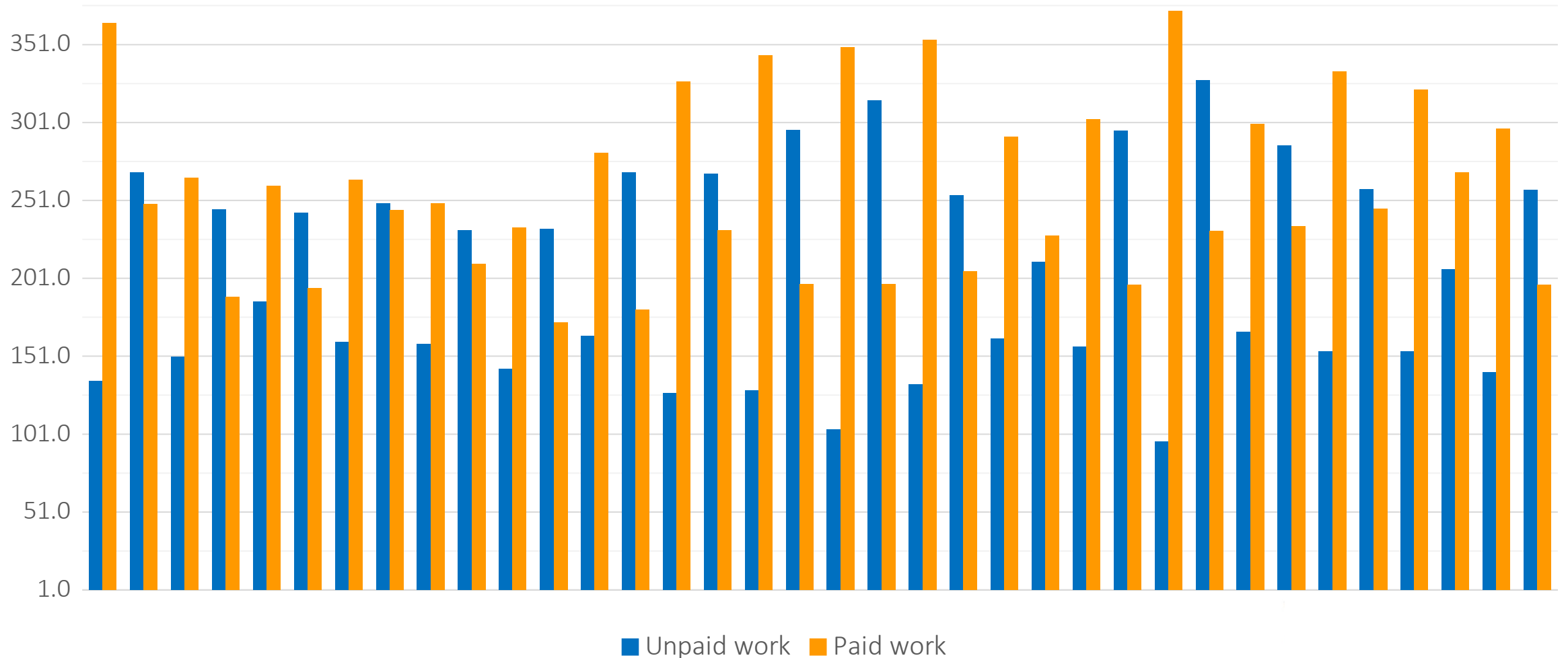
Reasons for women's inactivity in the labour market (%)_ FU128



Note: Results are based on responses of inactive women aged 20–64, excluding reasons of retirement and education or training.

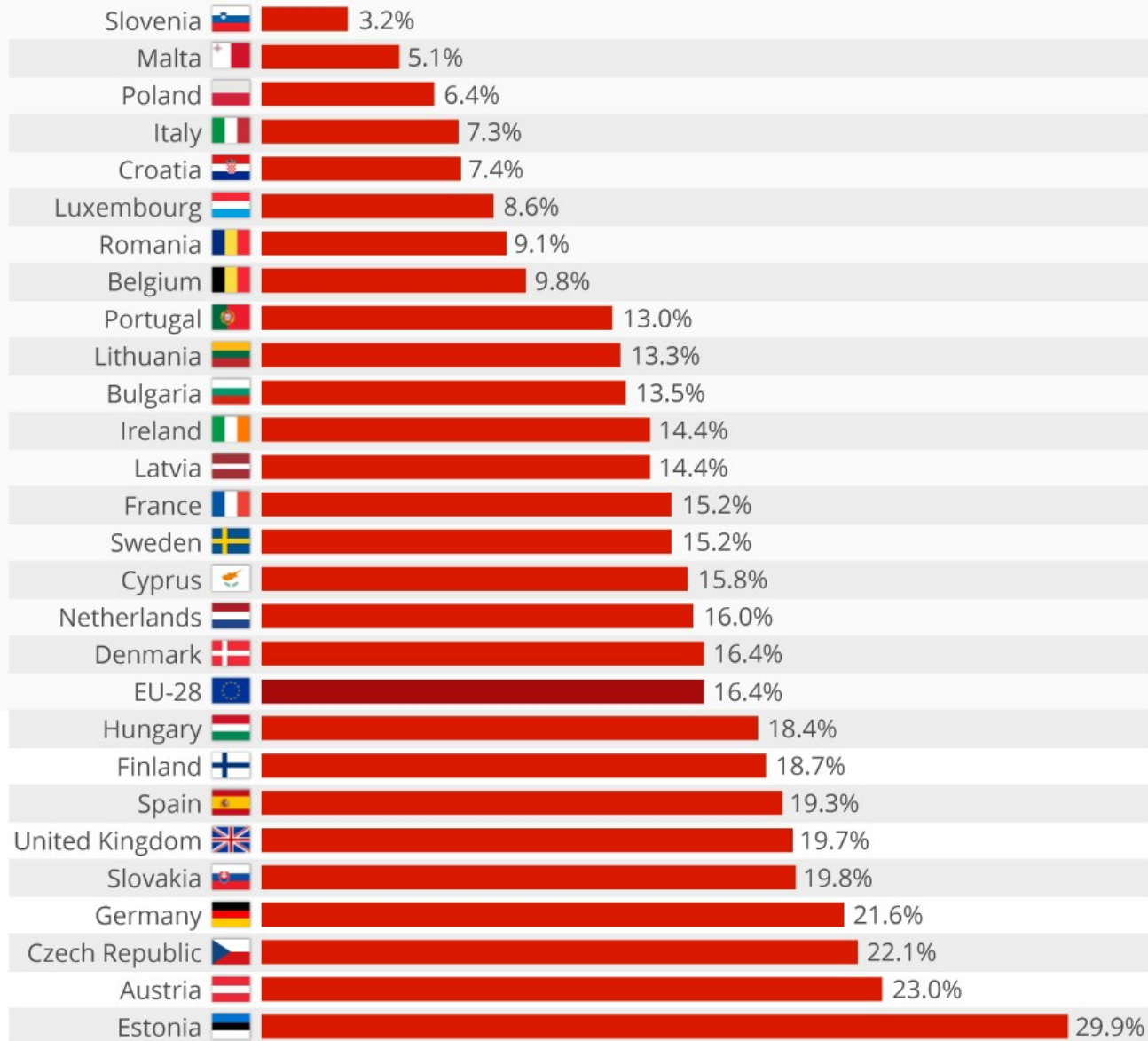
Source: EU-LFS 2013, Eurofound elaboration

Reasons for women's inactivity in the labour market (%), EU28

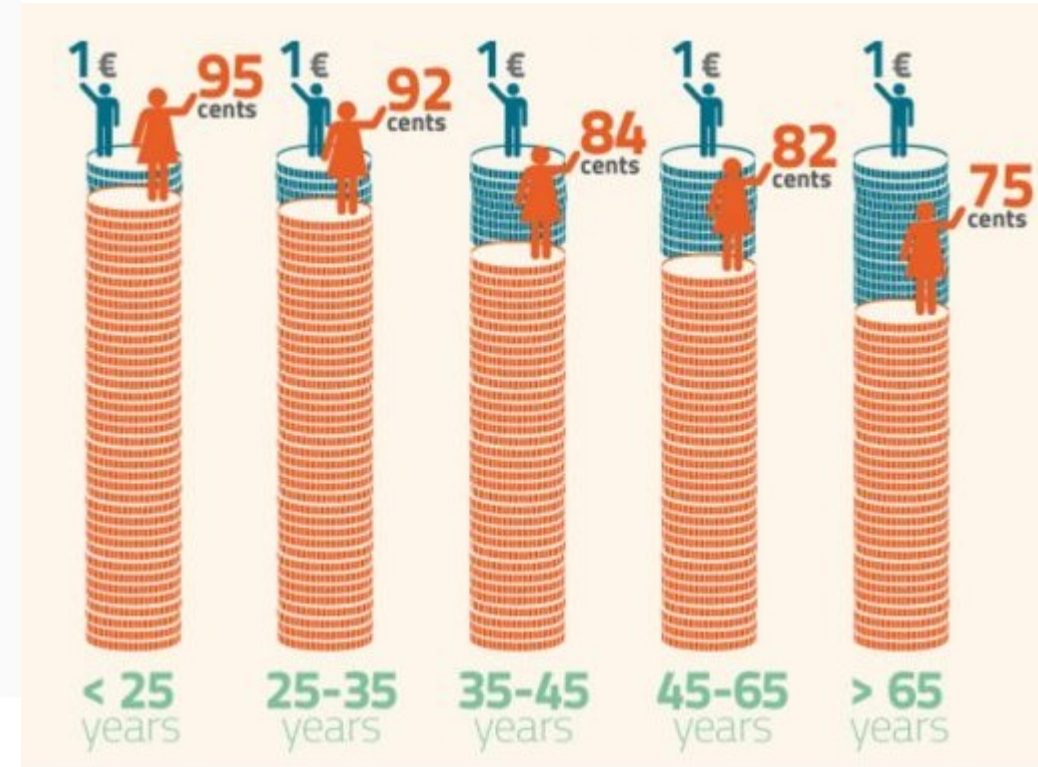


Based on OECD family database and Eurofound

Gender pay gap



European Union, 2013



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What do carers want?



Financial support: income based on a minimum wage

Employment: flexible working, paid and/or unpaid leave

Pension credits for care time

Regular breaks from caring

Training

It is now necessary to...

- **Continue raising awareness** on the significant contribution made by carers to our welfare systems and the economy, and the need to safeguard this contribution
- Further **develop support services for carers** as well as measures to **enable carers to remain in paid employment...**
- **Ensure that EU and national policies take carers into account and ensure carers/patients have access to quality, flexible, accessible formal (long-term) care** (i.e. alternatives to informal care)

In one word: **a coherent approach to mainstream caregiving into an integrated (long-term) care agenda for the EU** → The mission of Eurocarers!

Thank you for your attention!

www.eurocarers.org

