

Europe can do more for family carers

Yesterday, COFACE organised the **Reconciling Work and Care responsibilities: a challenge for family carers** in Europe conference in the European Parliament. The event, hosted by Irish MEP Marian Harkin, was a great success. COFACE believes strongly in providing further visibility for family carers through well tailored reconciliation policies.

MEP Harkin, President of the European Parliament Interest Group on Carers highlighted that "In today's challenging environment, it is increasingly important to provide the necessary support for family carers, who often make immense sacrifices, giving up their health and wealth to undertake care responsibilities towards their elderly or disabled relatives."

The conference featured speakers from different organisational backgrounds ranging from the perspective of the European Commission to employers' associations, and as well as carers' associations. Comprised of professionals from the health and social care sector, the speakers touched upon timely questions concerning family carers, ageing population and the challenges it involves, the gender dimension, the current economic situation, the cuts in public funding and the way forward finding possible solutions. In addition, the conference was also an opportunity to present COFACE's proposal towards 2014 to be designated as European Year for Reconciling Work and Family Life, which of course also has a strong carers dimension.

"We organised this event yesterday to highlight the work of ordinary people who are selflessly performing extraordinary tasks behind closed doors, often risking their own health and their own happiness. We want to trigger a holistic policy response, urge Member States to stop cutting funds which is detrimental to the quality of care, and instead invest in structures and services that would enable a real freedom of choice for reconciling care and working life", added **Ágnes Uhereczky**, Director of COFACE.

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A detailed report of the conference as well as the speakers' presentations will be made available soon here: <http://www.coface-eu.org/en/Events/Reconciling-Work-and-Care-responsibilities/>

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About COFACE: www.coface-eu.org

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