



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

Stecy Yghemonos – Executive Director



# The Eurocarers Network



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

59 member and partner organisations from 28 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.*



**EUROCARERS**

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION  
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



**EUROCARERS**

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION  
WORKING FOR CARERS



# 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



**EUROCARERS**

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION  
WORKING FOR CARERS

# 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



**EUROCARERS**

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION  
WORKING FOR CARERS

# 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](http://www.carersuk.org/media/k2/attachments/Valuing_carers_2011_Carers_UK.pdf)



**EUROCARERS**

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION  
WORKING FOR CARERS

# 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.



**EUROCARERS**

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION  
WORKING FOR CARERS

# But availability of informal care is under pressure, too!

---

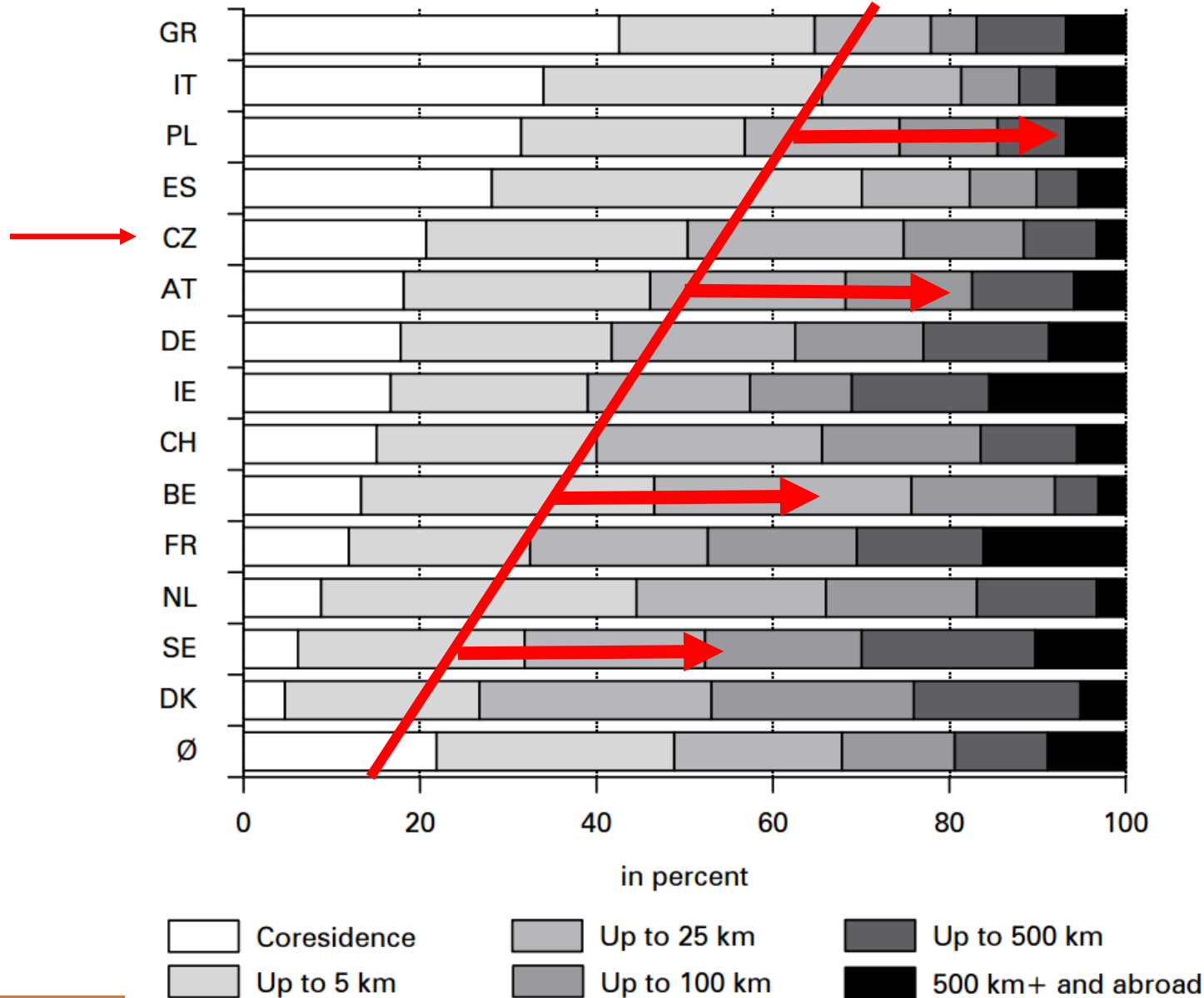
This is due to a number of demographic and socio-economic developments:

1. Lower birth rates
2. Smaller families
3. Greater physical distances between relatives
4. Rising number of women entering the labour market
5. A prolonged working life

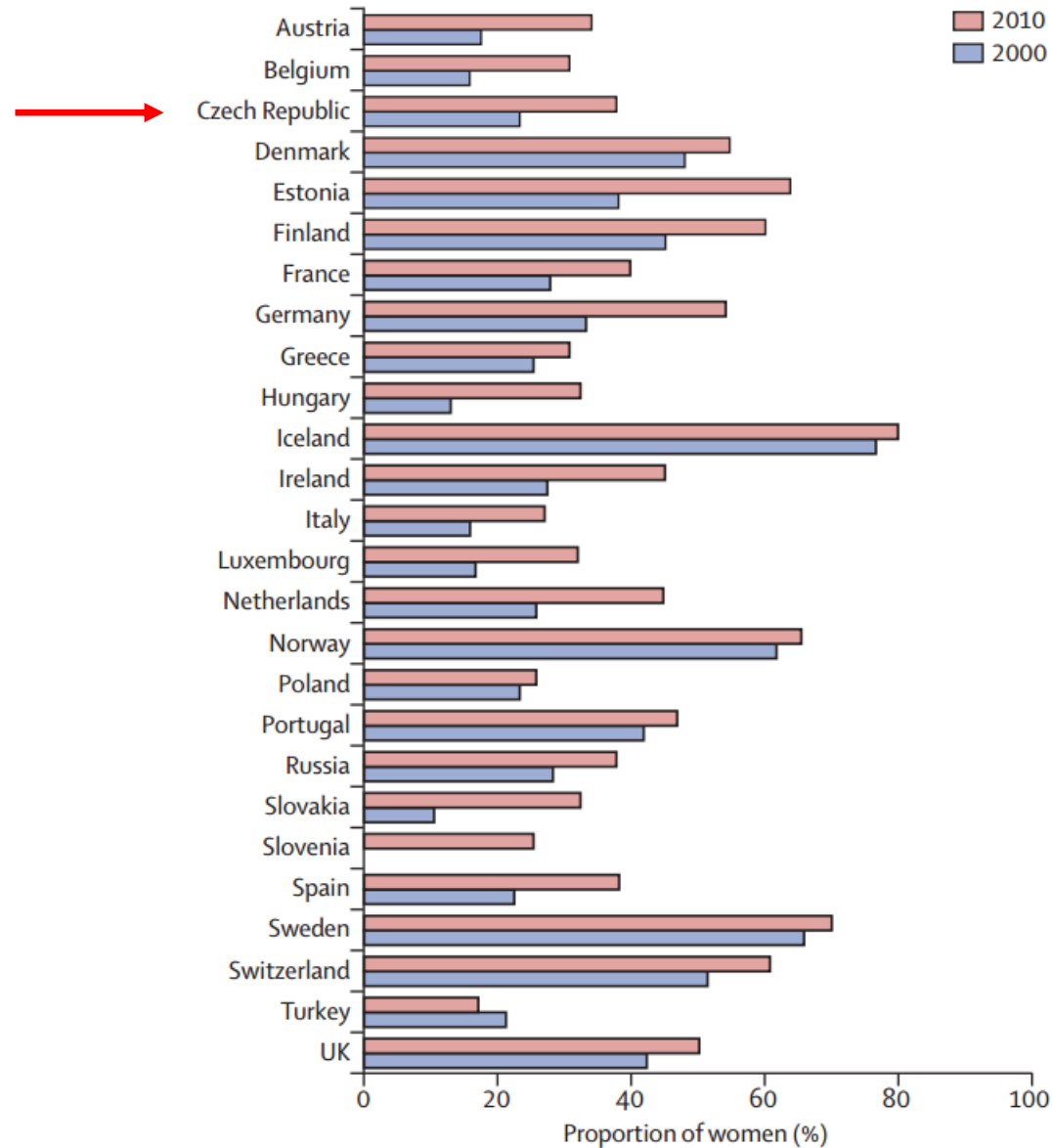


# Living distance from parents in some EU countries

Source: Isengard 2013



# Change in labour-force participation by women aged 55-64 years between 2000 and 2010



B. Rechel et al. – Health in Europe, the Lancet, March 2013

# Estimated shortages in some health care professions in the EU by 2020

Health Professionals or other health workers	Estimated shortage by 2020	Estimated percentage of care not covered
Physicians	230.000	13,5%
Dentists, pharmacists and physiotherapists	150.000	13,5%
Nurse	590.000	14,0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>970.000</b>	<b>13,8%</b>

Source: European Commission 2012

# 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”*



# 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



**EUROCARERS**

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION  
WORKING FOR CARERS

# That's why it is 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** and to **enable carers to remain in paid employment...**
- **Ensure that** EU and national **policies take account of carers** (e.g. by promoting their social inclusion)

In one word: to urgently adopt **a coherent, integrated approach – a STRATEGY! – to mainstream caregiving across all major policy areas**, starting at EU level (e.g. using the Interest group on Carers in the European Parliament), to ensure that all Member States are made equally aware about the urgency of such a crucial commitment!

→ **The mission of Eurocarers!**





*There are four kinds of people in the world:  
Those who have been carers,  
Those who currently are carers,  
Those who will be carers ,and  
Those who will need carers.*

Rosalyn Carter, Former First Lady of the United States

**This concerns us all !**



**EUROCARERS**

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION  
WORKING FOR CARERS

# Thank you for your attention!

---

[www.eurocarers.org](http://www.eurocarers.org)



**EUROCARERS**

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION  
WORKING FOR CARERS