

# Supporting family carers

**Easy-to-read version**

Easy-to-read is information

that is written in a simple way
so that all people can understand it.

You can find more information at:

[www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read](http://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read).

## Who we are

We are ‘COFACE Families Europe’.

We are an organisation that fights
for the rights of all families in Europe.

In short, we are called ‘COFACE’.

At COFACE,
we believe that all families
should have the same chances
to enjoy a good, healthy and safe life.

   

### What this text is about

At COFACE, we wrote a text to talk about
the important role of family carers
and to ask countries to support them.

We called this text
the ‘European Charter for family carers’.

This is an easy-to-read version of this text.

In the next few pages, we will explain:

What does it mean to be a family carer?

What is the situation of family carers in Europe?

What should countries do better
to support family carers?

### The role of family carers



All people may need to be looked after at some point in their lives.

For example:

* When they have a disability;
* When they get sick;
* When they get older;
* When they have an accident.

Sadly, most countries in Europe do not give enough support to people who need it.

Their families alone have to look after them, with little or no support from the countries.

A person who regularly looks after another family member is called a ‘family carer’.

For example, a family carer can be:

A parent who regularly looks after
their child with a disability;

A person who regularly looks after
their older parents;

A person who regularly looks after
their partner who is sick.

Sadly, it is often women who are left alone
to look after other family members.
That is why most family carers are women.

### The situation in Europe

The role of family carers is very important.

Sadly, most countries in Europe do not recognise the important work of family carers

and give them little or no support.

In most countries in Europe, family carers:

* Are not getting paid for their hard work.
* Cannot get another job,
because they have to look after
their family member who needs support.
* Do not get training to know
how to look after their family member
in the right way.
* Do not have the chance to take time off to rest.

### What should be done better

At COFACE, we believe that countries

should recognise the important role of family carers.

Countries should give family carers

the support they need to have a good life too.

Amongst others, countries should make sure that family carers:

* Know about the rights and choices they have.
This way, family carers can choose
the support that is right for them.
* Get paid for the important work they do
to look after a person who needs support.
* Get time off their work
when they need a break.
* Get training and learn how to look after
the person who needs support
in the right way.
These trainings should be planned
together with organisations of families,
family carers and the persons in need of support.
They are the ones who know their needs
the best.
* Get the support they need
for free or without paying too much.
For example, family carers should be able
to hire someone to help them look after
the person in need of support.

All these things can make a big difference
in the lives of family carers
and the people who need support.

Countries should regularly check how things go and the progress made in these areas.

To do that, countries should ask for the views
of organisations of families, family carers
and the people who need support.
They are the ones who know their needs best
and can guide countries
on the support they need.

### More information

If you want to know more
about the work we do at COFACE,

you can check our website at:

[www.coface-eu.org](http://www.coface-eu.org/).

If you have any questions,

you can send us an email at:

secretariat@coface-eu.org.