



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.



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.

If you have any questions, you can send us an email at: secretariat@coface-eu.org.

