

## Minutes of the Working Group “Civic commitment in domestic care settings

*Gordan Velev* and *Christiane Ecker* introduce themselves and open the session.

Focus: Volunteering.

Specifically: Cooperation & What could be possible in terms of advocacy on the European level

Participants introduce themselves

Hermine Freitag, Duncan Tree, Conny Reuter, Heribert Röhrig, Christiane Wedekind, Barbara Zychowska, Renata Cychon, Karl-Eugen Altdörfer, Andris Berzins, Ilze Briede, Aida Behrem, Mirsada Pecenkovic, Miodrag Nedeljkovic

*Mr. Velev* introduces the agenda, following the template: Challenges (Practical, Political), Future cooperation, Next steps.

He asks the group: What do you perceive as the biggest **practical challenge in domestic care** at the moment?

*Mr. Tree*: There are many but the first thing: preserve the integrity of volunteering in a time when paid staff is asked to do more for less. Second, concerns about the quality of care, stationary and domestic. Opportunity: Volunteering can demonstrate increase in quality. Third: articulation of needs, ideally by those who are in need

*Ms. Freitag* brings up the issue of volunteer training, that they do need a certain amount of knowledge

*Mr. Röhrig*: We have many volunteers in Civil Protection / Rescue / “Blue light”, not in care. Reason for this is lies in the way recruiting is done. Challenge: Recruit e.g. elderly people plus conflict with paid care workers. Care workers even object to division “real” care (e.g. washing people) and “nice things”, visiting services etc – as practicing bedside manner is the best part of their job, which they don’t like to give up

*Mr. Berzins*: Care for the elderly is different from care for young children or disabled people. For elderly people, volunteers will not do the same job as the professionals. Gives examples of what is part of domestic care but is done only by volunteers

*Ms. Freitag*: Clear rules what is work for professionals and a task for volunteers

*Mr. Altdörfer*: Confirms this, also says that volunteers lack and ask for professional knowledge for certain situations

*Mr. Tree*: “It’s difficult enough to get volunteers, but it’s very easy to lose them”. Lower level needs are not met by staff. Rules have to be there, but flexible where they better meet the needs or choice of older people.

*Mr. Reuter:* Grey market where people are exploited vs. legit professional services, which people sometimes cannot afford. This situation has to be considered when discussing volunteering. Idea to cope with the grey market: organize care workers from eastern Europe into cooperatives.

*Mr. Tree:* Division Social care / health care – European volunteer network for social care. Beneficiaries of services can at the same time also offer voluntary services to others!

*Mr. Velev asks* what about the named challenges stem from the **policy level – where to apply advocacy work?**

*Mr. Berzins:* Municipal authorities in Latvia do not finance many social services (hardly any). Issue of role of the state in care.

*Ms. Wedekind:* Social insurance covers care in Germany

*Ms. Behrem:* Need for a common European policy in volunteering

*Mr. Reuter:* International standards for labour relations exist, including for care. Becoming a signatory is, as Mr. Velev remarked, a field of national advocacy. The EU will likely sign it, thus making it applicable for all member states.

*Mr. Velev:* Other fields of advocacy?

*Mr. Berzis & Mr. Reuter:* Open method of coordination is ineffective, yields hardly any results.

### **Future Cooperation:**

*Mr. Velev* summarizes:

#### **Practical:**

- Strict division work / volunteers
- Training
- Promotional activities to recruit more volunteers for the social field (most are “blue light”)
- How to integrate immigrant workers or new workers?
- Programmes of elderly volunteering – ppl with support needs voluntarily caring for other people with support needs

#### **Advocacy:**

- Positions should be developed on Convention of the ILO and on the OMC

What projects can we derive from that?

*Ms. Behrem:* Exchange of best practices in existing social services, exchange about best use of volunteers

*Mr. Tree:* New generations will possibly not have the same view of volunteering as the currently strongly volunteering 50plusers. Strong worker mobility adds to stronger impact of demographic change in some regions. Also brings up the question of cooperation between SAM.I. members and non-SAM.I. welfare organisations.

*Mr. Reuter:* Common advocacy in volunteer framework and ILO. “New fields for new jobs” (Commission initiative) is an opportunity for SAM.I. / SOLIDAR members to define fields and jobs in the care sector.

*Mr. Tree:* Low status of care work is a problem, specifically because volunteering in care has a higher status! He talks about a CSV project that tries to foster recruitment into the professional care sector via volunteering.

*Mr. Velez* asks for first steps to achieve the discussed points.

*Mr. Berzins:* List / Definitions to clarify categories, professional, voluntary, social entrepreneurship

*Mr. Altdörfer:* Define the fields the volunteers work in, then define training standards

*Mr. Berzins:* suggests another project on best practices in volunteering (like the previous grundtvig project) but with a specific focus, such as care.

*Mr. Tree:* SAM.I. should aim to give the discussed issues the profile that they require, e.g. give the issue another forum to be discussed in (perhaps not just as part of a conference setting)

*Mr. Reuter:* There is a SOLIDAR conference on social economy in December in Vienna.

*Mr. Velez* reads back the results he documented in the screen presentation.

He adds an additional point by *Mr. Tree* on the value of volunteering to the development of the paid workforce.