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**PRODOME**  
**Deliverable 7**  
**“Roadmap:  
professionalising  
domestic work  
in Europe”**



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## DOCUMENT SUMMARY

As expected, the project partners draw up the inventory of the situation of domestic workers in Europe, they identified the stakes of this sector, and defined a target profile for which they developed a curriculum design and a training pathway, respecting the criteria of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), that they experimented, and whose purpose is to be shared with all those who wish to take it up or to draw inspiration from it.

At European level, around 8 million domestic workers are declared according to available European statistics. However, they would be 16 million if undeclared workers had a legal situation. The challenge of a harmonised training at European level is to provide workers with transferable skills, from one member country to another, and to establish the principle that, throughout Europe, these skills are useful and should be recognised as such.

To meet the coming societal challenges, this sector of activity and the millions of workers who are part of it must come out of invisibility, which requires political awareness of policy makers, at national and European level. PRODOM has shown the clear link between the existence of a favourable tax environment and legislative framework for private employers, and the possibility of offering employees a genuine vocational training system. We now need to meet and convince decision makers, and the European agencies and institutions, give them a glimpse of this sector, and share the issues and possible courses of action, with the aim of building a real sector-specific policy at European level, which impels its consideration in dedicated public policies of Member States, and European regions.

# ROADMAP: PROFESIONALISING DOMESTIC WORK IN EUROPE

The PRODOME project, which took place between November 2016 and October 2019, achieved its technical goals. As expected, the project partners, trade unions and employer organisations of the family employment sector, and VET providers, draw up the inventory of the situation of domestic workers in Europe, especially in the three countries partners of the project (France, Italy and Spain), they identified the stakes of this sector, and defined a target profile for which they developed a curriculum design and a training pathway, respecting the criteria of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), that they experimented.

At European level, around 8 million domestic workers are declared according to available European statistics. However, we know that a large number remain undeclared and that some are also exploited workers. If these undeclared workers had a legal situation, they would be part of the home employment sector. In this case we can then estimate its weight at 16 million jobs. And given the ageing of the population, this weight is expected to increase considerably in the coming decades.

One of the paradoxes of the sector is the contrast between the high social value of jobs and the invisibility of workers, who most of the time are women, with sometimes no access to social rights, and working without social welfare. Many stakes of their professionalisation must be looked at:

- Give the means at local level for European societies to create jobs allowing both to support population ageing and work/life balance;
- Recognising millions of workers whose added value doesn't need to be proved, by defending their dignity and integrity, by providing them decent work and basic social rights;
- Developing their skills allowing them to provide quality services to households, and making them aware of the professional nature of their work;
- To recognize, at European level, real professions and qualifications that meet the needs of families.

In this context, professionalising the sector must be understood in a broad sense. It is obviously a matter of developing workers' skills, but also, first and foremost, recognising this sector as professional, based on trades and qualifications, and not on a system of commodification of services and skills traditionally attributed to women.

In this sector, employees work in different occupations. PRODOME partners have chosen to focus on the profile of the domestic worker, whose main missions are not professional caring of young children, or caring of elderly people, but concerns all families, large families or

individuals, and accompanying them in their daily lives, for housekeeping, shopping, cooking...It is for this profile of workers, who support millions of households across Europe, and many people who are still autonomous but weakened by ageing, that the challenge of recognising skills and professional qualifications is the most difficult to meet. Recognition of this sector, at European level and in the Member States, is therefore a first step in its professionalisation, which is the key to a societal revolution because it is about changing attitudes and representations on this topic. Building the professional training of domestic workers is another step. But these key areas for development must be proceeded together because they are going hand in hand.

After 3 years of work, PRODOME partners today deliver the qualification's learning toolkit they have built and tested. It provides answers to identified needs but also raises questions. If the use and relevance of the training have been confirmed, the experimentation has highlighted at least 3 points that a future European project could explore:

- Implementing a pre-training to improve the language level of foreign workers who do not master sufficiently the language of the host country to follow the training;
- Make the training more flexible, to increase the part of distance learning and allowing trainees to organise themselves, as many of them already have a job. Modularising the training so that it is accessible by module and not only in its entirety, which is more consistent with the needs of trainees and of households employers, and to the lifelong learning logic.
- Despite all the encountered difficulties to carry out practical training for domestic workers in real situations in families' homes, the PRODOME partners succeeded in doing this, showing that it is possible. Now other solutions to acquire practical skills have to be developed so that the training of domestic workers can be effectively generalised: trainees should be paid, the training should be done in other places when it is possible, or in families' homes but under the responsibility of a tutor, and preferably in families in research and therefore interested in recruiting a trained person to practice at their home.

In any case, the purpose of the training kit delivered is to be shared with all the Member States and all the VET providers who wish to take it up or to draw inspiration from it. The challenge of a harmonised training at European level, meeting the criteria of the European Qualification Framework and the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), is to provide workers with transferable skills, from one member country to another, and to establish the principle that, throughout Europe, these skills are useful and should be recognised as such. It aims at creating the conditions of skills' mobility, which is necessary to allow the workers' mobility.

Professionalising domestic workers is a major challenge for Europe today and tomorrow, which needs to articulate technical devices and political support. To meet the coming societal challenges, this sector of activity and the millions of workers who are part of it must come out of invisibility, which requires a profound change of representations, and greater political

awareness of policy makers, at national and European level. Even if the European political lines are not always binding, they make it possible to turn the spotlight on certain realities, and thus raise awareness and take actions. PRODOME has shown very different realities from one partner country to another, and highlighted, as it is the case in France, the clear link between the existence of a fiscal and legislative framework that allows families to become full-fledged employers, and the possibility of offering employees a genuine vocational training system.

Tomorrow, Member States that have managed to reduce the share of undeclared work in the home employment sector, through committed public support policies, such as Belgium or France, and more generally all the actors who have identified the stakes and possible levers of action, are invited to join the European Federation of Family Employment (EFFE).

It is thus a question of constituting a real task force to meet and convince decision makers, and the European agencies and institutions. The conclusions of the White Paper "Home & Family employment and home care in the EU" published by EFFE in March 2019 could be used to give them a glimpse of this sector, to share the issues and possible courses of action, with the aim of building a real sector-specific policy at European level, which impels its consideration in dedicated public policies of Member States, and European regions.

This is why EFFE must also meet all the decision makers at local level who, on their own, identify the interest of supporting and professionalising this sector.

At the same time, all PRODOME project's partners must continue their commitment to raise the visibility of the project and share the PRODOME training, at all levels and with all types of actors, while continuing the reflection and the work of improving its content and its implementation.