

Labour Migration Branch

*Promoting integration for migrant domestic workers in Europe:  
A synthesis of Belgium, France, Italy and Spain*

Maria Gallotti  
Jesse Mertens

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## Preface

The ILO discussion paper series International Migration Papers aims to disseminate results on relevant and topical labour migration issues among policy makers, administrators, social partners, civil society, the research community and the media. Its main objective is to contribute to an informed debate on how best to address labour migration issues within the overall agenda of decent work. The primary goal of the International Labour Organizations (ILO) is to contribute, with member States and constituents, to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people, a goal embedded in the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, which has now been widely endorsed by the international community.

In Europe, as in many other parts of the world, domestic work has the characteristic of attracting large and increasing numbers of migrants, most of whom are female. While domestic work has been a source of employment for at least 2.5 million men and women in Europe, most of whom are migrants, increasingly restrictive national immigration policies leave many migrants trapped in situations of irregularity of status or in informal employment, remaining excluded from the enjoyment of fundamental labour and human rights despite the existence of regulatory frameworks in most European countries.

Since the adoption of the ILO Convention (2011, No. 189, hereafter C189) and its accompanying Recommendation 201 (R201) on decent work for domestic workers, there has been a renewed interest from EU Member States and national social partners to improve the working and living conditions of domestic workers and migrant domestic workers, and to promote their integration in their countries of destination. The current report was commissioned by the Labour Migration Branch of the ILO with the financial support of the European Commission's Integration Fund, as part of the policy-oriented research project entitled Promoting integration for migrant domestic workers in Europe, implemented by the ILO in collaboration with the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), Forum Internazionale ed Europeo di Ricerche sull'Immigrazione (FIERI), and the Fundación José Ortega y Gasset-Gregorio Marañón (FOYG), and with the support of the Centre for Migration and Intercultural Studies of the University of Antwerp (CeMIS) and the Institut National d'Etudes Demographiques (INED). Based on the findings presented in the four national reports (International Migration Papers Nos. 114, 115, 116, and 117), the authors discuss the current situation of migrant domestic workers in Europe. They explore the diverse perspectives, opinions, and strategies of migrant domestic workers in their search for higher quality work and integration opportunities, and of the social actors in their efforts to improve the quality of work in the domestic work sector. The report concludes with policy recommendations that address several gaps and opportunities for European governments, employers, trade unions, and other social actors to improve the integration of and decent working conditions for migrant domestic workers.

We hope that this paper will contribute to efforts to better analyse and understand the impact of national and EU-level migration and integration policies on the work and lives of migrant domestic workers and their employers, and support policymakers in the design and implementation of policies and programmes that serve to promote decent work for all migrant workers.

Michelle Leighton  
Chief  
Labour Migration Branch

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This synthesis report is based on original research conducted by four national research teams, composed of Joaquín Arango, Magdalena Díaz Gorfinkiel, and Djaouida Moualhi in Spain, Eleonora Castagnone, Ester Salis, and Viviana Premazzi in Italy, Joris Michielsen, Roos Willems, Ward Nouwen, Steffie Jalhay, and Jozefien Didden in Belgium, and Stéphanie Condon, Emmanuelle Lada, Amélie Charruault, and Agnès Romanini in France. The report also benefitted from the expertise and contributions of many ILO experts. In particular, the authors would like to thank Manuela Tomei, Amelita King-Dejardin, Martin Oelz, Claire Hobden, and Jose-Maria Ramirez Machado for their expertise and critical feedback to the synthesis report and during the course of the entire research project.

Our gratitude also goes to the many colleagues of the Inclusive Labour Markets, Labour Relations and Working Conditions Branch; the Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch; the Labour Migration Branch; the Department of Communications; and the ILO offices in Madrid, Paris, and Rome who contributed to the development and implementation of the project. Special thanks also go to our colleagues in the ILO office in Brussels, whose dedication and hard work made the project's closing conference possible.

The Promoting integration for migrant domestic workers in Europe research project was made possible with the financial support of the EU Integration Fund.

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## Introduction

This report is based on the findings of research conducted in Belgium, France, Italy and Spain, as part of project on “integration of migrant domestic workers in Europe”, implemented by the ILO and its partners with the financial support of the European Union.

Since the adoption of the ILO Convention on decent work for domestic workers, 2011 (No. 189, hereafter C189), and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 201, R201), there has been a renewed interest from EU Member States and national social partners to improve the working and living conditions of domestic workers and migrant domestic workers, and to promote their integration in their countries of destination.

From the ILO perspective, labour market integration relates in particular to migrants’ access to equality of treatment, enjoyment of fair and decent working conditions, and human rights as defined in international labour standards and human rights instruments. Therefore, the research is inspired by and anchored in the recently adopted C189 as well as on other ILO standards applicable to migrant workers.

The many international labour standards adopted by the International Labour Conference of the ILO are central to the dignity and rights of all workers, including migrant workers. In principle, and unless stated otherwise, international labour standards cover all workers, irrespective of their nationality or immigration status. A lack of labour protection for migrant workers, including those in irregular situations, undermines protection generally for all workers. These standards include the fundamental rights Conventions of the ILO; standards of general application; instruments containing specific provisions on migrant workers such as the recently adopted C189, as well as Conventions and Recommendations focusing on labour migration and migrant workers.<sup>1</sup>

In practice, despite the existence of regulatory frameworks in most European countries, migrants employed in domestic work often remain excluded from the enjoyment of these rights.

In spite of being a source of employment for at least 2.5 million men and women in Europe (ILO, 2013), most of whom are migrants, domestic work is a form of work that is still largely unrecognized as “work with value” by large portions of European societies.

Data suggest that women migrants are often facing the greatest integration challenges, but the specific situation of migrant domestic workers in Europe remains often under-researched and little understood. Evidence-based, action-oriented research is key to producing policies that will address the needs of European labour markets, and critical to expanding the opportunities for successful integration of this important and growing segment of the population.

In light of this, the current research aims:

- (a) to explore social, economic, and institutional factors affecting life and working conditions of migrant domestic workers in Europe; and

<sup>1</sup> See Annex 2 for a list of the pertinent Conventions and Recommendations.

- 
- (b) to identify challenges and practical ways public services, trade unions, employers and other social actors can support their improvement.

The ambition is to better understand integration dynamics by analysing the experiences and activities of migrant domestic workers themselves in countries of destination, taking into account their voices and experiences as a main source of information.

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## Gender, employment and migration: Why a study on the integration of migrant domestic workers in Europe?

Women, particularly but not exclusively those with low or medium skills, seem to face the biggest challenges in successfully integrating in European labour markets. At the same time, women migrants represent the bulk of the labour force employed in domestic and care work in many European countries. In Italy and Spain – both characterized by *familialist welfare regimes* – this is the main sector of employment for migrant women. The demand for domestic workers in these and other European countries is growing, while labour force shortages in the sector continue to exist, even if this is not always publicly acknowledged.

This phenomenon has been driven by a number of **employment-related factors, policies and dynamics**, such as the decline in the size and changing skills composition of the EU working age population (which, in a “no migration” scenario, could significantly shrink over the next few years); the reduction of public welfare budgets, often geared toward the transfer of care responsibilities from public institutions to families; as well as the growing insertion of European women in the labour force, which is seldom accompanied by changing gender divisions of labour in the household and societies in general.

At the same time in recent years, Europe has set ambitious targets in terms of **promoting gender equality and fighting discrimination in the labour market**, among others by raising women’s labour market participation, reducing pay gaps, fostering labour mobility and facilitating better balance between family and work responsibilities. European policies also recognize the need to promote integration of migrants against a series of indicators, among which are labour market indicators. The European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (European Commission, 2011) states that “integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by migrants and by the societies that receive them”. In this perspective, migrant domestic workers themselves, whether through direct interaction or through self-organized domestic worker’s associations, must be consulted more actively in the process of policy reform: at the same time, strategies and practices must be identified that help social partners integrate migrant domestic workers into their own ranks and into the formal labour market. However, it has been noted elsewhere that the mobilization of social partners in this sector is often difficult due to the high fragmentation and poor organization of domestic workers and employers alike (ILO, 2010). Only a few Member States, such as Belgium, France, Germany, and Italy, have negotiated collective agreements geared specifically towards domestic workers.<sup>2</sup>

Against this background, a number of employment, migration, integration and gender equality policies have been adopted in the last few years to promote European economic growth and competitiveness, as well as to achieve the objective of social cohesion and protection of fundamental rights that are at the basis of the European Constitution. One of the targets of the Europe 2020 growth strategy is increasing the employment rate for all men and women between the ages of 20 and 64 to 75 per cent. Given the projected shrinking of national workforces in Europe over the coming decades (Giannakouris, 2008), the stimulation of economic migration is of strategic importance to the sustainability of

<sup>2</sup> In some countries, domestic workers can be covered by, e.g. collective agreements concerning agency work (in Spain) or the cleaning sector (Netherlands).

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Member States' economies and societies. One of the identified strategies to achieve the EC's target is by further reducing barriers to women's access to employment and foster migrant's economic integration in European labour markets.

However, policy initiatives in these different domains remain insufficiently articulated or based on comprehensive, action-oriented research. Policy coherence challenges affect not only the articulation between different domains – such as gender equality, employment, migration and integration – but also how policy initiatives are designed and implemented at different levels, e.g. at European, national and local levels. The extent to which policies involve different levels of public administration and social partners, civil society and the migrant population relates to these challenges as well. Case studies have highlighted the existence of interesting initiatives carried out by local authorities and actors, which are not always known, scaled up or supported at the national level (c.f. Condon et al., 2013). Nonetheless, it is often at the local level where the articulation of policies is likely to take place and show concrete results. As the Italian report highlights *“only a comprehensive strategy based on the integration of monetary benefits, training and recognition of qualifications, tutoring and job-matching services, with a leading role of public actors and institutions, can achieve the objective of reducing informality and enhancing the quality of care in the sector”* (Castagnone et al., 2013, p. 11).

The research done under the auspices of the “Promoting integration for migrant domestic workers in Europe” project had the objective of shedding light on the interaction of these different policy domains and on how the specific characteristics of the labour market for domestic work and of the individual worker are influenced by relevant migration/admission and employment policies. The research further examined the strategies migrants use to face difficulties, overcome obstacles, and pursue their individual professional and personal aspirations.

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## Research scope and methodology

The project coordinated four pilot case studies in selected European countries (Belgium, France, Italy and Spain) conducted by research institutes specialized in migration and integration issues. The selection of the pilot countries was made based on the importance of domestic work as a share of the national workforce and relative weight of migrants therein, and on the diversity that these countries offer in terms of public and private care provisions, employment and migration policies.

C189 defines the term *domestic work* as work performed in or for a household, or households and the term *domestic worker* as any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship. During the discussion on the adoption of C189 at the International Labour Conference, the agreement on an internationally acceptable definition was not easily achieved. Difficulties were linked to the complexity and the multiplicity of forms that domestic work takes in different national contexts. As a result, the adopted definition remains sufficiently broad to cover a wide range of tasks performed under a wide range of employment arrangements differently captured by national statistics and regulated by national law.

Recognizing the limitations of trying to compare and synthesize widely distinctive national situations, the purpose of this action-oriented research was to propose a series of elements that could animate discussions for policy-making both at the national and European level, based on a range of different experiences and practices of the selected Member States.

The research was guided by a set of questions identified and agreed upon by the four research teams with the view to providing elements of analysis on the ways in which migration policies (regarding admission, right to stay and right to work) affect the labour market integration of third-country national migrant domestic workers (MDWs) in the EU. The project's nascent research questions were:

1. What have been the features, trends and changes in the country's policies affecting migrant workers over the past ten years?
2. What is the labour market situation of domestic workers, and migrant domestic workers in particular?
3. What is the situation of non-EU migrant domestic workers compared to that of EU MDWs and nationals? Are there specific groups of MDWs who tend to be concentrated in the poorest quality and most insecure domestic work jobs?
4. How do individual- and country-level factors, such as specific characteristics of MDWs (nationality, level of education, employment history, etc.) or the country care and welfare regime, influence the relation between admission policies (entry into host country, right to stay, right to work) and integration outcomes?

Recognizing that effective policy-making and policy articulation between different domains cannot be achieved without listening to the voice and opinion of those who are directly affected by different policy measures, the research aimed to understand migration and integration dynamics and implication through the testimonies of migrant workers themselves. Understanding their experiences and aspirations, analysing the individual and collective strategies they adopt to face challenges and seize opportunities, identifying factors that constitute "turning points" toward their improved working and living conditions, and seriously considering their recommendations, is essential to designing and implementing effective measures to overcoming real or perceived obstacles to improved labour market integration.

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With a view to capturing and understanding the different and dynamic aspects of migration trajectories, the research teams developed a common methodology that includes quantitative analysis and a qualitative survey. The research produced original data using a common interview guide in a target population selected based on agreed common criteria.

The four research teams conducted up to 60 semi-structured interviews with migrants who have been resident in the country of destination for between two and 15 years (totaling 222 interviews across all four countries). Interviewees had to be employed as a domestic worker or to have been so in the last year at the time of the interview. The interviewees covered a range of nationalities, reflecting – to the extent possible – the distribution of migrant countries of origin in each of the four destination countries, and were found to be active in both housekeeping and caring roles (care for children, the elderly or persons with disabilities), in both live-in and live-out situations. Researchers made sure to include irregular migrants and men among their interviewees. Interviews were designed to allow for an in-depth exploration of migrants' experiences. A major obstacle research teams faced was coming into contact with migrant domestic workers willing to be interviewed, especially ones with an irregular migration status, as they tended to be unwilling to be identified at all. Therefore, efforts were made to contact migrant domestic workers through diverse points of entry, such as local and national organizations and associations active in the field or individuals who are in contact with migrants (including irregular migrants). Chain-referral techniques were used where possible, but in practice interviewees were often reluctant to provide information on others or refused to participate when contacted directly by researchers. Based on qualitative biographical interviews, cases studies provide findings on the trajectories of migrant domestic workers, the challenges they face, and the strategies they use to overcome those challenges and improve their living and working conditions. National reports include a statistical analysis providing a panorama on the characteristics and role of migrant domestic worker, based on available statistics.

Findings from this rich body of interviews with migrant domestic workers were supplemented with interviews of relevant institutional and social actors (such as representatives of trade unions and employer organizations; faith-based, community and domestic worker organizations; and other national or local NGOs) active in the field, and with a review of existing trends based on official national statistics and policy and legal documents.

## Migrants in domestic work in Europe: Facts and figures

Women represent about half of the European migrant workers population. However, available data show that migrant women as a whole in Europe fare worse in terms of employment and economic activity than both migrant men and women nationals, as shown by their lower employment rates and higher unemployment rates. Migrant women also represent a larger portion of the temporary and part-time workforces than both migrant men and women nationals, with third-country nationals again faring worst of all. Part-time employment rates rose across the board between 2007 and 2011, but third-country migrant men and women were affected more strongly than nationals or EU migrants.

A large portion of migrant workers also face specific challenges in terms of recognition of skills and qualification. Available statistics in fact indicate that migrant women experience more deskilling and over-qualification for their job than migrant men or their national counterparts (OECD, 2011; Rubin et al., 2008). Data on over-qualification can realistically only be a lower-bound estimate (as figures could easily be much higher), since they include neither women who are unemployed and “forced back into the home” (Kofman, 2012, p. 69) nor those who find work informally.

These findings all help to confirm the claim that migrant women (especially third-country nationals) are poorly integrated in European labour markets and, to a large extent, concentrated in sectors of the economy which are traditionally linked to unpaid reproductive, and hence unrecognized and undervalued, work such as domestic work.

**Table 1. Employment rate, unemployment rate, temporary employment rate and part-time employment rate, by sex, nationality group and year (ages 15 to 64)**

	Employment rate *		Unemployment rate *		Temporary employment rate **		Part-time employment rate **	
	2007	2011	2007	2011	2007	2011	2007	2011
<b>Women</b>								
Nationals	58.6	59.1	7.6	9.2	14.7	14.1	30.4	31.1
Non-nationals from other EU27 countries	61.2	61.5	9.2	12.6	21.1	18.4	36.8	37.7
Third-country nationals	46.7	45.4	16.2	20.6	27.3	23.3	36.9	39.5
<b>Men</b>								
Nationals	72.5	70.2	6.3	9.1	13.1	12.9	6.8	7.8
Non-nationals from other EU27 countries	78.5	74.7	7.5	11.2	18.3	17.5	7.1	9.1
Third-country nationals	70.1	64.7	13.0	19.7	27.6	24.5	10.7	13.8

\* % of all active persons

\*\* % of all employed persons

Source: Eurostat, EU-LFA (lfsa\_ergan, lfsa\_urgan, lfsa\_etpgan, lfsa\_eppgan), 2012; own calculations

Domestic work remains one of the main areas of employment available to women migrants. According to recent Eurostat figures, domestic workers represented about 1.2 per cent of the total European workforce in 2008. ILO estimates place the amount of domestic workers in Europe in 2010 at just over 2.4 million workers. However, given the preponderance of informal employment in domestic work, these figures are probably much higher and increasing. Official figures of domestic workers in individual European countries range from 0.04 per cent of the workforce in the Netherlands through 2.9 per cent of the workforce in Italy, and up to more than 5 per cent of the workforce in Cyprus (Eurostat, 2012).

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Data on migrants in domestic work are scarce, in part due to the informal nature of their work and to the irregular migration status of the workers. Specific migration regulations – such as *au pair* schemes or those regulating entry and work of staff of diplomatic households, as well as the often unclear boundary between domestic and care work – obfuscate the extent of domestic work in national statistics (c.f. Michielsen et al., 2013). The boundary between domestic and care work can in reality be unclear, and workers classified in official statistics as care workers often performing domestic work tasks as well. For instance, particularly in southern European countries, many migrants who are hired as skilled care workers find themselves inadvertently doing domestic work for a large part of their job (León, 2010; Lyon, 2006; Williams, 2010). Nonetheless, and particularly in southern European countries, domestic work remains one of the most accessible occupations for migrant women (c.f. FRA, 2011; Gallotti, 2009; Reyneri, 2001; Rubin et al., 2008). A Eurostat study finds, based on data collected from the EU-LFS 2008 *ad hoc* module regarding the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants, that more than 10 per cent of foreign-born women are employed in domestic work<sup>3</sup> in Europe, compared to 1 per cent of native-born women (Eurostat, 2011, p. 46). **Interestingly, the study finds that women migrants’ employment in households differs markedly between *recent* and *settled* immigrants. The proportion of recently arrived women migrants in domestic work is 19 per cent, while that proportion is only 7 per cent for settled migrants.** The study leaves unanswered whether this is due to the improved integration and upward mobility of settled migrants or to the increasing availability of jobs in the domestic work sector (Eurostat, 2011, pp. 47–48).

Where they exist, official data on the number of migrant domestic workers also show an increasing trend over time. In Spain, 60 per cent of domestic workers were migrants in 2012, up from only 5 per cent in 2000 (Arango et al., 2013). The proportion of migrants in domestic work in Italy grew from about 50 per cent to about 80 per cent in that same period (Castagnone et al., 2013). In both cases, the change in absolute numbers of domestic workers is almost entirely attributable to migrants: the number of national domestic workers has remained relatively constant for at least ten years in both cases. National migration and social security regulations for domestic workers have had expected and unexpected consequences for the numbers of registered migrants.

<sup>3</sup> Domestic work is defined in the study as “activities of households as employers”.

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## Preliminary findings from desk reviews and stakeholders consultations

The following elements emerged from the various research studies of the project. Far from providing an exhaustive picture of the situation of migrants in domestic work in Europe, the statistical analysis of the national case studies, together with the broader European perspective presented below, is an attempt to provide a mapping of some of the main features of migrant domestic work in the countries under analysis.

### Capturing forms and modalities of domestic work across Europe

#### *Definitions and terminology*

Together with the different definitions used to account for migrant population, the lack of homogeneous statistical definitions on domestic work is one of the major challenges to obtaining comparable statistics across countries.

Definitions are not simply a technical matter, as they have major implications for how workers are made visible statistically and valued socially. In the case of Spain, Italy and France, where the use of terms such as “*trabajadoras del hogar*” (household workers), “*colaboratrice familiar (COLF)*” (family collaborator) or “*employée de maison*” (household employee) and “*aide à domicile*” (services related to personal care) respond to years of mobilization in favour of empowerment and enhanced social value of domestic work. They also respond to strategies to professionalize the sector and contribute to its emergence from informality.

Based on the specific characteristics of domestic work in the different countries covered by this research and the uneven availability and coverage of data sources, research teams then made methodological choices that allowed them to capture more in detail the situation of specific segments of domestic work.

For example, given the high prevalence of migrant populations in care of non-autonomous household members in Italy, the Italian report focuses particularly, though not exclusively, on this target population.

For reasons of categorizations used in official statistics, the French report focuses on specific segments of the sector, distinguishing between workers who offer services to or for “dependent/disabled household members”, those who perform more traditional household chores, and those who take care of children at the parent’s residence (for which, as explained in the report, no statistical data are available), while the Belgian report provides an overview on those workers who are employed under the national system of service vouchers, which seems to cover one of the largest shares of the migrant domestic workers population.

In the case of Spain, legislation does not create different professional categories within domestic work and, while it is possible to extrapolate some information on different tasks performed, these would not have implications in terms of categories of work.

At the same time, while studies cannot use uniform categories, the research results concur on a number of general trends and characteristics of the sector in Europe.

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## **Growth of both domestic work and women migrants' participation**

The growth of the sector in the last few years in the studied countries has been accompanied by a steady growth of migrants' participation in it, particularly in Southern European countries. The sizes and characteristics of domestic work have been to a great extent impacted and shaped by different migration policies adopted at national level. As the Italian report clearly highlights, *“it has been shown that some migratory systems emerged which are strictly connected to the demand for domestic labour (...), encouraging individuals to migrate and to look for a job in this sector of the labour market. Immigration policies, both through the regular admission system (i.e. annual quotas) and recurrent regularizations, have largely sustained this growth by making domestic work one of the major entry points into the (...) labour market”* (Castagnone et al., 2013, p. 1).

However, domestic work remains largely unattractive to European workers, even when some anecdotal evidence seems to indicate a very slight increase of EU citizens in the sector due to the economic crisis. The reasons for this are multiple and will be analysed further in this paper, but clearly relate to the low value generally attributed to and the prevalence of poor working conditions in the sector.

## **Migrant domestic worker profiles**

Using existing statistical data, the four case studies provide a synthesis of the individual characteristics of migrant domestic workers, both in terms of age, education and professional qualifications, as well as on the working conditions and the type of employment arrangements they may be involved in.

It is interesting to highlight that workers in this sector, both national and migrants, generally tend to be in the mid- to upper range of the working age categories, and in particular over 40 and often over 50 in all countries studied. If the sector is further disaggregated by the type of tasks performed, the concentration of higher age groups is even more pronounced among workers employed to perform household chores, while the average age of workers employed in care-related tasks is slightly lower. This is partly attributable to the higher concentration of migrants, who are slightly younger overall than their national counterparts, in care-related task.

Nonetheless, **most migrant domestic workers are over 40 years old**: for example: 60.4 per cent of migrant domestic workers in Italy are over 40, and around 40 per cent in France are over 49. Studies suggest that this age structure has important implications not only for the vulnerability to health-related problems linked, among other things, to the physical efforts and emotional burden of caring tasks, but also in terms of longer-term integration perspectives, aspiration and trajectories.

At the same time, the case studies provide interesting insights into the educational profile of these categories of migrant workers. While relevant differences in educational attainment can be highlighted with regards to different countries of origin (Asian and Eastern European workers often showing higher educational attainment levels), in general **migrants present higher levels of education than nationals employed in domestic work**. In Italy, for example, around 44 per cent of migrant domestic workers hold an upper secondary or university degree; in Spain, more than half of Latin American domestic workers (the largest migrant group in Spain) hold at a minimum a secondary degree. In France, 50 per cent of workers providing care-related services (*“aide à domicile”*) hold a professional or secondary school diploma, while the percentage is slightly lower for those who provide household services. Studies also point to the (non-)recognition of qualifications and professional skills, together with language barriers, as key obstacles to

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labour market integration, with important consequences in terms of both personal accomplishment and aspirations, and deskilling.

In terms of the tasks that they are mostly involved in, the reports seem to suggest that migrants **tend to occupy the most precarious, labour-intensive segments of the sector**, such as live-in, care-giving tasks. The situation seems slightly different in France, where migrant workers comprise 28 per cent and 11 per cent of home maintenance and home care employees respectively. A certain degree of segregation within the sector according to nationality of origin has also been highlighted: about 80 per cent of third-country nations in home-care work are reported to come from the African continent.

With regards to **working time**, data are particularly difficult to gather and vary significantly across countries. In the case of Italy, available statistics suggest that about 25 per cent of workers in the sector work more than 36 hours per week and 22 per cent more than 40 hours a week. Fifty-five per cent work for one single household, while about 45 per cent for multiple employers. In Spain, this is particularly true for workers who come from Asian and Latin American countries, 80 per cent and 55 per cent of whom work more than 40 hours a week respectively. The Spanish report also highlights the large shares of live-in situations among the migrant community, in particular among Latin American and Asian-origin working women.

In both cases, the share of live-in arrangements drops substantially after a few years of presence in the country.

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## Common features and cross-cutting themes from case studies

The studies identify some common features and elements of diversity between the European countries analysed.

### Migrant domestic workers are unevenly distributed across Europe, with a clear prevalence in southern European countries

In Italy, more than 80 per cent of the officially registered 881,702 domestic workers are of foreign origin. In Spain, the Labour Force Survey indicates that only 36 per cent of the more than the 660,000 domestic workers are of non-immigrant origin. In France, around 28 per cent of the approximately 250,000 workers involved in household services (*employées de maison*) and 11 per cent of the more than 540,000 workers employed in the area of domestic care services (*aide à domicile*) are migrant workers. In the case of Belgium, absolute numbers are more limited, but third-country nationals represent a significant share both of employees under the category “activities as household as employers” (17 per cent of the total in 2009) and as workers employed by agencies under the national voucher system (8 per cent in 2012). However, geographic distribution within countries is also uneven, with an important concentration of migrants in domestic work in metropolitan areas such as Paris, Brussels, Madrid and Rome. In broader terms, migrant domestic workers represent a common feature of European labour markets, even in some northern European countries, where the use – and abuse – of *au pair* systems is seen by many as a widespread system to fill domestic work needs with cheap labour provided by young women migrants.

### A highly feminized sector, often segmented along “ethnic” divides

Gender and nationality/ethnic segmentation relates to both the migrant workers’ likeliness to participate in domestic work, the type of employment arrangement and the tasks performed in it. Data on occupational concentration in Europe show a large degree of gender and nationality segregation on the EU labour market. In all countries studied, migrant women are over-represented in elementary occupations. This over-representation is much stronger for third-country nationals than it is for EU-born migrants. Furthermore, third-country nationals, and particularly migrant women, are under-represented among professional and other skilled occupations.

Country reports have confirmed this high predominance of women in the sector but, at the same time, provide some interesting information on the role of men and the impact and implications that specific migration policies play on male participation in it. The Italian and Spanish reports highlight, for example, that a sudden rise in the share of male domestic workers was registered in years when extraordinary regularization campaigns specifically linked to domestic work were held. However, this presence was not sustained over time, suggesting that domestic work is only seen as an entry route into regular European labour markets for men who might have greater opportunities for mobility outside the sector. At the same time, anecdotal evidence, especially from Spain, indicates that the economic crisis might have an impact in terms of raising male migrants’ participation in the sector. In terms of nationalities of origin, there seems to be a concentration of particular nationalities in the sector depending, among other things, on historical links between countries of destination and origin. Interestingly, some of the reports point out that workers can also perceive employers along “ethnic” divides, which contributes to stereotyping

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within the sector. Similarly, there seems to be a growth in numbers of employers who themselves belong to migrant communities. This is an element that deserves further analysis. While, in some cases, this can be seen as a strategy for migrant employers to reunify extended family members during regularization processes, in other cases this is the effect of progressive integration of the settled migrant population in Europe. Labour market policies as well as migration policies are sometimes seen as perpetrating, rather than challenging, this segmentation.

### **A largely informal sector, with significant presence of irregular migrant workers**

Studies indicate an intimate interrelation of widespread informal economies and the abundance of migrants with an irregular migration status. Some case studies clearly point to the existence of a convergence of interest, in the short term, between employer and employee to maintain an informal working relationship. This is particularly true when legislative frameworks maintain workers in a prolonged status of temporariness (see below), in which the long-term costs of informality and benefits of regularization are hardly perceived. The roles of migration and employment policies in reducing informality and irregularity of status cannot be seen as distinct and should not be underemphasized. For instance, an incentive for employers to regularize the status of their domestic worker can be seen when cash transfers to families for care provision are made conditional on the registration of an employment contract.

### **Widespread exposure to job instability, underemployment and substandard working conditions: Growing dual vulnerability of workers and employers**

Working conditions for domestic workers are generally poor, in practice often below the minimum level of protection guaranteed by law. Prevalence of long working hours, no coverage for sick or annual leave, sudden unilateral modification of working time arrangements including cancellation of hours of work without notice, underpayment and the lack of maternity protection, are just some of the experiences recurrently mentioned by interviewed migrants. In times of economic crisis, domestic work continues to be one of the sectors where work is readily available to migrant workers, though the large share of “underemployment” (in the form of part-time work, multiple employers or temporary arrangements) remains a predominant characteristic. This is confirmed by OECD statistics for European countries which report an increase of women migrants (OECD, 2012), which could be attributed to a range of variables, including the fact that many migrant women have entered the sector as a consequence of their partners’ loss of work. This seems to be the case for women originating from North African countries in Italy, who traditionally had very low levels of participation in domestic work, but who – according to data of the last regularization process reported by the Italian study – seem to be progressively entering the sector.

Reports highlight another particular vulnerability of migrant workers related to their migration status, which is that they are often left with no choice but to accept poor working conditions, at least upon first arrival (see below). However, it is also worth highlighting that, in particular in countries where care is mainly the responsibility of families, a growing number of medium- and low-income families and single elderly individuals resort to employing migrants to provide for otherwise unavailable or unaffordable care service. In time of economic crisis, this has important negative consequences for the employment conditions negotiated among the two parties. Paradoxically, in spite of the growing demand and the decreasing financial resources allocated to welfare in the EU, the sector

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remains one of the most complex – yet marginal and undervalued – of the European labour market. It attracts the most vulnerable workers and, at the same time, some of the most vulnerable employers. The fragility of both workers and employers would seem to largely justify a strong monitoring and oversight role for public authorities, yet this is seldom the case, and the employment relationship is left in the hands of parties that are often both under considerable economic pressure and fragile situations, who often reach a convergence of interests in informality.

This “double-weakness” and a focus on employer attitudes toward domestic work could be subjects for future action and research.



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## **Qualitative analysis of labour market integration trajectories of migrant workers in Europe: The voice of the migrant domestic workers**

The large presence of women migrants in domestic work is an undeniable and lasting feature of European labour markets. But, do women migrants tend to choose to work as domestic workers or are they compelled to work in this sector? And consequently, does domestic work represent an opportunity for successful socio-economic integration or is this just a “choice by default”, an obligatory step toward more rewarding occupations? Are there opportunities within the sector for workers to see their human capital and aspirations recognized and hence progress in terms of socio-economic integration in conditions of freedom and equality? What are the underlying dynamics and factors that drive workers in and out of domestic work and through upward socio economic trajectories? What are the obstacles and opportunities, the “turning points”, the elements of change that are likely to impact, positively or negatively, on these trajectories? What are some of the individual and collective strategies migrants adopt to overcome these obstacles? Who are the actors that can best support these processes?

These are some of the questions research teams have explored while interviewing the wide range of life histories of migrant domestic workers in Europe, as well as a number of key informants representing concerned public authorities, social partners and non-governmental organizations.

Whether domestic work becomes a path to successful socio-economic integration seems to depend on a set of individual characteristics and of contextual legal and policy framework in the area of employment and migration alike. Case studies seem to suggest a few interesting emerging issues and elements of analysis of integration trajectories and to highlight a number of “paradoxes” that characterize the sector and should be taken into account for future policy-making both at national and European level.

### **A logic of “paternalism” versus a logic of rights and social justice**

In many European countries, and contrary to migration in many other sectors, public opinion tends to describe women migrant domestic and care workers in rather positive terms. In the case of Italy, where the phenomenon has grown in public visibility in recent years, migrant care workers are sometime described as “angels”, or raised to “family members” by those who they provide services to. This is a clear example of how this type of work is still not perceived in terms of employment relationships and workers are not perceived as workers – hence not subject to human and labour rights. This is an approach that is sometimes accepted by migrants themselves, as demonstrated by the fact that many interviewed migrants ascribed the improvement in their working conditions partly to “luck”: the “luck” of finding a “good employer” who has been “kind” and “helped offering or finding a job”, or offering a place to live. The promise of employers to support in regularization processes is also often taken by the worker as a source of hope, which induces them to continue accepting poor working conditions. Finally, in the area of care work, it is important to highlight that the tasks performed within a family often change over time, as the health of family members in need of care deteriorates. The very personal relations that develop over time are a contributing factor for workers to continue working for the same employers even when the task to be performed and the salary no longer correspond to those originally agreed.

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## **“From there to here”: Modalities of entry into domestic work for migrant workers**

Case studies seem to suggest migrants enter domestic work mainly in two ways that might be related to their specific country of origin. Different motivations to migrate and different modalities of entry tend to lead to different trajectories in domestic work.

A first group of migrants enter European countries with the **specific purpose of working as domestic workers**. In this case, they often rely on informal networks of co-nationals who have identified a working opportunity and hence tend to enter the country with a specific job offer. Migration tends to take place within formal or semi-formal channels, often supported by specific policies in countries of origin, usually within the framework of organized modalities “targeting” the sector along international “care routes”, as specifically described by the French report. In some cases, migrants enter with the purpose of substituting co-nationals who return temporarily or permanently to their countries of origin. In these cases, migration and domestic work are fundamentally overlapping experiences and cannot be dissociated. However, even in those cases where the explicit purpose of migration is domestic work and the job opportunity is known before departure, employment does not necessarily lead to regular migration status. As the Belgian report points out, aside from the few cases of *au pairs* and work in diplomatic households, chances for third-country nationals to be granted a residence permit for the purpose of domestic work are virtually non-existent.

Another group is represented by those whose migration decision is not directly linked to domestic work, but then “end up” in the sector “by default”, because they do not find employment in other areas of work. This does not mean that migrants belonging to this group would not know or expect domestic work to be the most probable available option to them. As the Spanish report highlights, testimonies of migrants suggest that the migration process often starts with the consciousness and acceptance that domestic work is often “an obligatory first step”. This group can be rather heterogeneous and range from accompanying family members of migrant workers to foreign students who accept work in the sector to support their studies or to bridge the time until an occupation is found in other areas. In some cases, such as in France, Belgium and Spain, traditional migration patterns, linked to the language affinities and ties with ex-colonies, influence the flows of migrant domestic workers who tend to have consolidated networks at destination who can support this second group in the first period after arrival. In general, few are those who have worked as domestic workers prior to migrating.

## **Challenges and opportunities of labour market integration upon arrival: New immigrants into domestic work**

All reports describe biographic histories and dynamic processes characterized by a wide range of individual characteristics and collective strategies to seize opportunities for upward socio-economic mobility. However, they all concur on describing these processes in terms of subsequent, though often non-linear, “phases” characterized by different conditions of work and life and accompanied by different levels of rights awareness, mobilization and empowerment. The acquisition of a combination of these elements, which is strongly influenced by the economic and political context and the legal framework regulating migrants’ rights to live and work in a given country, are instrumental to successful integration in European labour markets and societies. All authors put emphasis on the key issue of rights awareness and subsequent mobilization for those rights, as essential for empowerment and enhanced socio-economic integration.

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Transition from one to the other of these stages, an often tortuous path of scattered steps forwards and backwards, is what transforms the migration experience into a story of upward mobility and socio-economic integration. A wide range of variables and actors, which will be briefly analysed below, contribute or hamper this often lengthy process.

**An initial “arrival” phase is characterized by a high degree of vulnerability** determined by the pressing economic needs of migrants, often linked to covering travel expenses and debts, and the insufficient level of awareness about rights and access to support networks in the country of destination. Most reports highlight the important individual and collective resources that individuals must mobilize in order to be able to migrate. Contrary to what is sometimes portrayed by media and public discourses, migrants are often among the most resourceful person in their communities of origin and migrate with much-needed human capital. However, as a first step upon arrival, they also tend to accept to work in the most vulnerable, labour-intensive segment of domestic work, often as live-in workers providing care assistance to non-dependent family members. In a logic that the French study terms the “logic of domesticity”, which recalls the elements of servitude of the past, they would therefore be ready to accept working informally, for long hours and little salary, and with limited autonomy or privacy. In particular, irregular migrant workers rarely perceive themselves as rights holders and generally are not keen to complain about poor working conditions. It is important to highlight that this does not imply they accept this logic uncritically and as unchangeable, but rather to the contrary, they might progressively learn the “unwritten rules of informality” and use them to their advantage to improve their working conditions and prospects. However the power imbalance and dependency which often characterize the employment relationship in domestic work act as important obstacles to these processes and maintain many migrant domestic workers in a situation of vulnerability over time.

### **Breaking isolation and gaining rights awareness: Some steps in an empowerment processes**

Acceptance of poor working conditions is linked to many factors, some of which are related to short-term perspectives and immediate economic needs of recently arrived migrants (e.g. repayment of debts, maximizing remittance levels, etc.). Other reasons are linked to the specific characteristics of the employment relationship in the sector, characterized by intimate relationships between employer and worker and the important element of trust. In this context, migrants are usually well aware of the importance of maintaining a “good reputation”, and to this purpose they often accept work under poor conditions with the perspective of future improvement. Accepting these “unwritten rules of informality” would eventually be the key to finding other occupations and improving one’s situation. It is interesting to see that one of the main strategy domestic workers employ to improve their working condition is to change employer.

Migrants’ biographic histories suggest that after this settlement period, which can take longer than is often imagined, they put in place a number of individual and collective strategies to improve their conditions of work and life. It is what the French team has described as non-linear, non-automatic “transition” from the “logic of domesticity” to “the logic of profession”.

One of the first elements of this transition is the **progressive access to networks and support services** and, where relevant, one of the first concrete steps that are taken for this purpose is moving out of live-in positions, and hence **breaking isolation**, as soon as this is feasible. Linguistic, cultural, social and physical isolation are major obstacles to integration and some of the strongest barriers in access to and effective implementation of existing integration measures, such as language courses and professionalization initiatives.

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In this process, some migrants go through a process of empowerment through which they learn how to gain knowledge of the sector, awareness of their rights, and how to “re-programme” their human capital to use within the sector or eventually outside it (though the scope of this research did not allow going into detail on the situation of workers who have left the sector).

The role of networks of co-nationals in this process has been described in ambivalent terms. On the one hand, access to personal and professional networks is central to accessing the labour market but, at the same time, co-national networks, by facilitating co-national labour market participation in the sector, often also contribute to perpetrating the ethnic segregation of the sector, which is more and more seen as a “migrant occupation”.

## **Professionalization versus multitasking**

Case studies confirm that most migrant domestic workers perform a variety of tasks which are not clearly defined contractually and are difficult to distinguish, both in practical and in normative terms. International and national organizations that are active in the sector promote the idea of an increased “professionalization” of domestic work. However, case studies seem to suggest that in practice professionalization policies and programmes do not always reach their intended goals for a number of reasons: (a) they are not always readily accessible to migrant workers (for their residence status but also because immigrants are often linguistically and physically isolated or too pushed by pressing financial needs that they have no time to attend); (b) they do not necessarily translate into improved working conditions and salaries (often employer prefer not to employ professionals because they would be entitled to higher salaries). Finally professionalization seems to conflict with what employers indicate as a need to perform a wide variety of tasks. In the context of the economic crisis, particularly the more fragile employers would look for a worker who is able to perform a variety of tasks, suggesting overspecialization is therefore seen as undesirable.

## **The impact of the economic crises**

An important element that exacerbates the poor integration of workers can be found in the economic crisis, which seems to deteriorate the situation of employers and employees alike by pushing both into more fragile and vulnerable situations. Most cases studied highlight that migrant domestic workers in Europe provide essential services that would otherwise be difficult to cover by families in light of reduced welfare budgets. It has been noted that employers are often themselves in situations of high vulnerability, in particular in the case of elderly persons living alone.

## **Some possible turning points in labour market integration trajectories**

The situation of all countries under study presents many country-specific features, both in terms of how the sector is organized and regulated by national law and, often consequently, in terms of migrants’ participation in the sector. However, authors coincide in describing the situation of migrant women in domestic work as more precarious than that of other categories of workers, and hence call for a need to provide a more coherent and integrated policy response.

A number of factors and events have been commonly identified by migrants and by experts of the sector as those that seem to “make a difference” for enhanced protection and access

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to improved working conditions, often providing “a choice”, an opportunity for enhanced socio-economic integration. These factors include, among others:

- a. acquisition of regular migration status;
- b. access to support networks;
- c. information about rights;
- d. acquisition of language skills;
- e. recognition of diplomas and qualifications; and
- f. access, on an equal basis to other workers, to training, skills and qualifications.

Whether or not migration becomes an empowering story for those involved depends very much on the choices made by policy-makers in deliberately and coherently addressing the needs of migrant domestic workers from a holistic, multidisciplinary and coordinated approach. Policies should be formulated that take into account both employment needs of workers and employers, and migration needs of individuals and countries of origin and destination. At the same time, EU-level policies could be seen as a way of streamlining the need for collaboration between sending/receiving countries.



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## Emerging recommendations

The following policy recommendations could be put forward for further discussion.

- **Promote systematic, Europe-wide data collection and research on the numbers, profiles and characteristics of migrants in domestic work, including the task they perform and their working conditions.** The availability of statistical data on the sector is uneven across European countries and is often difficult to compare. Quantitative data are essential to better understand the size and characteristics of domestic work and the participation of migrants in it. However, given the particularities of this area of work, statistics alone would not be sufficient to provide a realistic picture of the participation and role of migrants in domestic work. Interdisciplinary, qualitative and participatory approaches should be combined with quantitative analysis in order to advance the policy agenda.
- **Promote policy and legislative coherence, simplify and harmonize legislation to regulate the status of different categories of workers.** Case studies point at insufficient coordination between different policy areas, such as employment, migration, integration and social policies in general.
- **Create spaces for multi stakeholder dialogue and exchange, involving migrant workers themselves.** Case studies have shown that a number of interesting and relevant policy measures are taken at different levels (and by different actors) to promote protection for migrant domestic workers and their socio-economic integration. However, these initiatives are often poorly coordinated and actors are often unaware of others' initiatives. Sometime, and despite important efforts by workers' movements to enhance coordination, even actors with similar agendas (such as workers organizations, domestic workers associations and civil society organizations) still act independently and in isolation. The research, and the project that it is part of, has acted as a catalyst for diverse actors to get together to discuss challenges and opportunities faced by migrant domestic workers and propose elements for policy debate. Participation of migrant domestic workers in such spaces is essential.
- **Adopt migration policies that recognize and address labour market needs in domestic work based on sound labour market assessments and job-matching mechanisms with strong public oversight and control.** Regular migration channels for the purpose of domestic work, if properly linked with labour market assessment and efficient matching services, are likely to reduce migrants' exposure to irregularity and abuse.
- **Support organization and representation strategies and initiatives targeting domestic workers and migrant domestic workers.** Case studies have documented several important steps made at different levels and in different forms by workers' and migrant organizations, which can be linked, among other things, to the strong mobilization processes following the adoption of C189. This momentum must be capitalized on and workers' organizations need further national and international recognition and support. Organization and voice is an essential element of empowerment and enhances socio-economic integration.
- **Promote public awareness on the value of domestic work as real work and on domestic workers as workers with rights.** Public awareness campaigns should be designed that speak to different target populations, such as migrants, employers, institutional actors and the general public.

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- **Enhance skills recognition and qualification mechanisms.** Cases studies clearly highlight the fact that many workers employed as domestic workers have high degrees of professional and education attainments, but face legal and practical difficulties in getting skills and diplomas recognized.
  - **Promote and adapt professionalization policies for domestic workers which also target migrant populations,** including the adoption of innovative learning and training methodologies designed to meet specific migrant needs. Studies suggest that existing policies of professionalization do not always prove successful in reaching out to migrants, who are often unaware of professionalization and training opportunities or are excluded due to their migration status and language skills.

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## Annex 1: Annotated bibliography

The literature outlined in this bibliography, based on a small selection of articles, provides an illustration of the conceptual, methodological and regulatory issues relating to domestic work in Europe, and the extent of existing research in the field. In recent European research and policymaking, (migrant) domestic work exists at the intersection of care regimes, employment policies and migration policies: providing households with formal and informal domestic and care services that are being provided less and less frequently by state-run services (which are themselves subject to increasing funding cuts); existing in a context of strong demographic aging in almost all European societies (and a strong upwardly mobile, though quickly shrinking, national workforce); and responding to increasingly restrictive immigration policies that limit the socio-economic integration of migrants, relegating them to performing the so-called 3Ds (dirty, dangerous and degrading) jobs readily available in the informal sphere.

The bibliography is divided into several sections, starting with articles on theoretical and statistical analyses of domestic work in Europe, followed by articles focusing on the socio-economic integration of (migrant) domestic workers, articles on the demand for (migrant) domestic work, and ending with case studies and examples of research done at the national level. Although this literature review is by no means exhaustive of the existing research and literature, it provides ample sources for the interested reader to explore fundamental and nationally salient issues present in the discussion on (migrant) domestic work in Europe. One striking observation that can be made from the onset of this literature review is the proliferation of research based on very small, non-nationally representative bodies of interviews with domestic workers, their employers, policymakers or other experts. Most reports recommend performing more detailed nationally-representative surveys in order to chart with more accuracy the development of the sector.

### **ILO publications on domestic work and migrant domestic work**

Gallotti, M. (2009): *The Gender Dimension of Domestic Work in Western Europe*, International Migration Papers No. 96 (Geneva, ILO).

This report outlines developments in the area of migrant domestic work in Europe: it discusses conceptualization, normative frameworks, regulatory frameworks, existing statistics, measurement, and examples of best practices in several countries. The report argues for the implementation of gender equality and labour and migration policies at national and international levels in order to improve decent work opportunities for domestic workers.

ILO (2013): *Domestic workers across the world: Global and regional statistics and the extent of legal protection* (Geneva).

This volume presents national statistics and new global and regional estimates on the number of domestic workers. It shows that domestic workers represent a significant share of the labour force worldwide, and that domestic work is an important source of wage employment for women, including in Europe. It also examines the extent of inclusion and exclusion of domestic workers from key working conditions laws. In particular, it analyses how many domestic workers are covered by working time provisions, minimum wage legislation and maternity protection. The results demonstrate that under current national laws, substantial gaps in protection still remain.

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ILO (2012): *Effective protection for domestic workers: A guide to designing labour laws* (Geneva).

This guide is a practical tool for those involved in national legislative processes and in designing labour laws, including government officials and representatives of workers' and employers' organizations. The first part discusses alternative approaches to regulating domestic work, the nature and characteristics of domestic work, the forms of employment relationships that may exist, and implications for regulation. Subsequent chapters focus on substantive areas of regulation, namely formalizing the employment relationship, working time, remuneration, fundamental principles and rights at work, protection from abuse and harassment, protection of migrant domestic workers, and child domestic workers.

## **Theoretical and statistical analyses of domestic work in Europe**

Abrantes, M. (forthcoming): "Yes, but what about numbers? A quantitative contribution to the study of domestic services in Europe", in *International Labour Review* (Geneva).

This article is one of the few quantitative studies on the prevalence of domestic work in Europe. Though it does not examine informal employment, it outlines a general trend of a growing formal domestic work sector. The author analyses EU-LFS data disaggregated at the national level from 2000 and 2010. Although the analysis takes into consideration the differences between domestic work in household and care work, the author does not strongly examine the implications of a growing reliance of European family households on informal care work and subsequent implications for domestic work. Furthermore, it does not take into consideration the reification of traditional gender and occupational roles that facilitates women's and migrant's entry into the sector. Also, the author makes no distinction between national and migrant domestic workers.

Chen, M. (2011): "Recognizing domestic workers, regulating domestic work: Conceptual, measurement, and regulatory challenges". in *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, Vol. 23, pp. 167-184.

In this article, the author explores the definition and conceptualization of domestic work, illustrates broad challenges to their measurement in national databases, and discusses difficulties of regulating the sector. More specifically, she discusses issues related to policy implementation and enforcement, the "mismatch" between domestic work and the rest of the labour market, and the heterogeneity of domestic workers as a group. She concludes the article with a discussion on organizing domestic workers within unions and/or other less formalized institutions as a way forward.

GEMMA (2004): *SERVANT: The Socio-Economic Role of Domestic Service as a Factor in European Society* (Liege).

This EU research project attempts to identify contemporary typologies of domestic work, alongside a description of the historical development of domestic service in Europe. The project conducted several seminars with national and international experts. The report examines how structural factors (sex, age, gender, socio-economic status, education, etc.) inform the distribution of domestic work in diverse national contexts. Though it tries to provide a statistical picture of domestic work in Europe, the authors argue that the sector cannot be adequately measured given current data collection mechanisms in the EU.

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Lutz, H. (2008): *Migration and Domestic Work: A European Perspective on a Global Theme* (Hampshire, Ashgate Publishing).

In this publication, the author has compiled writings from leading authors on gender, migration, and care regimes in Europe. The book places domestic work at the intersection of these regimes and shows how traditional divisions between paid and unpaid labour inform the distribution of domestic work in diverse European societies. The work contains contributions by authors providing analyses of local situations and national contexts, and provides an excellent introduction to the way in which domestic work is usually analysed in Europe.

See also:

- Blackett, A. (1998): *Making domestic work visible: The case for specific regulation*, Labour Law and Labour Relations Programme Working Paper No. 2/1998 (Geneva, ILO).
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### **Promoting the socio-economic integration of (migrant) domestic workers**

Cancedda, A. (2001): *Employment in household services* (Dublin, Eurofound).

This report, produced by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, provides an overview of domestic services in Europe up to 2001, and is one of the first reports to systematically measure employment in household services. It synthesizes national reports from several European countries, and covers a description of typical workers employed in domestic service, their working conditions, the government and social actors involved, and describes the reconciliation of family and working life. Most importantly, Chapter 7 provides an overview of how national policies diverge and converge with respect to regulating domestic work. The report however, pays no special attention to the distinction between national and migrant workers.

Council on Employment, Income and Social Cohesion (CERC) (2008): *Personal and Household Services*, Report No. 8 (Paris).

This report outlines the legislative and regulatory frameworks that govern and help shape the structure of formal domestic work in France. The report distinguishes several types of domestic work, i.e. personal and household services, child care, housekeeping and ironing, and private tutoring. Furthermore, the report also analyses the amount and impact of public financial support (through direct transfers and the service voucher system) on the costs of employing a domestic worker. The report concludes with suggestions for alternative ways to satisfying the existing needs for domestic service. The English translation of the document is an abridged version of the French report.

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European Commission (2010): *Opening Europe's doors to unskilled and low-skilled workers: A practical handbook* (Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union).

This report examines legislation governing unskilled and low-skilled (mostly migrant) workers in EU countries by looking at national frameworks where they exist: at specific regulations regarding entry, stay, and work permits; specific procedures that must be followed by workers and/or employers; and maps out which institutions play shaping and guiding roles. The report is very revealing for country specific information, but does not provide a cross-national comparison or analysis of country policies. It is interesting to note that very often countries do not have specific regulations regarding low-skilled workers, and that no legislation at the EU level exists (while it does exist for highly skilled workers).

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2011): *Migrants in an irregular situation employed in domestic work: Fundamental rights challenges for the European Union and its Member States* (Vienna).

This report is based on interviews with 72 migrant domestic workers from ten EU Member States. It analyses and provides policy recommendations on five fundamental rights areas which emerged as the most relevant for migrant domestic workers in an irregular situation. These include fair working conditions (including fair pay, sick leave, compensation for work accidents, rest periods and lodging for live-in workers), unjustified dismissal, freedom of association, access to redress mechanisms (including for serious crimes) and issues relating to family life. For many of these issues, international human rights law and labour law standards prohibit differential treatment based on status.

Overall, the report shows that the protection of migrant domestic workers' rights in an irregular situation varies across the ten countries examined, as do the roles played by civil society actors and by the justice system in protecting and safeguarding them. In practice, domestic workers' access to fundamental rights is currently largely dependent on the goodwill of the employer. More efforts are required to monitor whether fundamental rights of migrant domestic workers in an irregular situation are respected. This, in combination with migrants, employers and the wider society as a whole (for which the role of civil society is crucial) becoming more aware of migrants' rights, are deemed crucial.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2011): *Migrants in an irregular situation: Access to healthcare in 10 European Union Member States* (Vienna).

Related to the FRA report above, this report is based on 221 semi-structured qualitative interviews: 36 with public authorities, 43 with civil society representatives, 67 with health staff, and 75 with migrants in an irregular situation. Five main barriers were identified as challenges in receiving and providing care to this specific group of migrants: costs of care and complex reimbursement procedures; unawareness of entitlements by health providers and beneficiaries; fear of detection due to information passed on to the police; discretionary power of public and health-care authorities; and quality and continuity of care. Some of these obstacles also concern emergency health care. Interestingly, by law, all four countries in the "Promoting integration for migrant domestic workers in Europe" project should provide "cost-free" access to medical services beyond emergency services.

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Marchetti, S. (2012): *Together? On the not-so-easy relationship between Italian labour organisations and migrant domestic workers' groups*, ICDD Working Paper No. 3 (Kassel, International Center for Development and Decent Work).

This paper provides a very telling representational analysis of the (scarce) collaboration between migrant (domestic worker) organizations and labour unions in Italy, which to a large extent could be extrapolated to other European countries. While labour unions represent themselves as upholders of migrant rights, this is often regarded by migrant organizations with suspicion, and interpreted as lip-service and political pandering, without offering any actual support. Collaboration seems to be in the interest of both parties, but neither seems to be able to convince the other of their relevance in this issue.

Mckay, S., Markova, E., Paraskevopoulou, A., and Wright, T. (2009): *Final report: The relationship between migration status and employment outcomes*, Undocumented Worker Transitions), retrieved from [www.undocumentedmigrants.eu](http://www.undocumentedmigrants.eu).

This is the final report prepared for the EU-funded Undocumented Worker Transitions project. Partner countries and organizations participated in background reviews, and collected in total 211 interviews with migrant workers and a further 70 interviews with EU stakeholders and international experts. It provides a literature review and framework analysis of migration and employment policies of undocumented workers in seven partner EU countries. It also provides statistical estimates of undocumented migration, and examines different processes of status transitions that help lead to undocumented work. The report discusses working conditions, gender and migration, regularization programmes, and human and social capital and migration. Interestingly, sex work is explicitly mentioned as needing political recognition, whereas domestic work is not. The report concludes with broad policy recommendations.

Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) (2008): *Integration of Female Migrant Domestic Workers: Strategies for Employment and Civic Participation* (Nicosia, University of Nicosia Press).

This report examines policies and best practices in regards to the employment and integration of migrant domestic workers of Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain. The policy recommendations in this report detail an almost exhaustive list of existing approaches to the integration of migrant domestic workers in the covered European contexts.

Pannell, K. and Altman, M. (2009): "Minding the Gap: Feminist perspectives on policies affecting immigrant labor in the domestic services industry in Europe", in *Cahiers de l'Urmis*, No. 12, pp. 1-18.

This article provides an alternative approach to the regulation of domestic work in Europe. By taking a feminist perspective on the regulation of domestic work, the authors identify policy and gender gaps that at best do not improve the conditions of migrant domestic workers at best, and exacerbate poor conditions at worst. The authors call on policymakers to acknowledge the persistent inequalities inherent in employment and migration policies when considering policy reforms.

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Sansoni, A.M. (2009): *Limits and potential of the use of vouchers for personal services: An evaluation of titres-services in Belgium and the CESU in France*, Working Paper 2009.06 (Brussels, European Trade Union Institute).

Published under the auspices of the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), this article examines the effectiveness of “service vouchers” used in Belgium and France. The author finds that, although the services have provided a considerable amount of formal employment, it is unclear whether this employment supplants informal employment in domestic work. An interesting suggestion raised in this paper is the potential for transferring the vouchers to other European countries.

See also:

- Tomei, M. (2011): “Decent work for domestic workers: Reflections on recent approaches to tackle informality”, in *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, Vol. 23, pp. 185-212.
- Windebank, J. (2004): “Demand-side incentives to combat the underground economy: Some lessons from France and Belgium”, in *International Journal of Economic Development*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 54-75.
- Windebank, J. (2006): “The Chèque Emploi-Service, the Titre Emploi-Service and the Chèque Emploi-Service Universel in France: The commodification of domestic work as a route to gender equality?”, in *Modern & Contemporary France*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 189-203.

## Case studies and policy studies at the national level

Ahonen, E.Q. et al. (2010): “Invisible work, unseen hazards: The health of women immigrant household service workers in Spain”, in *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, Vol. 53, No. 4, April, pp. 405-416.

This article focuses on the perceived hazards and health of women immigrant household service workers in Spain. It is an exploratory, descriptive study of 46 female migrant domestic workers; as such, it is not hypothesis driven (it does not contain any statistical or representative sample data, or accompanying analysis), but it has a lot of information on research design, the participants and data collection from focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Both documented and undocumented workers were approached; however, the study concludes that such a distinction was relevant only in terms of empowerment and bargaining power, and not in terms of work tasks or direct exposure to hazards.

Furthermore, the study concludes that there are three categories of hazards to domestic work: environmental hazards and respiratory and skin reactions; ergonomic hazards and musculoskeletal problems; and, most frequently, psychosocial hazards and health concerns (long working hours, lack of influence over Terms of Reference or working conditions, role clarity, emotional demands, lack of career development and personal growth, isolation, , insecurity due to informality, fatigue, anxiety, sleep affection, depression, frustration, etc.). Despite all these hazards, the interviewees interestingly stated that domestic work is better than no work. Looking at domestic work from the point of view of occupational hazards can help to specify potential labour market integration indicators, or at least illustrate the need for better market integration.

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Devetter, F.X. and Rousseau, S. (2009): “The impact of industrialization on paid domestic work: The case of France”, in *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 297-316.

The authors of this article have published several articles and books on domestic work in France, often making the case that domestic work needs to be recognized at the national level as a phenomenon that accompanies social, political and cultural changes in the way household and care work are regulated in France. The article analyses the impact increased regulation of the sector has had on the quality of employment in domestic service, and concludes that wages, working time, professional development and “ethnic preferences” of employers can be improved through professionalization (even privatization) of the sector. However, the authors warn that inequalities and status differences between worker and employer can be even more easily concealed behind the pretext of professionalized and formalized employment relationships and agencies.

European Network of Migrant Women and European Women’s Lobby (2012): “*Equal rights. Equal voices*”. *Migrant women’s integration in the labour market in six European Cities: A comparative approach* (Brussels).

The European Women’s Lobby has members all over Europe, and lobbies for the equality of men and women in all areas of life in Europe. This report focuses on the labour market integration of migrant women in Europe in general and on national policies and best practices in Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland and Spain. They point out that policy recommendations aimed at migrant women in general strongly impact the domestic work sector, as migrant women tend to be over-represented in this sector. The report provides some useful examples of labour market integration policies and practices at national and local levels.

Flückiger, Y. and Ferro Luzzi, G. (2009): *Domestic work in Switzerland: Calculation of the prevailing wages in the domestic services sector in Switzerland in consideration of the establishment of a standard contract* (Geneva, University of Geneva).

This report provides a demographic description and economic analysis of living and working conditions of domestic workers in Switzerland. The report is based on national statistics, but acknowledges the large magnitude of informality which could lead to underestimates of wage differences or other findings.

Gordolan, L. and Lalani, M. (2009): *Care and immigration: Migrant care workers in private households* (London, Kalayaan).

This report presents research done by Kalayaan on 50 migrant domestic care workers on living and working conditions, negotiating the employment and social relationship with employer, and the impact of race and racism on employment. Finally, it outlines what strategies are helpful in promoting the inclusion and providing greater support for migrant domestic care workers.

In this report, there is an overlap between migrant domestic workers and migrant care workers, as many migrant care workers are in fact migrant domestic workers, who entered the United Kingdom with a domestic worker visa. Paid care for the elderly is a growing phenomenon across the European Union, and the United Kingdom is no exception. The reasons for this are complex, and the consequences of increasing (especially elder) care work for migrant domestic workers are still under-researched. The report concludes with recommendations (on regulation, citizenship, training, health and safety laws, and social inclusion, etc.) for a community-based strategy targeted at carer groups, support services and policy-makers.

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Kilkey, M. (2010): “Domestic-sector work in the UK: Locating men in the configuration of gendered care and migration regimes”, in *Social Policy and Society*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 443-454.

This study is based on 24 interviews of households and 29 interviews with domestic workers, and examines the role of men in domestic work, which includes both employers and workers. The author argues that selective migration policies have a similar effect in inflating the demand for migrant men as “handymen”, as it does for migrant women. Furthermore, the author contends that men’s presence in domestic work requires a re-examination of the role of reproductive work in British society.

See also:

- Scrinzi, F. (2010): “Masculinities and the international division of care: Migrant male domestic workers in Italy and France”, in *Men and Masculinities*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 44-64.

León, M. (2010): “Migration and care work in Spain: The domestic sector revisited”, in *Social Policy and Society*, Vol. 9, No. 3.

Based on national statistics, this article explores the increasing significance of domestic workers in Spain, a country that has the highest figures of registered household employees in the EU, of which many are female migrant workers. The paper focuses on how the domestic sector has grown along with mass migration flows. Although the domestic sector in Spain is more regulated than in many other countries, greater efforts to formalize and improve the labour and employment rights of household employees are needed to counterbalance occupational segregation and social inequality.

See also:

- Sevilla-Sanz, A., Gimenez-Nadal, J.I. and Fernandez, C. (2010): “Gender roles and the division of unpaid work in Spanish households”, in *Feminist Economics*, Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 137-184.

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) (2004): *Private Homes – A Public Concern. The Experience of Twenty Migrant Women Employed in the Private Home in Ireland* (Dublin).

The Migrant Rights Centre Ireland is a large NGO that has a national mandate to provide community and national services and regulation recommendations to various kinds of migrants. This report, based on 24 interviews with migrant women working in private homes, examines a broad range of working and living (social) conditions of domestic workers within the Irish context. Its recommendations are in line with those on a broader EU level, such as those provided by the European Agency for Fundamental Rights report on undocumented migrants in domestic work.

OR.C.A. (2010): *Huishoudpersoneel: door een andere bril bekeken* (Brussels).

OR.C.A., the organization for clandestine labour migrants in Belgium, has produced this report to illustrate the situation of domestic work in Belgium. Though there is still much informality in the domestic work sector in Belgium, the report identifies that among certain types of employers, there is a desire to work towards a more coherent formal employment scheme. The report closes with recommendations that explore alternatives to the existing Belgian system of “cheques service”, a voucher system used to subsidize occasional domestic work.

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Walsh, K. and O'Shea, E. (2009): *The Role of Migrant Care Workers in Ageing Societies: Context and Experiences in Ireland* (Galway, Irish Centre for Social Gerontology).

This report, produced for COMPAS, studied 34 migrant care workers in Ireland and a postal survey among 570 employers. According to this survey, migrant care workers made up almost a third of all care workers. The primary reason for migrant carers entering elderly adult care is linked to employment opportunities and vacancies, although for some individuals the decision to remain in the sector was linked to a preference for performing care work. Almost 75 per cent of participants interviewed intended to stay in the elderly adult care sector. Informal networks featured strongly as pathways to employment for migrant carers. Although not characteristic of the experiences of all migrant carers, discrimination was a significant issue for some carers, and for some, it dissipated over time. Policy recommendations focused on increasing awareness of migrant needs, increasing care work training, and increasing attention to the overlap between rights of elders and migrants.

Walsum, S. Van (2011): "Regulating migrant domestic work in the Netherlands: Opportunities and pitfalls", in *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law Revue*, Vol. 23, No. 1.

The author provides an overview of existing (but scarce) research on (migrant) domestic work in the Netherlands, reflecting a lack of regulation in the sector, and a predominance of irregular migrants employed as informal domestic workers. While domestic workers are slowly becoming more organized and demanding improved working conditions in the Netherlands, the author stresses that there is a need for policy-makers to understand domestic work within a broader, more global context of care migration, labour protection and social benefits.

## **Demand for (migrant) domestic work**

Anderson, B. (2011): "A very private business: Exploring the demand for migrant domestic workers", in *European Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 247-264.

Based on two qualitative surveys distributed to employers and *au pair* host families in the United Kingdom, this article discusses structural (policy) and cultural (employer preferences, ethnic discrimination) factors that influence the demand for domestic work in the United Kingdom. The author compares the preferences for *au pairs* with the preferences for domestic workers, and shows how *au pairs* are often seen by employers as a prototypical *live-in* domestic worker, where conflating an employment relationship with a personal one is easy and common. She concludes that the demand for migrant domestic labour is racialized and the relationship between employers and domestic workers is highly complex. For example, employers imagine their relationship to their domestic worker as a personal, mutually beneficial one, in order to justify hiring a migrant to do an unrewarding job.

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Coleman, D. (2009): “The demographic effects of international migration in Europe”, in *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 452-476.

Using data from OECD and Eurostat, Coleman analyses demographic changes in Europe with regard to international migration and makes projections. He finds that migration trends do differ greatly between countries, but in general show that projected population growth (or change) is almost entirely due to immigration, directly or indirectly. However, he also stresses the deficiencies of existing migration data and the volatility of migration trends. As a demographic indicator, migration is very unpredictable, due to constant changes in policy or other short-term trends. Though the article does not discuss domestic work explicitly, it does illustrate the importance of international migration to demographic projections, and consequently to employment trends.

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## **Annex 2. International labour standards relevant to the protection of migrant workers**

### **Fundamental rights**

#### ***Abolition of forced labour***

Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)

Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)

#### ***Elimination of child labour***

Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)

Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)

#### ***Trade union rights***

Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87)

Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)

#### ***Equality and non-discrimination in employment and occupation***

Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)

Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)

#### **Selected Conventions and Recommendations of general application**

Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81)

Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95)

Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122)

Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)

Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183)

Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184)

#### **Selected Conventions and Recommendations with specific provisions on migrant workers**

Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation) Convention, 1925 (No. 19)

Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88)

Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)

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Protection of Migrant Workers (Underdeveloped Countries) Recommendation, 1955 (No. 100)

Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118)

Employment Injuries Benefit Convention, 1964 (No. 121)

Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982 (No. 157)

Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181)

HIV and AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200)

Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)

Domestic Workers Recommendation, 2011 (No. 201)

### **Labour migration and protection of migrant workers**

Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)

Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)

Migration for Employment Recommendation (Revised), 1949 (No. 86)

Migrant Workers Recommendation, 1975 (No. 151)