



Voices from the Field | IG24 — Austria

We are an organisation of self-organised migrant care workers in Austria and their supporters. At IG24, we provide counselling on legal and social matters connected with live-in care work, raise awareness about the precarious labour and social situation of migrant care workers, and work continuously to shape both public opinion and the care system itself — a system that currently enables grave breaches of labour law and human dignity.

We joined LeTs-Care because the project focuses on sustainable practices in long-term care, searching for promising models across Europe. Collecting and presenting alternatives to live-in care with a domestic care worker — and translating these into the Austrian context — would be a meaningful step towards a less exploitative system of care work. That is the change we are working towards.

We operate as an informal migrant care workers' union. Our vantage point is that of the live-in care worker: with everything it costs them, and everything that makes them do the job anyway. We try to empower care workers themselves to politicise, engage and organise — to make use of their own voice, which our organisation's supporters work to amplify. Our goal is to take live-in care work out of precariousness: to make it safe socially, financially and health-wise.

Our contribution to the research draws on work we have already done — our own research on the situation of care workers in Austria, on the quality of care and the work environment, and on promising practices in legal and social institutions that enable high standards of long-term care while also providing decent wages and safe working conditions. We have shared this with other project partners and participated in the project's workshops, and we remain ready to contribute further in any way we can.

What we hope to take away is recognition that the perspective of workers belongs in this research alongside the perspective of patients and families — not in opposition to them, but as an equally important group of people existing within the same system. We also hope to gain insight into promising practices across the EU, and to find inspiration for our own efforts to push for a fairer, more sustainable care system in Austria.

"Between the first and second stakeholder workshops, I noticed a shift — in tone, in how people were thinking about the future of long-term care. I realised it came from greater representation from the healthcare field. Someone who has experienced care work on their own body and soul sees ageing, illness and care differently — and feels a greater urgency to change the system."

— Andrea Gredecká, activist and supporter, IG24