



What is the social innovation?

The Work Package 3 (WP3) of the INNOVAGE project aimed to develop, test and implement the **InformCare** web platform, which includes a package of **internet-based support services for informal carers** aiming at increasing accessibility to relevant **information** on caring and get both peer and professional **on-line support**. Informal carers can indeed benefit from this social innovation, which addresses their information, self-awareness and support needs, and can have a positive impact on their quality of life during the life course.

The platform is already available in **32 versions** for **27 member states** of the European Union (EU-27), in **23 languages**: this result guarantees carers all over Europe to access to a minimum set of information (in the EU-27) and support tools (in selected countries) in their native language through the **Eurocarers website** (www.eurocarers.org/informcare).

InformCare was developed by the Italian National Institute of Health and Science on Ageing (INRCA) and Eurocarers.

Who will benefit from this innovation?

Informal carers of older people in need constitute the main target group of InformCare. Through the on-line services, they can get useful information (in the EU-27), as well as advice, counselling, emotional, social and professional support (in selected member states).

Furthermore, two secondary target groups are addressed by the platform, i.e. **employers** of working carers and **care professionals** dealing with informal carers, by means of relevant national contents developed and implemented in a selection of EU-27 countries, in order to promote a more adequate recognition of informal care among these target groups.

How has the social innovation been tested?

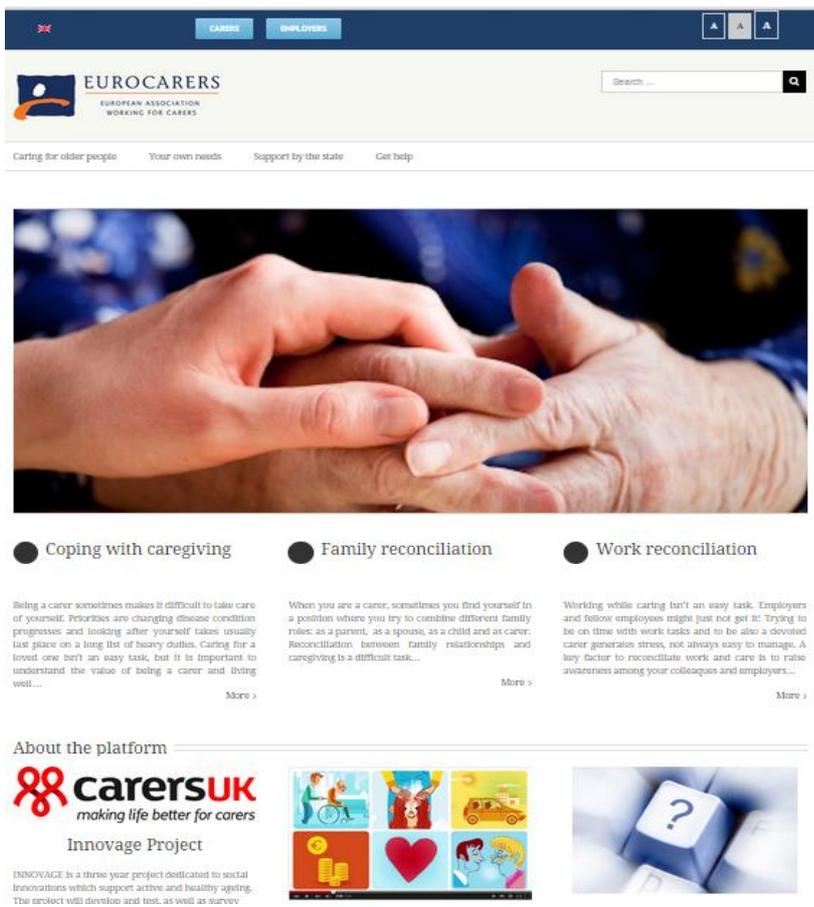
A **pilot test** was conducted in Italy, Germany and Sweden with **118 informal carers** overall. During this one group pretest-posttest study, users tested the InformCare platform (including on-line information and support) for around 3 months. Results demonstrated the usefulness, appropriateness and effectiveness of this web platform in different contexts. Feedback collected from users gave the possibility to further refine the platform for the **implementation process** in the EU-27.

How were end users involved?

Overall, the development and testing of InformCare involved **almost 200 among end-users and experts**, and **32 stakeholders** (user organisations, research centres or experts), during its activity. The design, development and implementation process was based on a **continuous consultation** with users, experts and stakeholders in the field, assuring indeed the final outputs would be helpful for informal carers (primary target group), care professionals and employers (secondary target groups).

What were the findings?

Generally speaking, the InformCare was well **accepted** by users, who reported benefits from the exchange with other carers and professional staff – psychologists or social workers – made possible by interactive services offered. Users felt **empowered** because they became able to become more self-aware on their own situation, they could receive helpful advice from peers and moderators, and they could share own experiences and feelings with other people in similar situations. Indeed, quality of life of informal carers is positively influenced by this social innovation, which could indirectly contribute to better health status and an extension of their healthy life expectancy. Some **issues** to be taken into account for the implementation emerged as well, including: the low level of digital skills of many informal carers; need for stimulation strategies for improving the active usage of web services; need for making carers more self-aware, especially in contexts where they have low or no social and cultural recognition.



The screenshot shows the Eurocarers website interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs for 'CARERS' and 'EMPLOYERS'. Below that is the Eurocarers logo and a search bar. The main content area features a large photo of two hands clasped together. Below the photo are three circular buttons: 'Coping with caregiving', 'Family reconciliation', and 'Work reconciliation'. Each button has a corresponding text block with a 'More >' link. The 'Coping with caregiving' text discusses the difficulty of taking care of oneself while caring for others. The 'Family reconciliation' text discusses the challenges of balancing family roles. The 'Work reconciliation' text discusses the stress of balancing work and care. Below this is a section for 'About the platform' featuring the CarersUK logo and the 'InnovAge Project' description. The CarersUK logo includes the tagline 'making life better for carers'. The InnovAge Project description states it is a three-year project dedicated to social innovations for active and healthy ageing.

What is required to implement the social innovation?

The InformCare social innovation was already implemented in the EU-27 during project lifetime: it is now **publicly available** (www.eurocarers.org/informcare) with over **2,500 web pages** for carers and 300 for care professionals and employers. For achieving this ambitious goal, there was need to establish a wide network of stakeholders active at national level in the field of support and advocacy of informal carers under the umbrella of Eurocarers coordination. Eurocarers took over the responsibility of the platform, involving member organisations and other stakeholders in the development of national contents for the platform, the final implementation and related dissemination at national level. Further steps for implementation includes a wide discussion within the established network for agreeing on a **sustainability plan** for InformCare, in order to assure it continues supporting carers in Europe well beyond INNOVAGE project lifetime.

Where can I learn more?

Please visit the InformCare platform: www.eurocarers.org/informcare

For more information:

Areti Efthymiou, Eurocarers

areti@eurocarers.org

Francesco Barbabella, INRCA

f.barbabella@inrca.it