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## **Europe needs 750,000 new care places by 2020 Private care companies are prepared to make investments**

**The political and economic conditions for care institutions will develop increasingly at a European level. The European umbrella organisation, the *European Confederation of Care Home Organisations*, ECHO will play a central role in these developments. The association of private care organisations with its headquarters in Brussels was founded in 1989 and represents around one million people in care in private care institutions and institutions for the disabled. The member institutions from 13 EU member states employ over 650,000 staff and are responsible for the training of more than 50,000 people. To date they have invested more than €40 billion private capital into care facilities. And even more investment is planned.**

“Care in Europe”, according ECHO President Bernd Meurer at this year’s New Year’s Reception, “is an enormous economic challenge but at the same time a chance for private businesses. Due to the demographic development in Europe no other sector will grow as much in the next few years as the health sector.” Bernd Meurer emphasised that “dealing with sick and needy elderly people is not only an economic question but also a question of ethics and morality for which society has to find an answer”.

“It is a fact that in Germany alone an additional 200,000 new places in care homes will be needed by 2020. This requires investment of about €15 billion creating more than 100,000 new jobs”, said ECHO President Meurer. “At a European level we expect 750,000 new places in care homes and the creation of more than 500,000 secure workplaces. This means that the health sector will experience enormous growth. ECHO together with its organisations and their numerous member institutions will contribute significantly to developing solutions for the tasks the European health sector will face”, continued the ECHO President.

ECHO, representing businesses in the economy and working together with politicians, researchers and teachers, society and the media, aims to face up to the challenges and opportunities arising in Europe. As part of yesterday’s event the Maltese Minister Dr Francis Agius presented a new degree course, the ‘Bachelor of Art in Elderly Care Management’ at the *Link-University of Malta* and the *University of Rome* which will in future educate managers in the care sector.

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