

*A stream of cooperation.*

# A FINAL WORD FROM THE D-CARE LABS TEAM

Dear friends and partners of the D-Care Labs, welcome to the last edition of our newsletter!

We are happy to take a quick look at our rather busy year in the last edition of the D-Care Labs newsletter.

The year 2022 has been another busy one for our partnership. Another year of learning, work, experience sharing and practice has culminated in tangible results all over the Danube region!

The end of the year 2022 means the finalisation of our project activities, with some of the activities of the labs successfully continuing to make an impact in their respective countries and others culminating in results that can be found on the official **D-Care Labs website**, so make sure to check them out.

We wish you all the best in the new year 2023, and have a good and informative read of the newsletter (and do not hesitate to share the newsletter further)!

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# KEY FACTS ABOUT THE D-CARE LABS

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

D-Care Labs project aimed at establishing specialised macro-regional D-Care Lab innovation structures to enable social service providers, product developers and social start-ups to design and implement better and innovative home care services and products for elderly persons, people with disabilities and children with special needs.

The story of the D-Care Labs goes all the way to 2020, when the partnership of 26 organisations from 10 countries started on their mission of creating innovative home care solutions. The partnership began working together and, in 2.5 years, successfully made an impact and a contribution to shaping a social Europe from the bottom up.



## ACHIEVEMENTS



**Establishment of and pilot test of 9 regional D-Care Labs**



**57 new home care innovations in the pilot phase**



**250 trained social entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs in the test phase**



**Sustainability of D-Care Labs after project end (incl. ecosystem of social investment, regional partnerships)**



**Established an interregional community of lab practitioners**

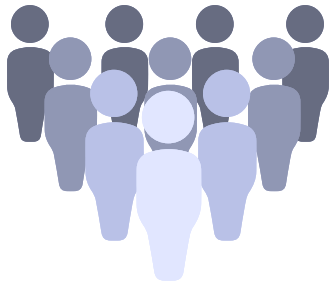


**Policy development through analyses of needs for changes, interregional learnings and policy dialogues**

# ABOUT THE PROJECT - RESULTS

More than 230 participants from 9 countries joined our nine regional D-Care Labs and produced **57 new social innovations!**

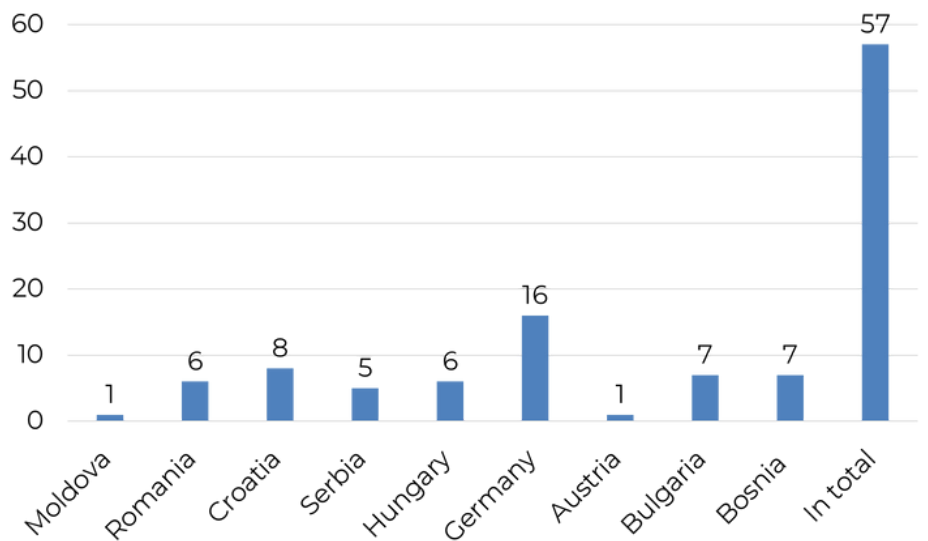
We engaged more than 100 external experts, and identified more than 190 social investors



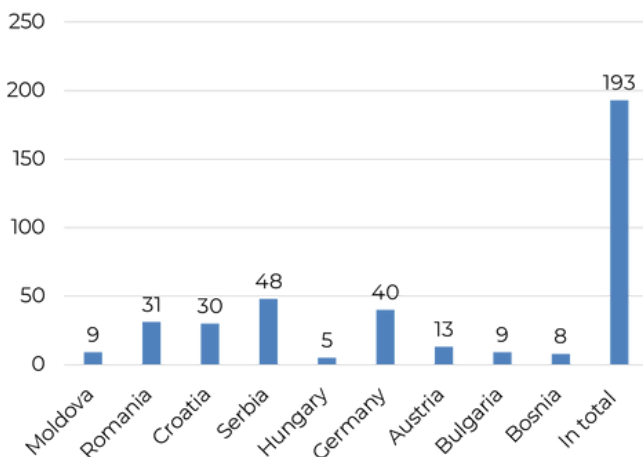
Total number of lab participants:  
**238\***

\*9 additional participants joined the new lab cycle occurring in Croatia.

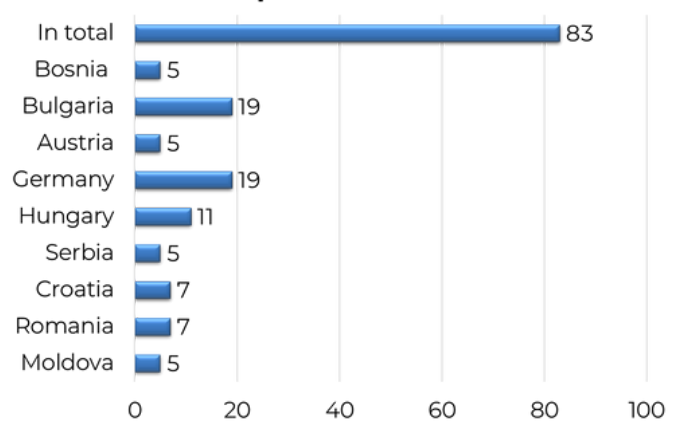
**Number of home care innovations**



**Number of social investors identified**



**Number of additional external experts involved**

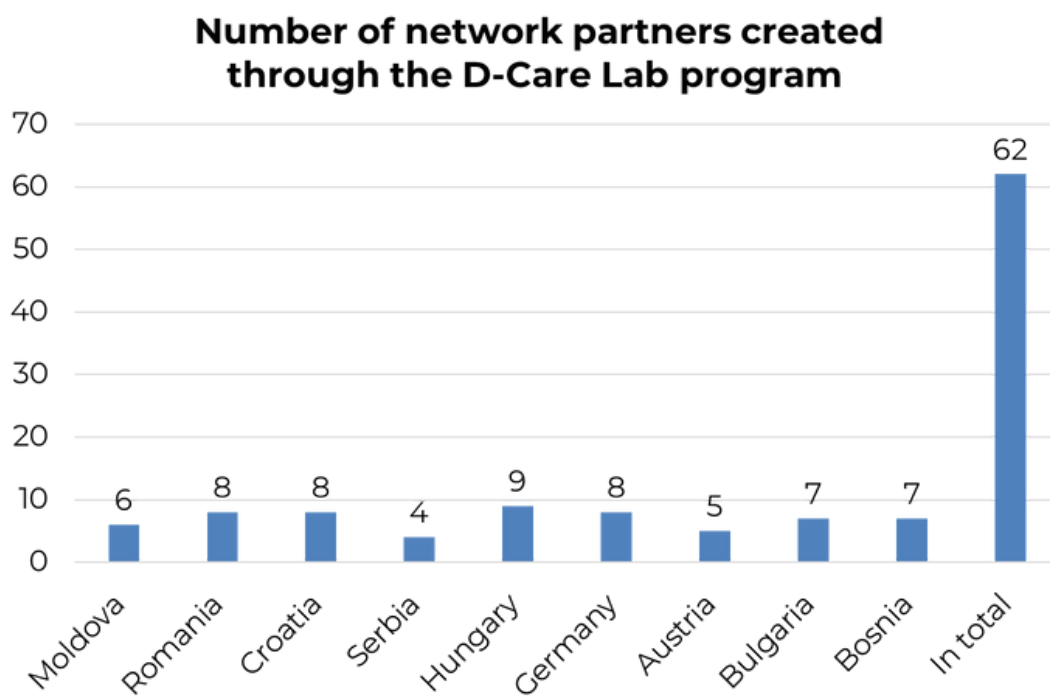


# ABOUT THE PROJECT - RESULTS

During the 2.5 years, we have worked on establishing and managed to establish a wide variety of regional partnerships - more than 60 in total.

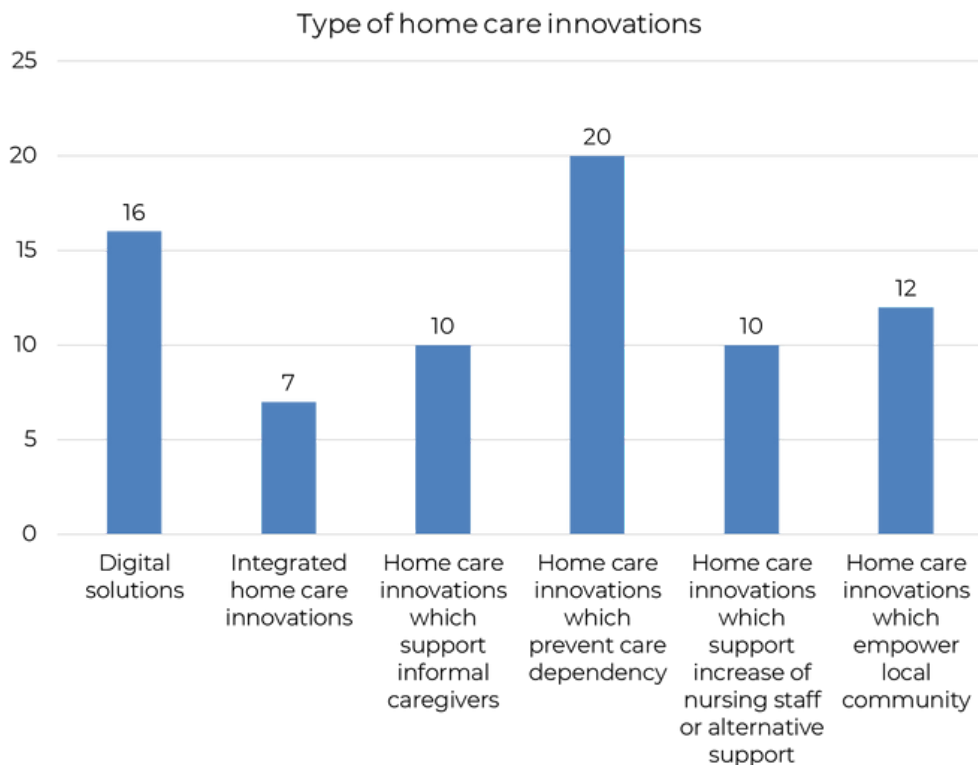
The regional partners as a part of our networks are:

- Scientific partners like universities
- Local NGOs
- Ministries and state agencies
- Local Authorities
- Social Service Providers
- Foundations
- For-profit companies
- Banks, financial institutions
- Umbrella organisations



# ABOUT THE PROJECT - RESULTS

The home care innovations produced in the scope of the project fall under 6 different types - the majority of solutions works on the prevention of care dependency (20 solutions).



## We are also thrilled to present some of the success stories

In the case of **Croatia**, one innovation is funded by ESF+ and already operating on the market (visually-impaired entrepreneurs lead it). Another innovation is currently getting funds through a crowdfunding campaign.

In **Bulgaria**, FSSB signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Ruse - the Bulgarian lab participants are and will be certified by the University of Ruse for social business modelling competencies. The team also secured the financial sustainability of the lab for the following year.

In **Romania**, the innovative service 'Social laundry' stemmed from the situation of home care beneficiaries in rural areas who do not have running water and cannot use a washing machine to sanitise clothing. For the purchase of the equipment, they obtained a grant of 29.000 EUR.

In the case of Germany, the social innovation lab already acquired 350,000 EUR for the regional lab and an additional 700,000 EUR for innovations.

**YOU CAN FIND MORE PUBLICATIONS ABOUT OUR RESULTS [HERE](#).**

# D-CARE LABS HAPPENINGS

## PROJECT MEETING IN BULGARIA

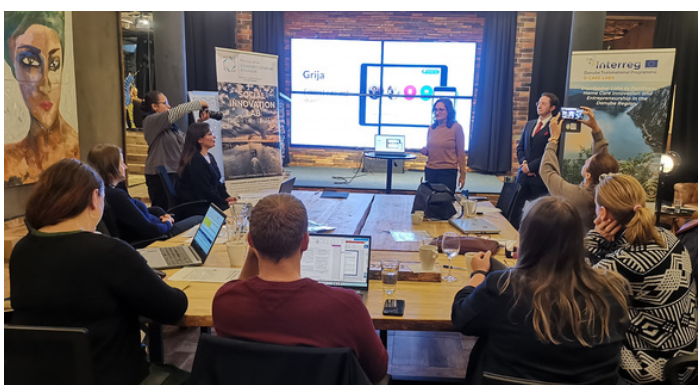
Continuing the project activities, the D-CareLabs partnership went on the road again! This time the partnership joined forces in Sofia, Bulgaria, where the week of activities was dedicated to the reflection and discussion of the final outputs of the project.

The week's discussions also turned to future perspectives and the importance of the sustainability of the regional D-Care Labs. Colleagues (and our guests this week) from the Federation of social NGOs in Bulgaria - FSSB presented their inputs on the social impact networks and presented a live pitch on an app for care.



The first day of the project meeting began with a study visit of the foundation Concordia, a part of a network of organisations for public benefit in 8 countries. Concordia is working towards better social inclusion of young people and support of marginalised groups.

While at their headquarters, we visited the candle-making and pottery ateliers, where Concordia Bulgaria provides the first job experience for many youngsters.



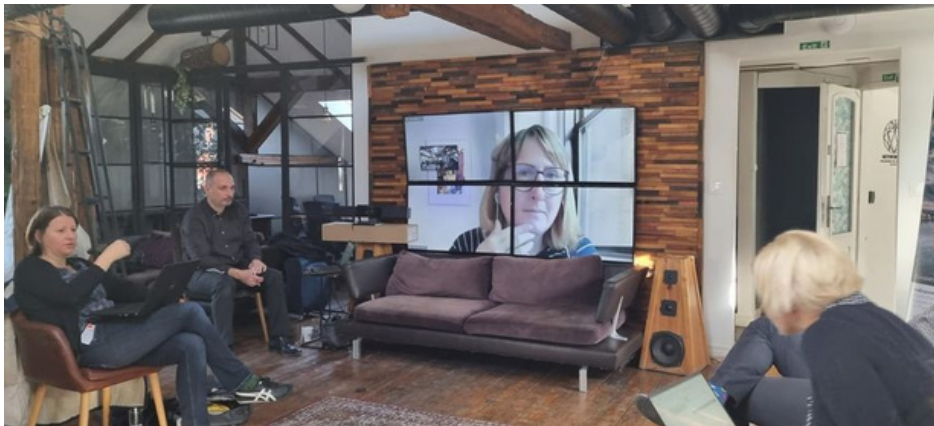
The day continued at the Networking coworking Sofia, where we discussed growth, acceleration, peer-to-peer exchange, scaling, system innovation and more. We also held a workshop on the future of the project and the processes that will take place in the continuation of the work.

The day concluded with an excellent live pitch of a new app for caregivers and care beneficiaries called Grija, developed by Bulbera Ltd, with whom the FSSB signed a memorandum of understanding.

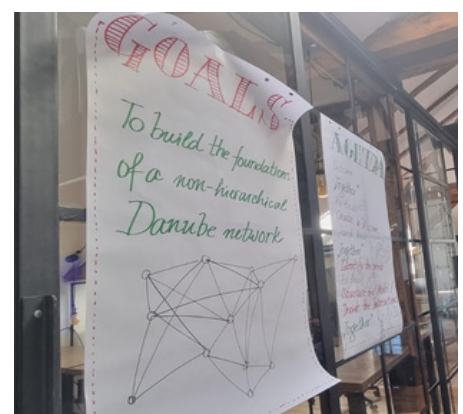
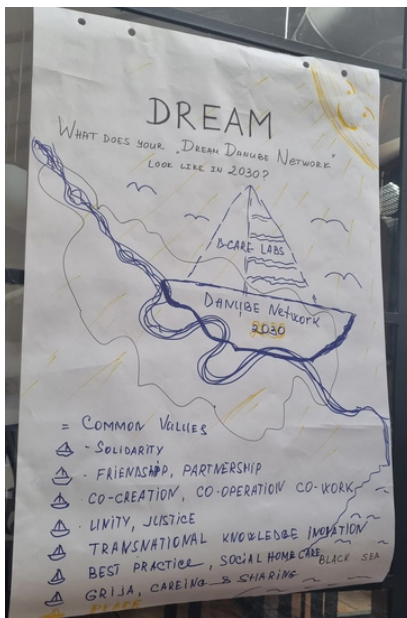
# D-CARE LABS HAPPENINGS

## PROJECT MEETING IN BULGARIA

The second and last day of the D-Care Labs meeting in Bulgaria began with a session on the financial aspects of the project. It continued with a session that kick-started the team's brainstorming session - the discussion focused on the vision for the future of the Danube with partners teaming up to share their ideas and hopes for the future of the network & future collaboration for a more innovative Danube.



The day continued with discussions on the support system for the implementation of new home care services & products and more!



# D-CARE LABS HAPPENINGS

## STUDY VISIT IN SARAJEVO, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

With the aim to continue the experience sharing, the D-Care Labs teams from Romania, Moldova, Hungary, Bulgaria and Croatia participated in a study visit to Mozaik, the Startup studio, and Centar za zdravo starenje Novo Sarajevo in the first week of December.

During the study visit, Mozaik presented its work in the field of social entrepreneurship in the Western Balkans, its work with youth and its innovative approaches to supporting of entrepreneurship and the development of business models.



In the second part, the team visited the "Centre for Healthy Aging", a project started 10 years ago that offers a day program to the elderly in the community with social activities, workshops, sports activities, trips and intergenerational activities.



The experience exchange continued in mid-December with a study visit to Budapest to our Hungarian partner Települési Önkormányzatok Országos Szövetsége - TÖÖSZ.



# D-CARE LABS HAPPENINGS

## STUDY VISIT IN BUDAPEST, HUNGARY



Following the valuable study visit in Sarajevo, the D-Care Labs Hungarian partner TÖOSZ organized international professional days from 13 to 15 December, focusing on highlighting the experiences and results of the D-Care Labs project to the public. Taking part in the activities were also partners from Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Bulgaria.

The first day of the study visit began with a lecture by Dr Martin Ivanov (of the D-Care Labs team from FSSB), who gave a lecture on Bulgarian home care innovations at the TÖOSZ Municipal Innovation and Coordination Center.

The second day of the visit was dedicated to showcasing the TÖOSZ social innovation lab, D-Care Lab Budapest and its activities. Bulgarian, Bosnian, Croatian, Moldavian and Romanian project partners, as well as other interested stakeholders, were able to get a closer look at D-Care Lab Budapest. Deputy mayor Gergely Csiga greeted the participants on behalf of the XIII. district municipality and presented the district's community budget, while undersecretary Magdolna Karácsonyi presented the district's elderly and social innovations and good practices. General Secretary of TÖOSZ, Dr Ferenc Gyergyák, presented the results of the D-Care Lab Budapest. The participants were also addressed by Dr Veronika Andráczi-Tóth (Ministry of the Interior), who held a lecture on the present and future of care policy in Hungary.

The last day of the study visit was dedicated to field visits and presentations of good practices. Dr Ferenc Gyergyák presented TÖOSZ and its services, and Dr Bíróné Csilla Dienes, mayor of Szamossály, presented the good practice of the domestic elderly care facility and the Szamossály Municipality's institution for dementia patients. In the second part of the day, Dr Róbert Bolyán, director responsible for social investments at Unicredit Hungary, spoke about the financing options for social innovations, while Dr Anikó Soltész, D-Care Lab Budapest expert, spoke about the present and future of the lab.

## A WORD FROM OUR PARTNERS

As we bring the D-Care Labs project chapter to a close, we gathered some thoughts about the project from our partners.

*"The EU project "D-Care Labs" ends in December 2022, but we continue to implement our vision of promoting and accompanying social innovations in homecare and community-based services in the Danube region. In the last 2.5 years, we built up interregional innovation structures. About 250 social innovators developed 47 homecare innovations to enable good living conditions for care-dependent persons in the Danube Region. Thus we made an important contribution to shaping a social Europe from below. Our 26 partners from 10 European countries work and collaborate with passion and high professionalism."*

**Dr Katja Vonhoff, project lead from D-Care Labs leading partner Diakonie Baden**



*"We are proud of being a member of the D-Care Labs family that created a strong partnership and bond among individuals, civil society, public and private actors while involving us all in a dynamic ecosystem that collaborates on creating services, products, opportunities, and events.*

*It is a great feeling of fulfilment when we know that we have friends and partners in ten European countries with the same goal of promoting social innovation in the area of home care and beyond."*

**Sejdefa Bašić from the D-Care Labs project team from Mozaik (Bosnia and Herzegovina)**



*"The thing we enjoyed the most about this project is that it enabled us to improve the work of many organizations and change many people's lives. We founded the Centre for Social Innovations. Some of the results are that we helped employ several blind people, started the campaign which aims to organize the first European gastro competition for people with disabilities and increased the quality of life for many elderly people. We also really enjoyed meeting colleagues from other regional countries - the exchange of knowledge that we all had is priceless."*

**Jelena Andjelić from the D-Care Labs project team at ACT Grupa (Croatia)**



## A WORD FROM OUR PARTNERS

*"Participating in the project was a challenge for us. During this period, we created a team that identified the gaps in the system. Later, each of us studied and submitted constructive proposals for the elaboration of the Country Report on the innovation of the home care service, the elaboration of the Transnational Strategy on the innovation of home care residence in the Danube region and also Mapping social investors."*

**D-Care Labs project team from Agapedia Moldova**



*"We are grateful for the learning experience for everyone involved and the opportunity to witness what is possible when people from different areas join together to solve problems creatively. We had a chance to see that through social innovation, a new solution to a problem in society can be designed that is more useful, sustainable, and equal".*

**D-Care Labs project team from Mreža organizacija za decu - MODS (Serbia)**



*"We're ending the transnational collaboration for innovation in the home care sector with a lot of new ideas and much more knowledge of the diverse contexts in Europe. We'd like to use the image of a pinball game for an illustration of our collaboration: When the ball is shot, a lot of things happen, get moving, and are put into action. One central concept that we'll take away is the importance of going on the meta-level and figuring out how to apply innovation methods in different circumstances and health care systems."*

**D-Care Labs project team from Grünhof (Germany)**

*"We've been truly blessed to meet a team of such kind-hearted people, all working towards the same goal - to make an impact and give a better future to older people and their families in the Danube region. We've learned a lot about home care and solutions social innovation can bring to bridge the divide and address the needs of the care sector."*

**D-Care Labs project team from the Centre for European Perspective (Slovenia)**

## A WORD FROM OUR PARTNERS

"I am honoured to be part of such an innovative project, and together with the team to be able to plant the seeds of innovation in home care in Romania. I strongly believe that the secret of innovation is freedom. The freedom to imagine, to experiment, to fail, to connect and to learn. And in the project offered that."

**Mariana Țițărean from the D-Care Labs project team of the Federation of Social NGOs in Transylvania - FONT (Romania)**



"In short: HOME-CARE REVISED. Both for the FSSB crew and our country, on the whole, the past two years have been filled with a fair amount of effort and challenges. Working together with our international partners and domestic participants in the context of a very unstable political situation, COVID-19, the digital conditions, and now in an increasingly complicated situation worldwide, we realized that trusting and supporting each other, being aware that we stand on the same side, and willingness to bear responsibility is essential for any development, innovation, and wellbeing on any level —individual, organizational, system, or international.

We have no idea what the future holds, but we are confident in our ability to face it together because we are united by the same core values — compassion, freedom, and solidarity — and we make it a point to pray for peace.

This is the foundation for any kind of positive change we in the Federation of Social NGOs in Bulgaria seek for our society and the whole Danube region, which we call HOME, and which we try to take CARE of side by side with our fellow partners from our DANUBE network, which we call our international FAMILY."

**D-Care Labs project team from the Federation of Social NGOs in Bulgaria**



"We are delighted to continue our work in developing social innovation ecosystem in Croatia and the region. The transfer of knowledge and cooperation of science, policy and practice was a "fire starter" of sustainable changes in addressing the social needs of the most vulnerable. We were happy to be part of the D-Care Labs community and are inspired by the work that we undertook together to continue to work on making positive social changes happen in the Danube region."

**D-Care Labs team from the Faculty of Law of the University of Zagreb (Croatia)**

We are at the end of the year and at the end of our last newsletter. In the name of the consortium of the D-Care Labs project, we want to thank you for following our activities.

We wish you a prosperous, healthy and joyful 2023!



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