

## **Circular Migration of *Live-ins* in Germany – Reinforcing the Segmentation of the Labor Market?**

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### ***Abstract***

*In past years, circular migration has been used as a theoretical idea in political discussions, and also on the standard of the European Union. Within these discussions, the types of circular mobility already in existence within the EU are often ignored. This article explores the circularity of so-called live-ins in Germany: those who stay with the people they take care of and are usually migrant workers. The focus is on how the circularity is organized and what implications it has for the migrants. What are the practical consequences of the legal framework for live-ins? How does this subsector relate to the elderly care sector in Germany?*

*This article is built on the results of a two-year study with more than 35 interviews conducted in the elderly care sector showing that the employment of live-ins takes place in a semi-legal sphere, which marginalizes the employees and limits their labor rights. The results further suggest that the circularity fosters a segmentation of the labor market because the limited time of the stays prevents*

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*live-ins from becoming accustomed and integrating into local hierarchies, which constitutes a necessary step toward claiming their full rights. The study shows how this type of employment is built on circularity with great implications for the actual living and working situations. On the political level, however, the term circular migration is not used in this case, which is why it is important to engage in a discussion on consequences of live-in arrangements in the European Union, regulations favoring this type of employment and how labor rights can be assured.*

*On the other hand, the study has also indicated that while migration plays hardly any role in the elderly care sector, the whole subsector of live-ins would not exist without migration. The legal framework—together with societal changes and structures such as emancipation, demographic change and the elderly care sector itself with its inherent nancial shortage—lead to a gap that is covered by live-in arrangements.*

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