

[A summer we will remember](#)

Date

Wednesday, August 19, 2020 - 12:00

Due to the Corona pandemic it is a strange summer for many. For workers in health and care the challenge of dealing with COVID19 patients remains prevalent. Several affiliates report that [workers face exhaustion](#). The number of cases of infected and hospitalized workers is increasing again in several countries, including here in Belgium. And again care homes face a heavy burden. The infection of workers and residents shows many employers and governments are not really ready for a new wave.

EU budget and Recovery Fund

It was therefore disappointing that the European Council did not agree substantial funding for the EU4health programme as part of the EU budget. That programme would have helped assist countries whose health care systems are facing severe pressure in dealing with the pandemic. We will continue campaigning with ETUC and others to convince the European Parliament to restore the funding. Many MEPs have indicated their support. Positive is that the Member States have approved the recovery fund. Unemployment is rising fast and measures to assist people to keep their job and to create new jobs are urgently needed.

Beirut and Belarus

This summer will not only be marked by the pandemic. The awful explosion in Beirut will be etched in our memories. The damage is enormous. Members of PSI affiliates lost their lives. Please do not forget to donate to the solidarity fund PSI has established. The unions need our support. More information is available in this newsletter.

We will also not forget the workers of the Belarusian company MZKT shouting to Lukashenko that he should go - "УХОДЇ". To maintain in power he rigged the elections on Sunday 9 August. People did not accept this, came to the streets and his security forces brutally intervened. And that made many more people angry, leading first to women coming out in white with long human chains demanding an

end to the violence. It was a prelude to the largest demonstration in Belarusian history on 16 August. It started a wave of strikes supported by the independent confederation BKDP. Its members have faced repression and arrest. The European trade unions support the Belarusian people's demand to have free elections. The result of the struggle is not known yet. It does show that there is tremendous power in a people united.

Consultation on Fair Minimum Wages

Maybe less noticed but one of the largest consultations in the EU is taking place this summer. Unions representing 45 million workers are asked to approve or reject the response of the ETUC to the European Commission's 2nd phase consultation on fair minimum wages. Many unions are discussing their reply in union bodies and in their confederations. The deadline is tight. EPSU affiliates are to respond by 1 September. Please do not forget to send us your response so we can formulate the EPSU position.

And whatever you are doing or wherever you are going during the rest of the summer - Keep Healthy and Stay Safe.

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