EPSU’s demands for the German Presidency in area of health and social services



(15 September 2020) The German Council Presidency will play an important role in the development of European health and social services policy, especially in light of the Sars-COV-2 pandemic. EPSU has sent it’s demands to the German Presidency, which began on the 1st July .

We recognise that the primary responsibility for the organisation and delivery of health and social services lies with the Member States, but the EU plays a crucial role in complementing and coordinating national health services and promoting cooperation. This holds especially true with regards to the COVID-19 pandemic, where European cooperation is more important than ever.

A substantial EU4Health fund is the best way to strengthen this cooperation. EPSU welcomes the fund which will improve the resilience of the health sector and benefit the health workers who are so essential to our societies. At the same time, it is clear

that with cuts of over 80% compared to the European Commission’s proposal, as has been imposed by the European Council, the fund will not achieve this goal. EPSU therefore calls on the Council and the European Parliament to reverse the cuts to the funding.

Moreover, we want to draw attention to the existing structural deficits that led to the high infection rates and death toll in long-term care homes. Underfunding, understaffing, increasing profit orientation in the sector and poor occupational health and safety protocols contributed significantly to this tragedy that has effected the mainly female workforce, elderly and other residents. The lack of meaningful social partnership in many places, especially with private sector employers refusing to enter into collective agreements, has only worsened the situation.

Together with Ver.di, a German affiliate in the DGB, and other unions we will advocate for more funding for health and social services, better coordination of national strategies as well as strong and effective implementation of workers’ rights in the field of occupational safety and health.

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