

Applause and promises are not enough! Fund public health and care



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The European Council meets to discuss responses to the second wave of the pandemic Thursday, 29th October. The European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU), representing Europe's health and social service workers, calls on EU leaders to fund the EU4health programme budget with 9.4 billion as proposed by the European Parliament and the European Commission. The Council cut it back to 1.7 billion Euro. This is laughable given the challenge we face and shows a lack of solidarity.

Our public care systems are on the verge of collapse. As the second wave hits, Europe's health and care systems are under enormous strain once again. From all corners of the EU, EPSU is receiving reports of high infection rates of health and care workers. Workers are exhausted and many face a burn-out.

Jan Willem Goudriaan, EPSU General Secretary stated: *"We need concrete action from the Council to demonstrate that they truly understand what is going on in health and care workplaces across Europe. Adequate funding for the EU4health programme is an urgent first step. In the longer term, our governments need to address the lack of protection for workers' health and safety, as well as staff shortages."* He continued, *"care workers, who are mostly women, need a substantial pay increase to reflect the challenging but essential work they do. This requires more funding for public health and care systems to undo years of austerity. Only then can health and care workers deliver quality care for the sick, the elderly and for all of us."*

As a result of austerity and underfunding, our hospitals and care homes were woefully ill-prepared for the outbreak of the Covid-19. EPSU estimates that [over 200,000 health and care workers have been infected and several hundreds have died, including doctors, nurses, medical and support staff like cleaners.](#)

This week, nurses, doctors, healthcare assistants, elderly and home care workers and others on the frontline [are mobilising across Europe.](#) Their demands are to transform the health and social care sectors. In Brussels, EPSU has organised a symbolic action at Rond Point Schuman to underline the demands of health and care workers. This action is supported by International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the [European Network against privatisation of Health.](#)

Ends

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Where: Rond Point Schuman (metro Schuman) Symbolic action tomorrow at 12 o'clock for the press as the European Council meets to discuss the COVID response.

EPSU is the European Federation of Public Service Unions. It is the largest federation of the ETUC and comprises 8 million public service workers from over 260 trade unions; EPSU organises workers in the energy, water and waste sectors, health and social services and local, regional and central government, in all European countries including the EU's Eastern Neighborhood

. EPSU is the recognized regional organization of Public Services International (PSI).
For more information please go to: www.epsu.org

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