

## **EPSU demands action from EU Health Ministers to improve working conditions and safe staffing for care and health workers**



*(EPSU Press Release - Brussels, 6 December 2021)* On the occasion of the Council of Ministers for Health on Tuesday, 7 December 2021, EPSU demands that Ministers stand up for the right to health and care, remembering that the resilience of health and care systems means investment and funding. Ministers must stand up for workers in our hospitals, care homes and the overall health and care system - from cleaners to administrative workers, nurses, doctors and supporting staff.

Ministers say that we need a return to the Stability and Growth Pact rules. This means a return to coordinated austerity and the misery it causes.

**Jan Willem Goudriaan**, General Secretary, EPSU says, “The women and men that kept our health and care system and our public services running during this pandemic deserve better than a return to austerity. The right to care and the right to health for all - principles of the EU’s Pillar of Social Rights - require funding to deal with persistent staff shortages and high workloads. Redistribution of wealth must be a top priority for Member States to tackle rising inequalities and to fund our public services, social protection and climate change measures.”

Trade unions in health care [recently set out](#) the lessons learned from the pandemic and what is needed from governments and employers to improve the situation. A key point is that neoliberal policies of creating markets in health, privatisation of services and austerity to curb funding simply do not work.

**Dr Adam Rogalewski**, Policy Officer for Health and Social Services, EPSU adds: “Neoliberal policies weakened our health and social care systems and resulted in making them unprepared for the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic underlined that we urgently need adequately staffed needs-oriented services and adequately paid workers protected from OSH risks including psychosocial risks and stress. So many workers are exhausted and deal with stress and burnout. This is the only way to guarantee greater quality of care and, to that end, we must ensure that the EU will implement those principles.”

Read the position of EPSU’s Standing Committee on Health and Social Services on the lessons learnt from pandemic, available in [EN](#) / [FR](#) / [ES](#) / [DE](#) / [RU](#) / [SV](#), to learn more.

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*The European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) brings together trade unions from across Europe and represents over 8 million public service workers. It is the most representative European trade union organisation in the social services sector. EPSU works hard to deliver better working conditions, improved health and safety and enhanced rights for its members. By sitting down with employers at European level, we negotiate best practice agreements that improve the working lives of public service workers and ensure quality services for citizens.*

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