

Protests multiply across Europe - time for public service workers!

Date

Thursday, November 17, 2022 - 12:00

Protests are continuing across Europe as workers call on employers to provide decent pay rises and on governments to address the cost-of-living crisis. On 16 November, we joined a strike by workers at the CPAS public social service centres in Brussels. Social workers and support staff were on strike over the lack of resources and staff to ensure a decent level of service. High workloads mean that cases take a very long time to process, leading to increased aggressive behaviour against staff. This is another European phenomenon that we will discuss with employers in our European conference on third party violence on 25 November in Madrid.

Time for decent pay increases for public service workers

The CPAS is refusing to provide a decent pay rise to its employees despite the rising cost of living. The demands are very similar across Europe and we have been sending solidarity greetings to public service unions taking action. Last week there was a general strike in Belgium, actions by the CGT confederation across France and a national protest of workers in Bulgaria. On the 17th, nurses will start a series of strikes in Portugal while UK firefighters refused a measly pay offer and will be balloting for strike action, joining nurses, other health staff and civil servants in their demands for a pay increase that compensates for inflation and properly rewards their work. On 26 November Swiss health workers will take to the streets in Bern and Dutch workers will march in Amsterdam. Our support and solidarity to all.

European protest in health and care

Delegations of health and care workers will join an EPSU action on 9 December in Brussels. We will be demanding that health ministers put our concerns on their agenda. They do not understand the urgent need to tackle the lack of staff across Europe and the risk that health and care systems are on the verge of collapse. You are very welcome to join us. And please let us know of your actions.

And a success for Norwegian private childcare workers

Norwegian workers in private childcare facilities have shown that it pays to be in the union and to fight for better conditions. Their strike action, the largest in private childcare in Norway, began on 17 October and an EPSU delegation visited the picket line in Oslo. On 16 November, they reached an agreement that delivers better pensions. Thank you for your inspiring fight. Congratulations.

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