

EPSU stands with public sector unions taking action



(16 March 2023) Thousands of health workers across the Netherlands are taking industrial action today in their campaign to secure a 10% pay increase. And this week they are not alone as many other unions are involved in strikes and demonstrations in France, Germany, Greece, Portugal and the UK, as EPSU affiliates seek to improve their employment conditions or defend pension rights and public services.

The [FNV](#) and [NU'91](#) trade unions are organising the action – implementing a “Sunday service” – in the Netherlands where they are highlighting the need for a 10% pay rise in response to high inflation. The unions are also making a strong case for improved pay and conditions as a necessary step towards tackling the urgent staffing crisis across health and care. This is also the focus of NU'91's [“every Tuesday in black”](#) campaign.

Health workers in Germany were involved in warning strikes across the country on 14 and 15 March as the [ver.di](#) trade union builds support for its negotiations covering 2.5 million workers in federal and local government. The union is seeking a pay rise of 10.5% with a minimum increase of €500 a month.

Nurses in Portugal are involved in strike action in both private and public sectors. The [SEP](#) trade union has organised a one-day strike today (16 March) over pay, hours and other conditions in the private sector while it will be joining a larger strike across public services tomorrow with similar demands and involving local government union and EPSU affiliate, [STAL](#).

Meanwhile, in the UK some health service unions – including [UNISON](#), [Unite](#), the [GMB](#) and the [RCN](#) – have suspended their industrial action over pay in order to negotiate with the government. However, anger over low pay in the health service has spread to junior doctors, members of the [British Medical Association](#), who took part in an unprecedented three-day strike action this week.

In central government, the [PCS](#) union has been running a targeted campaign of industrial action to support its claim for higher pay and in defence of pensions and jobs. A nationwide action was organised on 1 March and yesterday (15 March) another national strike took place to coincide with the announcement of the government's budget.

In France, public service unions are shoulder to shoulder with their private sector counterparts as they continue to fight the government's proposed pension changes, including the increase in the pension age from 62 to 64. The latest and seventh day of protests took place on 11 March and further demonstrations and strikes are planned across different sectors. All EPSU affiliates are involved across the main confederations and trade union organisations – [CGT](#), [CFDT](#), [FO](#), [UNSA](#) and [CFE-CGC](#).

There is also public and private sector solidarity in Greece where the [ADEDY](#) and [GSEE](#) confederations have called a general strike for 16 March in response to the tragic train crash at Tempe in northern Greece on 28 February. Fifty-seven people died and hundreds were injured. The unions are calling for a full and thorough investigation and for a stop to the privatisation and commercialisation of public services.

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