Proposed cuts in EU healthcare funding for the next 7 years are hugely disappointing



Applause is not enough – the EU must increase its efforts to protect workers and people

EPSU supports European Parliament demands for improvements.

(Press Release, Brussels, 24 July 2020) The European Council adopted its multi-annual financial framework for the next 7 years as well as the COVID-19 Recovery Fund on 21 July. While the approval of the recovery fund is positive news for the EU and Europe’s workers, the plans to slash the EU4Health Programme budget are a great disappointment.

EPSU strongly regrets the decision by the EU Council to cut down funding for the EU4Health programme from €9.4 billion, as was proposed in May, to €1.67 billion. After months of applause for health workers, this decision creates a sense of disillusion.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to rage across Europe with severe consequences for everyone, especially health and care workers. After months on the frontline, an estimated 200 000 health and care workers have been infected and several hundreds have died. They are exhausted and are facing new outbreaks in several countries. EU4health should have been key in helping Member States cope with the consequences of COVID-19 on health systems at EU level, rather than country-by-country.

"The decision of EU leaders to save money on health at the expense of a common response and mutual preparedness is a dangerous move. It is a slap in the face to thousands of healthcare and other frontline workers that fought these last months to keep our citizens safe from the biggest sanitary threat of this century" stated Jan Willem Goudriaan, General Secretary of EPSU, the largest European trade union federation representing millions of healthcare and social services' workers in Europe.

The proposal of EU leaders to slash the EU's capacity for long term investments in the surveillance of health threats is a let down for EU citizens. The EU is not improving the resilience of health systems to ensure better health outcomes. As the pandemic has clearly shown, this would have been a win-win for all.

The proposed cuts impede the EU's promise to improve drug production in the EU via reform of the European Medicine Agency, and undermine the stockpiling of medical gear. It is highly doubtful that EU Member States can live up to their promise of "Never again" fighting for supplies from China and the rest of the world.

Jan Willem Goudriaan added – *We support the position of the European Parliament to defend the future of our healthcare and to live up to the promises made to health and care workers. We ask the MEPs to revise the proposed cuts to health and other programmes like the Just transition fund.*

The European Council did agree the Recovery Fund and the budget which includes a number of welcome aspects, such as making a Eurobond possible for the first time and the continued discussion on own resources. EPSU also supports the idea of the

Financial Transaction Tax.

- For the reaction of ETUC on the European Council deal https://www.etuc.org/en/pressrelease/eu-recovery-plan-good-news-60-million-risk-unemployment and on the position of the European Parliament
- For the position of the European Parliament
- The conclusions of the European Council (17-21 July) and the deal

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***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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