

Infections are sky-rocketing across Europe - it is time for action not austerity! Join us

Date

Wednesday, October 14, 2020 - 12:00

Every day ten of thousands of people across Europe are getting infected with the COVID-19 virus. The map of Europe is showing hot spots with orange and red zones and Belgium, Czechia, the Netherlands and regions in France, Spain and the UK going dark red. Intensive care beds are being filled and the death toll is rising. Health and social care workers – from cleaners to nurses and doctors – are already under pressure. Many are exhausted after months of catching up from the March-May period. With more infections, more staff are in quarantine or falling ill themselves. Medical students will be called upon to fill the gaps in Czechia. It means normal care and operations are being postponed again.

Instead of more funding for care and solidarity with the worst affected regions, EU governments have slashed the EU4Health Programme budget by more than 75%. This is the type of austerity we simply do not need. People realise that years of cost-cutting have left our health and care services vulnerable. The European Commission's Vice-President Dubravka Šuica recognized this in a debate with Members of the European Parliament (EP) on 8 October. She said that the mainly women workers in the care sector and especially in long-term care, are low-paid and have bad working conditions. They do not get the recognition they deserve and services are understaffed. While the majority in the EP and the Commission agree with us, Member States are blocking EU-level solidarity.

Applause is simply not enough, and so health and care workers want to send a strong, European message to governments, the EP and the Commission with an action week 25-30 October. We need to think beyond the pandemic, and fight for a better future for our health and care services. That means higher wages, ensuring safe staffing levels and a focus on the quality of the care our members deliver for the sick, the elderly and the dying. Public health and social protection systems have proven to be the back bone of our society in this crisis. These need strengthening. On the 29 October our actions will tie in with those of the ITUC's global call for investing in care. Please show your support for our health and care

workers and their unions. Please take a picture with the logo of the action and post it on your social media. Together we make the difference.

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