

EPSU leaders strongly support French public service workers fighting for a pay increase

(19 September 2017) *We are fully behind the demands and actions, including strikes of the French public service unions for better pay and conditions and high quality public services* stated the leadership of EPSU, Europe's largest union federation. Across Europe workers need a pay increase as many have lost thousands of Euros in purchasing power as governments froze salaries of nurses and other medical staff, of care workers, firefighters, police, teachers, municipal and central government workers and so many more groups during many years. High quality public services for Europe's people need highly trained and resourced staff with decent pay and conditions. We express our solidarity with your struggles and wish all much success.

All French public service unions including the EPSU affiliates from CFDT, CGT, FO and UNSA will join hands in central government administrations, municipal towns halls, public care institutions and hospitals. The workers fight for better pay. They oppose plans to scrap ten thousands of jobs and reject the privatization of public services. Our experience from across Europe shows that [privatization and PPPs](#) (Public private partnerships) do not lead to better services and are not cheaper. Such proposals do deprive workers of stable jobs. With subcontracting we do see more precarious employment. The opposition of the French workers against the plans of the government are well rooted in the day to day experience at workplaces. And each crisis shows how essential public service workers are to maintain good governance and administration and provide health, energy, water and so many other services we rely upon in our societies.

The EPSU leadership met 18 September. They considered the situation in Europe in which many workers suffer because of their government's austerity policies that increase inequalities. EPSU unions are actively involved in the [European campaign for better pay](#) with union actions in the Slovakia, the UK and many other countries. We looked at the speech of Juncker. We need a substantial European pillar of social rights and an action plan to implement these and a social progress protocol to ensure that social rights are not subject to economic rights. The group discussed what is important for workers to be on the agenda in the European Parliament

elections (2019) and beyond, the EPSU Congress (also in 2019), the financial situation of the Federation and the agenda's of the forthcoming Executives 29 October and 28-29 November. The leadership team represents EPSU's President Isolde Kunkel-Weber, Verdi, Germany, Dave Prentis, Vice-President and General Secretary of Unison (UK), Mette Nord, EPSU vVce-President and President of Fagforbundet, Norway; Francoise Geng, EPSU Vice-President and in CGT Sante, Services Social and the EPSU General Secretary Jan Willem Goudriaan and Deputy General Secretary Penny Clarke. Vice-President Mikhail Kuzmenko, President of the Russian Health Workers Federation could not join us.

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