

## **Defending affordable and good quality care for public administration staff and their families in Portugal against commercial interests**

(12 March 2019) EPSU's Portuguese member STAL for many month is working hard to defend the right to health and good quality health care for the workers, employees and civil servants of the public administration and their families. The special health insurance and assistance system (in Portuguese: *Instituto de Proteção e Assistência na Doença, Instituto Público*; acronym: ADSE-IP) is a public institution with a "participative administration", i.e. involving representatives of the beneficiaries and their families in the management of the system. It provides measures of health promotion, disease prevention, medical treatment and rehabilitation. It also involves representatives of trade unions in its Executive Board. The colleagues delegated to this governing body of ADSE-IP by STAL are part of the Common Front of Public Administration Trade Unions. Nearly 95% of the income is paid by the workers, employees and civil servants of the public administration and their families (in 2017 about 620 mio. €).

The ADSE-IP and the trade union representatives recently have again come under the pressure of private commercial health providers, such as Luz Saúde, Melo Saúde, Lusíadas, Trofa and HPA, and the Portuguese Association of Private Hospitals (APHP). They have threatened to cancel service provision agreements signed with ADSE-IP and have started campaigns that would misinform the ADSE-IP beneficiaries, i.e. the workers and employees of the public administration and their families. One main aim is to avoid that ADSE-IP is recovering money from them (nearly 40 mio. €) – in this context reports on the regularisation of payments have been amended to give the wrong expression that an agreement had been reached. Another aim is that ADSE-IP can fix prices for the services provided by these commercial health providers to beneficiaries of the special health insurance and assistance system that would not increase the contribution of the workers to the ADSE-IP and/or the profit margin of the private providers, as there is evidence that the commercial health provider groups have issued invoices for their services with extensively high fees, that unnecessary treatments have been done and invoiced

and that equipment, medical devices and medical supplies has been overpriced. The workers' representatives defend a founding principles of the ADSE-IP, namely the public and inter-professional and intergenerational solidarity nature of this special social protection scheme.

EPSU is fully supporting the political line of the trade union representatives of the Common Front of Public Administration Trade Unions in the Executive Board of ADSE-IP to defend and strengthen the Portuguese National Health Service and the public and inter-professional and intergenerational solidarity nature of the special health insurance and assistance system for the workers, employees and civil servants of the public administration and their families, ADSE-IP, as well as full transparency of its administration.

You find more details in the [press release](#) issued by the Common Front of Public Administration Trade Unions in the Executive Board of ADSE-IP on 15 January 2019 and in a [presentation](#) shared with us by STAL, both in Portuguese as well as in two articles published by STAL on [17 January 2019](#) and [8 February 2019](#) (with all four bits of information in Portuguese).

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