Unions secure €1 billion for health workers' pay and conditions

Belgium

After a lengthy campaign of protests and industrial action, unions have secured an additional €1 billion in funding from the federal government to improve pay and conditions for health workers. €500 million will go towards the implementation of a new pay system and harmonisation of pay in the private and public sectors. Unions estimate this will mean pay increases of 5%-6%. €400 million will cover additional staff to ensure a better staff/patient ratio and 10% of this amount will contribute to improved training. €100 million is allocated to improving working conditions, including in particular more permanent contracts and more hours for part-time workers. There will also be new rights to take three consecutive weeks of annual leave, a right to training in general but also for workers' reps and other measures covering pensions and action to reduce burnout. While unions have welcomed this initiative covering services funded at federal level, campaigning continues to put pressure on the other levels of government that are responsible for other health and social services.

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