

Latvian health workers protest austerity, demanding investment



(27 April 2015) Braving a cold wind, several hundred protestors gathered in front of the national library where the European Union health ministers were meeting in Riga. The workers were protesting the continued freeze of public funding for health and social services. With the demonstration the workers showed that [there is not a Latvian success story](#).

The public health system is under a lot of pressure due to lack of funding. Health workers (nurses, doctors and others) have migrated. This has increased stress on the remaining workers and resulted in longer waiting lists. The government refuses to increase funding thus ensuring the breakdown of the public system and those that can afford it are escaping to the private health clinics which are 6-10 times more expensive. The government seeks structural reforms, and commercialising of the health and social services. The workers symbolised this by a huge banner symbolising the bleeding health care system and a clever play on words (assassins).

The EPSU General Secretary spoke at the demonstration underlining that Latvia is

among the countries with the lowest % of GDP spent on health care. According to Unicef Latvia has [one of the highest child mortality rates in the EU](#). EPSU supports the protest and with the union demands more public investment in the health and social services. Corporations and the rich should pay their fair share of taxes to make this possible. The protest was also supported by other unions, doctors, patient organisations and pensioners. The demonstration was joined by EPSU Executive Committee Member Jevgenija Stalidzane, President of the Latvian energy workers underlining that quality health and social care is an issue for all in society.

The protest was organised by EPSU affiliate LVSADA that has had [a long campaign](#) to change the policies of the government and its President Valdis Keris even won the prestigious [Silver Rose award](#) as a recognition of effort of the union to stand up for public health and the interests of working people. The union organised a petition in which ten thousands participated.

The event was organised in Riga, 20 April 2015

Demo with Jevgenija Stalidzane (first from right)



-



- [Log in](#) to post comments

- [Printer-friendly version](#)

Policies

[Health and Safety](#)

[Health](#)

[Social Services](#)

Sectors

[Health and Social Services](#)