

# EPSU and the Social Employers issue a joint statement on the COVID-19 outbreak: social services are essential to overcoming the current crisis and need active support



Brussels, 25 March 2020

## **Joint EPSU/Social Employers Statement on COVID-19 outbreak: the impact on social services and needed support measures**

As the coronavirus spreads all across Europe and States successively enter into lockdown, we raise awareness on the threat that the virus poses to care organisations and the 11 million social services workers in the EU, who play a crucial role for millions of EU citizens in need of care and support. These workers, in close contact with older persons, persons with disabilities, and other people in need of care and support, are on a daily basis exposed to Covid-19 and the risk of an infection.

(30 March 2020) All across Europe, COVID-19 creates significant challenges for the care sector. In many countries, it exacerbates already existing problems of underfunding and understaffing. On a daily basis, workers are in close contact with older persons, persons with disabilities, and other people in need of care and support. This also means that they are particularly exposed to Covid-19 and the risk of an infection.

With this joint statement, the European Social Employers and EPSU want to raise awareness of the threat that COVID-19 poses to care organisations and the 11 million social service workers in the EU. They play a crucial role for millions of EU citizens in need of care and support.

The statement summarises our shared concerns for the workers as well as the providers of social services and outlines our main proposals to manage this crisis. Workers must be protected from infection by ensuring access to the adequate equipment, but also need protection from job loss and/or loss of income as a consequence of a coming economic recession. Furthermore, solutions must be found for care workers who are themselves in need of childcare services as well as cross-border workers. Collective bargaining and social partnership are key to finding consensual solutions for these pressing topics.

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