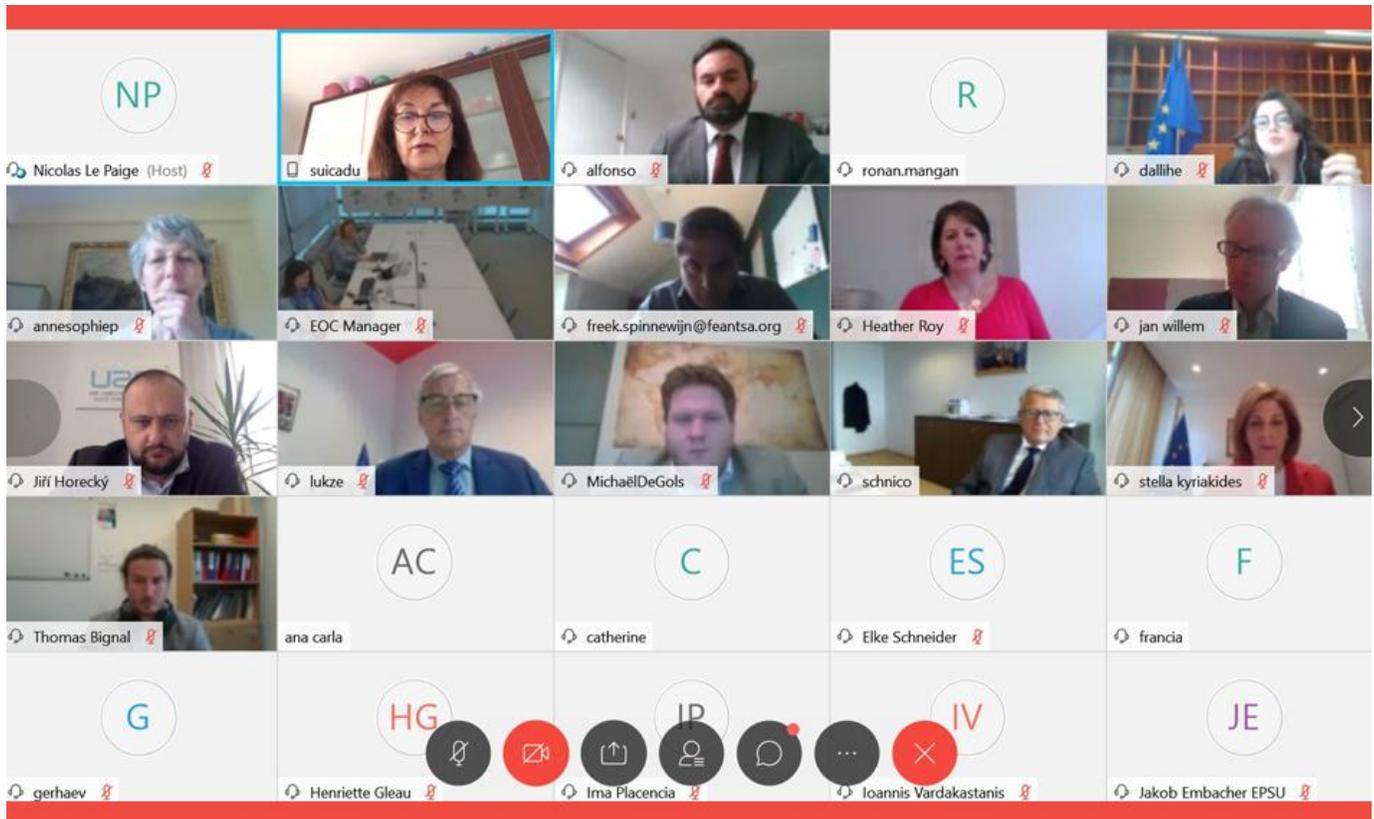


EPSU represents social service workers in a high level exchange on the impacts of COVID-19



(30 April 2020) On Wednesday, 29 April, Jan-Willem Goudriaan was invited to represent EPSU in a high level exchange with European Commissioners Nicolas Schmit, Stella Kyriakides, Dubravka Šuica and Helena Dalli. Eight civil society organisations such as EASPD also took part in the meeting.

During the meeting, Jan-Willem Goudriaan raised various key concerns for workers, such as the importance of stricter health and safety measures. It is essential that social service workers be considered as a priority, especially with regards to safety equipment. EPSU expects the Commission to coordinate procurement of PPE and test kits for both workers and the people we care for.

Long before existing problems such as understaffing and underinvestment have also contributed significantly to the crisis. It is crucial that emergency funding from the EU should be made available to prevent social services going under. Moreover, EPSU stressed the importance of collective bargaining. Involving the social services

employers and trade unions at EU level in developing the EU level responses is urgently required and demanded by social partners.

Overall, the meeting showed that the representatives of social services workers and providers were unified in calling for a stronger role for the EU. Initiatives backed by all participants were for instance guidances to Member States on social service provision during COVID-19, the mobilization of EU funds and a possible EU emergency fund for social services. There was also a general understanding that low levels of investment in the sector in the past significantly contributed to the current problems and would need to be reversed. The European semester could be an important tool in that regard. We consider this meeting a positive step in the right direction and will seek to work closely with the Commission as well as the social service employers to promote these issues.

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