

EPSU participates at European Social Services Summit



(30 June 2020) On June 25th EPSU, together with the Social Employers, participated in a conference organized to highlight the deficiencies and shortcomings in the support to the social services sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. The webinar was attended by Commission Vice-President Suica as well as Vice-President of the European Parliament Dimitrios Papadimoulis and a broad range of other civil society actors.

In her opening speech, VP Suica warned that the current crisis would deepen inequalities if social services were not adequately supported. Furthermore, she stressed the need to make profession more attractive. Better income and working conditions will be needed as the demand for such services increases. Other speakers such as MEP Dragos Pislaru from Renew Europe concurred and also highlighted the need for a well supported and funded workforce.

In his intervention, Jan-Willem Goudriaan made clear that Social Service workers cannot be considered only as an afterthought to healthcare. In the face of current deficits in staffing levels, better salaries and protection of workers are urgently needed. Furthermore, workers are predominately female, who faced double the pressure during the crisis as childcare was often not accessible, while still earning less than their male colleagues. The way to achieve better remuneration, better staffing levels and to fight against gender pay gaps is through solid collective bargaining and social dialogue structures, both on a national and a European level.

In the run up to the event, EPSU also co-signed a Joint Position Paper, demanding a stronger role by the EU to strengthen the recognition and resilience of the social services sector and its workers. The position paper also includes specific recommendations regarding the ongoing negotiations on the Recovery Plan for Europe, such as the demand that min. 5% of the Recovery and Resilience Facility should be allocated to support social service provision, including both Long-Term and Short-Term/Crisis Care.

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