

EPSU rejects Commission's attack on health care workers' wages



(Press release. Embargoed until 23:59 2nd December 2020) The European Commission has called into question Member States' decisions to increase wages for health care workers. For EPSU this is interference in the wage policies of the trade unions and employers. We reject this.

[The position of the Commission on the draft budgets of EU Member States](#)like

France and Belgium reveals its critique of increasing health care workers' pay. For the Commission these higher wages increase public debts. Its analysis implies that these well-deserved increases after years of neglect should not have taken place. Or worse that the governments need to find measures to reverse them by seeking savings for example by closing health services or reducing staff. That is the wrong message to health and care workers and to other public service workers who, often at great danger for their personal health and safety, operate in the frontline of the pandemic. It shows the hardnosed attitude of the budget hawks in the European Commission. The very same workers that were and are applauded, are now being snubbed.

This is the return to coordinated austerity. These policies have brought so much damage to public services, and estranged Europe's people from the European Union.

On the eve of the EU Council of Ministers of Finance (1/12) and of Health (2/12) EPSU's General Secretary Jan Willem Goudriaan said: "This pandemic has shown just to what extent the coordinated austerity policies of the EU have undermined our public health and care systems. For the Commission now to seek a return to austerity is a slap in the face for all those workers that continue to care for the ill and dying and for workers that struggle to make ends meet. Where is the Commission's critique of the lack of policies to redistribute wealth? Whose side is the Commission on?"

Over the past two years, there have been over 100 strikes and demonstrations of health and care workers across Europe. In Belgium and France their actions have delivered decent pay rises but the fight continues, particularly in France where care workers, mostly women on low pay, maintain their campaigns for better pay and conditions.

The Commission published the Autumn Forecasts and the positions on the 2021 draft budgets on 18 November 2020.

Ends

For more information: Pablo Sanchez psanchez@espu.org 0032 (0) 474626633

- [Log in](#) to post comments
- [Printer-friendly version](#)

Policies

[Collective Bargaining](#)

[Economic Policy](#)

[Health](#)

[Social Dialogue](#)

Sectors

[Health and Social Services](#)

Other organizations

[EC](#)

Document types

[Press Release](#)