

Staff shortages in health increase across Europe



(25 January 2022) Many European countries are facing severe staff shortages in health and care due to the recent Omicron wave. These have been exacerbated by the Covid crisis. Almost all EU countries [report a shortage of health care staff](#).

EPSU has been pointing out the severity of the staff shortage ([around two million workers](#)). Europe's governments should substantially increase funding for health and care and respond to demands of workers to invest. The Omicron wave is demonstrating how urgent this investment is, as the [WHO stresses that once again](#) "the greatest burden of responding to this pandemic is being carried by our health and care staff."

A recent study [Labour Market and Wage Developments report](#) by the European Commission (EC) mainly focuses on how labour markets respond to the recent recession following the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020. It does note worsening staff shortages in health. The latest evidence from around Europe reveals how the situation has deteriorated further because of Omicron. The Commission is aware of poor pay and conditions as main cause of shortages. We insist that the review of fiscal rules gives member states scope for significant boost to public spending to allow for massive recruitment of health and care staff.

Recent reporting of trade unions and others shows that workers including intensive care workers are leaving work. Stress, inadequate protection at the work place, lack of recognition for their work and too low salaries. The pandemic continues to have a disastrous impact on the European health workers. This needs to be addressed immediately.

For background

[ETUC position on the economic governance review.](#)

[Germany: 8000 intensive care jobs are vacant](#)

[Austria: addressing long standing shortages and training takes time](#)

[Denmark: 144 intensive care nurses left](#)

[France: In Ile de France \(region Paris\) one reanimation/ intensive care bed in 5 is closed due to lack of care staff](#)

[Greece to deal with the pandemic and cover up for austerity cuts government needs to find thousands of new staff.](#)

[Italy: Lack of 4000 staff for emergency care](#)

Spain: reports mention shortages of staff of nurses and doctors – 80.000 or more.

[UK: Estimated lack of staff of 100.000 or more](#)

[US: Also in the US nurses are walking away](#)

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