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Ref : JWG/RP/MM/sd

Brussels, 19 June 2019

Dear Paul,

I am writing to express EPSU's solidarity with your 10,000 health care support workers who will be taking strike action tomorrow.

It must be very frustrating for your members to have seen a positive outcome from the job evaluation exercise in 2017, but then be forced to take strike action because of the health ministry's failure to implement the award. These support workers provide an invaluable contribution to the health service and the government should act swiftly to recognise this with the appropriate upgrading and pay increases.

Your members have also supported the various national public sector pay deals since 2010 which have involved considerable sacrifices on the part of public sector workers. The job evaluation scheme is an important part of those agreements and the government threatens to undermine confidence in these arrangements.

We wish you every success with the action.

Yours in solidarity,

Jan Willem Goudriaan  
EPSU General Secretary

Appendix : copy of the solidarity message posted on [www.epsu.org](http://www.epsu.org)

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## EPSU sends message of support to striking health workers in Ireland

EPSU has today (19 June) sent a message of support to the SIPTU trade union in Ireland for its strike tomorrow involving 10,000 health workers.

The workers, support staff and chefs, voted with a 95% majority for the action following the failure by the Health Service Executive to implement a job evaluation pay award.

SIPTU members have been frustrated that the health service employers accepted the recommendations of the job evaluation scheme in 2017 which found that the skill levels for the support staff had increased significantly in recent years and set out which staff should be upgraded with appropriate pay increases, but that, as of today, these pay upgrade have not yet been implemented.

Since then the union has made clear that it is open to negotiations over implementation of the changes and last week took part in talks at the Workplace Relations Commission aimed at resolving the dispute. However, the talks ended on Monday 17 June without agreement as the government continued to refuse to come up with any additional money for the pay upgrading and is not yet living up to its commitment to pay health support staff following agreed job evaluations.

The initial action across 38 hospitals and healthcare institutions will involve SIPTU members providing portering, household and catering services and employed as health care assistants, maternity care assistants, laboratory aides, chefs and surgical instrument technicians. This staff has a key role and delivers indispensable services for the good functioning of the Irish health and social care system and ultimately the citizens. Without them, in hospitals and care facilities patients may not be moved or fed, beds may not be cleaned and security may not be provided.

EPSU hopes that the conflicts can be resolved prior to the national review of the role of Health Care Assistant in Public Health Service that will take place on 1 July 2019 in Dublin, following an extensive period of research and concurrent stakeholder engagement.

It should also help implementing the recommendations contained in this review in the context of the People Strategy 2019-2024.

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