



## European Parliament Elections 23-26 May 2019

### Priorities EPSU & Standing Committee on Health and Social Services

#### 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The issues at stake in the May 2019 European Parliamentary (EP) elections are of fundamental importance. In 2014 only 43% of the 375 million Europeans entitled to vote did so. All indicates that although this European election will be key for the future of Europe the turnout might be as low as before and the result is expected to be less worker-friendly and more hostile to public services. We also expect a big turnover of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and many new faces.

EPSU is convinced that presenting voters with concrete social alternatives will increase participation in the EP elections, strengthen the EU's democratic basis and help our overall objectives. EPSU will be promoting workers rights, equality, just taxation and the promotion of fundamental rights (right to water, right to health, right to care, right to energy...). And for this we need strong progressive forces in the Parliament.

EPSU affiliates should therefore be active in the run-up to the EP elections and:

- Encourage everyone to vote (particularly trade union members)
- Remind members that the EP can make a difference (e.g., tax, right2water, trade, work-life balance, whistle-blowers' protection, gender equality)
- Remind members that the EP is the most transparent and democratic EU institution with co-decision rights with Council on important matters such as EU budget, social policy, gender equality and internal market. The incoming Parliament will elect the new Commission's President
- Support progressive candidates
- Call for a gender-balanced European Parliament

#### 2. Priorities and main demands of EPSU affiliates in the field of health and social services

In its meeting of 27 February 2019 EPSU's Standing Committee Health and Social Services (SC HSS) has identified and agreed on a number of joint priorities, building on the EPSU 2014 Congress Resolutions 8 and 11 and the work of the last five years. EPSU affiliates are invited to use this document and the priorities outlined for their own activities and/or campaigns with their members and/or the general public in relation to the European Parliament election end of May.

For EPSU and its affiliates the health, safety, well-being of patients and good working and pay conditions of the workforce in health and social services must be at the heart of European policies.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the text under the headings "Introduction" and "The next European Parliament must be 'public service and worker' friendly" is copied from the document "EP elections 23-26 May 2019: EPSU Briefing", agreed at EPSU's Executive Committee on 8 and 9 May 2018. This is to set the scene and to put the sectoral priorities and demands in the broader context of EPSU's general work and priorities.



The health and social services sector is an economic and social wealth. Public investment in this sector is above all a political choice for a society aiming at the health and well-being of its citizens, at the guarantee of their social rights and at sustainable economic development. Considering the health care and social services sector only as a cost to the public finances, national health systems or health care insurances and a focus alone on the optimisation of expenditure and on austerity measures is an erroneous approach. This also applies to a European public policy of sustainable health care and social services.

For EPSU and its affiliates organising workers in health care and social services the **main joint demands and political priorities** for the European Parliament elections and beyond are:

- A **high-quality health care and social services for all**
- **Sufficient and adequately qualified staff, based on mandated save and effective staffing levels**, with **good working and pay conditions** for the workforce in health and social services, as sufficient, healthy and well-trained staff also has a positive impact on the quality of care and the quality of the services and on the patients and users of these services
- Health and social services that are **affordable and accessible to all**
- Health and social services that are **provided in the general interest**, in support of the public service principles and that are **of a not-for-profit-nature**
- **Full involvement of trade unions and workers in the design and regulation of the digital transformation of health care and social services**, including on workplace and sectoral level and by making use of information and consultation rights, of legislation at different levels, of collective agreement and of workplace agreements
- A **sustainable and socially responsible financing** of the national social protection systems, based on systems and instruments of solidarity, including in the fields of health care, elderly care, care for persons with disabilities childcare and social work activities
- The improvement of employment, housing, education, professional qualification and environmental policies as they are key factors to **promote good (public) health**

For EPSU and the health and social care workers principles 8 “Social dialogue and involvement of workers”, 10 “Healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection”, 11 “Child care and support to children”, 16 “Health care”, 17 “Inclusion of people with disabilities” and 18 “Long-term care” of the European Pillar of Social Rights must be transformed into concrete and lasting actions, by the EU MS, social partners and EU institutions.

"Taking care of those who take care of you" should become a guiding principle for policy makers across all levels. For EPSU and its affiliates focusing on the positive contributions of the health care and social services sector and workforce to our societies and sustainable economic development is an opportunity and the rights approach for the future. But this requires a change in the way we look at this sector. We need to do so by recognising health care and social services as genuine producers of well-being and wealth.



### **3. The next European Parliament must be ‘public service and worker’ friendly<sup>2</sup>**

We need a EP that will stand up for a progressive, democratic and social Europe. What does this mean in concrete terms? We expect MEPs to support a European agenda that delivers good employment, workers’ rights, and universal access to quality public services i.e..

- Gives support to public investment in collectively financed and democratically run public goods and services based on fundamental rights (e.g., right2water, right2energy, right2care, right2health). The EP should oppose Single Market and trade policies that push for further liberalisation of public services.
- Recognises the value of public service workers and the need to ensure employment rights for all workers, irrespective of the nature of the employer, of the employment contract or status. Equal treatment for all workers – not the least on information and consultation rights on restructuring - in Europe is a must.
- Makes progress towards progressive, transparent and efficient taxation. The EP has played an important scrutiny function on corporate tax deals and tax havens including in the EU that could be developed further.
- Rejects the privatisation of public services, including through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). Especially on PPPs, the EP should oppose guarantees being given to private investors.
- Recognises the threat posed by privately-driven EU standards (CEN) and certification/accreditation schemes to regulation and collective agreements that are the preferred instruments to determine the quality of service and quality of work.
- Prevents special rights being given to investors in trade and investment agreements (including in the new Multilateral Investment Court (MIC)).

Brussels, 28 February 2019

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