



European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)

Press Communication – 9 October 2014

The fight against Ebola - health workers on the frontline while politicians cut budgets

(Brussels, 9 October 2014) The EPSU Health and Social Services Committee, representing over 3.5 million health and social services workers across Europe sends its solidarity to the frontline workers in Madrid and other countries who are risking their lives fighting Ebola. We recall the several thousands that have died from the virus in West-Africa, including many health care workers.

Their courageous work is invaluable for our societies. Yet Spanish Government officials and many others who have pushed austerity measures - cutting health care budgets, freezing and cutting wages of those working on the ground - continue to look for individual scapegoats to hide the effects of their policies.

Humans make mistakes. But is it the political decisions that deny health care institutions and staff of the necessary resources that creates the conditions for safety protocols becoming difficult to apply. It leads to stressed workers and understaffed health centres that are not able to deal with an emergency in an optimal way.

The European Federation of Public Service Unions, **Jan Willem Goudriaan**, states “*Those heroes fighting Ebola and risking their lives do not receive the recognition they deserve. It is a scandal that their wages are frozen in many countries while we fail to increase taxes for the wealthy*”. He added “*Being unprepared for what can become a threat to public health is the consequence of policies that undermine the public service in the EU.*”

Public Services International, the international sister organisation of EPSU has been warning of the disastrous health policies in West-Africa. Our colleagues in West-Africa are fighting Ebola and are exposed to the virus in circumstances where equipment and resources are lacking. It is necessary that the EU and the international community step up their support. <http://www.world-psi.org/en/healthcare-workers-killed-ebolaworst-outbreak-ever>

For more information: Pablo Sanchez, psanchez@epsu.org 0032 (0) 474 62 66 33

*EPSU is the **European Federation of Public Service Unions**. It is the largest federation of the ETUC and comprises 8 million public service workers from over 265 trade unions; EPSU organises workers in the energy, water and waste sectors, health and social services and local, regional and central government, in all European countries including the EU's Eastern Neighborhood. EPSU is the recognized regional organization of Public Services International (PSI). For more information please go to: <http://www.epsu.org>*