

EPSU Executive Committee stands for ORPEA workers' rights to information and consultation

65th Meeting of the EPSU Executive Committee - 24-25 November 2020

(25 November 2020) Yesterday, the EPSU Executive Committee received a report about the negotiations between the Special Negotiating Body and the French multinational company ORPEA. These negotiations aim to establish a European Works Council. ORPEA has frustrated the process and sought to organise a last minute in-person meeting in the midst of the pandemic, without ensuring the safety of delegates from several countries, many of which strongly advise against travel. The company, without explanation, refused to hold the meeting via video conference, despite the fact that hospitals are overflowing with Covid-19 patients and public health systems are on the brink of collapse.

The EPSU Executive Committee representing Europe's unions in health and social services, including those organising workers in ORPEA, condemns the attitude of the company. It was an irresponsible act towards the health of ORPEA workers and an act of bad faith in the process to establish information and consultation procedures in the company.

Members of the Executive Committee note that ORPEA management has frustrated the process of setting up an EWC **since the beginning. It has used any possible stratagems to slow down the process and to maintain a climate of distrust between the parties involved.** Regrettably, the 3-year period to negotiate an agreement has passed. Consequently, Members of the Executive Committee urge ORPEA to establish as soon as possible a EWC, based on the European directive subsidiary requirements. The first meeting should be organised as soon as possible to ensure the involvement of ORPEA's employees in any management's decisions to respond to the current sanitary and economical crisis.

EPSU will work with the unions representing workers in ORPEA to ensure the safety of SNB/EWC members, their families and residents of the establishments in which they work. We will together address the situation that has emerged and consider the best way to enforce workers' information and consultation rights. To this end, a coordination meeting will be organised soon.