



## **EPSU Executive Committee Statement in support of Italian Affiliates Strike**

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

**The EPSU Executive Committee expresses its support for the Italian public services unions that will strike on 9 December to demand recognition for their role and work during the pandemic and for the government to renew the public service workers' collective agreement that expired more than a year ago.**

During the pandemic public service workers have made it possible for our countries and public administrations to continue to provide critical services to citizens and businesses. From health and care workers to education and local and central administrations, workers managed to guarantee service continuity. This has been despite the problems connected with safety and despite the austerity measures of the last 10 years which weakened the capacity of public services to cater for the needs of our citizens, particularly in the case of such a health emergency.

For this reason we express our solidarity to Italian unions and we join their demands for:

- Safe staffing: staff shortages were already putting public services under pressure before the pandemic hit. This is no longer sustainable. It is necessary to recruit and retain more workers by making public services more attractive and this is why EPSU supports the Italian unions' demand to launch an extraordinary recruitment plan in public administrations and begin to fill the 500,000 shortfall. This plan will also represent an extraordinary opportunity for innovation in public administrations and ensure safe and quality employment for young people.
- End precarious work in public administrations: It is a scandal that there are currently 170,000 precarious workers in public administration in Italy which even led the European Commission to open an infringement procedure against Italy. For EPSU it is a priority to restore dignity and provide stable and quality jobs to precarious workers in public services.
- Improve safety: During the pandemic frontline workers have faced enormous pressures and serious risks to their safety. During the health and care workers mobilization EPSU and its affiliates demanded safe workplaces for all frontline workers and we will support Italian unions in this fundamental demand

It is therefore essential to invest in public service workers and for us this investment starts with the reinforcement of collective bargaining. We call on the Italian government to negotiate pay increases as part of new collective agreements in the public services.

Public services have never been more important. EPSU sends its support and solidarity for a successful action in the interests of workers and citizens.