Social Employers and EPSU initiatives on COVID-19

Jakob Embacher, Policy Officer EPSU
Sylvain Renouvel, Director Social Employers

#DialogueSProject
Joint actions during the first stage of the pandemic
Statements

• **25th March 2020** - Joint Social Employers/EPSU statement on COVID-19 outbreak: the impact on social services and needed support measures.

• **17th April 2020** - Joint Social Employers/EPSU Letter to the EC calling to action to tackle the lack of PPE for social services workers all across Europe.

• **14th May 2020** - Open letter with other European representatives of social services organisations and social partner organisations in social services.
Joint Webinars

- **9th June 2020** - Joint Social Employers/EPSU Webinar on “Safe and healthy workplaces in Social Services during and after the COVID-19 pandemic and the role of Social Partners”.

- **25th June** - Online summit, ‘Social Services & COVID-19: what role for EU?’ to discuss the role of the European Union in supporting social services during these difficult times, ending with a joint statement.
Joint Position Paper
Preparing the social services sector for the COVID-19 resurgence and increasing its resilience

#DialogueSProject
Content

1. COVID-19 in the social services sector: challenges
2. Recommendations for the preparedness of the sector
3. How EU Institutions can help?
4. How EU social dialogue can help?
1. COVID-19 in the social services sector: challenges

- Lack of clear measures and protocols coordinated at national and European level
- Lack of testing in residential settings
- Lack of protective equipment
- Lack of funding to invest in safety and managing the crisis
- Understaffing and shortage of supplies
- High proportion of people with COVID 19 staying in residential care
- Lack of training on how to handle an infectious disease
- Lack of mental health support
2. Recommendations for the preparedness of the sector 1/2

• Provide reliable and updated information
• Update the occupational health and safety risk assessment
• Develop crisis management protocol
• Guarantee the access of staff to training in safety measures at the workplace
• Ensure access and availability of tests in social care facilities
• Encourage residents and staff to be vaccinated against seasonal influenza
2. Recommendations for the preparedness of the sector 2/2

- Ensure the access and availability of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Provide psychological support for users and staff
- Classify COVID-19, when a reliable link can be established between the working situation and the infection, as an occupational disease across Europe
- Use of digital tools
3. How EU Institutions can help?

- Coordination of common safety protocols and health guidelines at European level
- Develop guidelines on enhanced cooperation between health and social care and on cross-border movements for care workers
- Creation of social funds for emergency response
- Urgently facilitate social services’ access to EU and national funds
- Ensuring sufficient and well-trained social care staff
- Recognition for the social services sector
4. How social dialogue can help?

Social partners play a **key role in ensuring occupational health and safety**, by jointly agreeing possible solutions, measures and initiatives to protect workers and users, and to promote the recognition of the sector.

**EU social dialogue can be fundamental to promote cooperation** among social partners in ensuring preparedness of social services by the exchange of good practices and the formulation of principles and guidelines.

#DialogueSProject
Thank you for your attention!
Any questions?