

Massive rally in Brussels demands refinancing and more staff in health and non-profit sectors

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Workers' mobilization in Brussels. Photo: via Medicine for the People-MPLP

On Tuesday, January 31, workers from non-profit sectors in Belgium demonstrated in the capital, Brussels, to defend the future of the care, culture, and welfare in the country. More than 20,000 people participated in the march, which was organized by trade unions such as the Union of Employees, Technicians, and Managers (SETCa), General Labor Federation of Belgium (FGTB/ABVV) affiliate General Union of Public Services (CGSP), and Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (CSC)'s affiliate CNE, along with organizations such as La santé en lutte and Medicine for the People (MPLP).

The participants in the march demanded an increase in wages, better staffing, and refinancing of the health and non-profit sectors. Activists from the Workers' Party of Belgium (PTB), Communist Party of Belgium (PCB), and others also participated in the protest and extended their support and solidarity to workers.

Working class sections and other low-income households across Europe are reeling under an acute cost of living crisis. On top of that, workers in the non-profit professions in Belgium, especially public health care, are exhausted with overwork and insufficient wages. The plans proposed last year by Federal Minister of Health Frank Vandenbroucke to reform the organization and financing of hospitals haven't evoked much enthusiasm among health workers as, according to the PCB, the [reforms](#) "only focus on 'working better' with the existing resources, but [include] no specific plans for more recruitment, increase in wages, and better working conditions."

On January 24, Medicine for the People [accused](#) the health minister of "turning a blind eye to calls for help from staff, instead of assuring everyone of good working conditions such as a 30-hour week, recognition [that it is] a difficult job, better wages, and better hours."

On January 31, the PTB [said](#), "We are not machines. We want respect. For our work. And for our patients, our residents, our little ones..[we want] respect, time, and

human and financial resources.”

“Care is not assembly line work. It is human labor. So, all [workers] ask for is: a decent work pace, better wages, better career endings. They have our full support,” the party added.

Julien Hannotte Morais from the leadership of the Communist Party of Belgium (PCB) told *Peoples Dispatch* that “after the COVID-19 crisis the workers in the non-profit sectors faced several difficulties with not enough people and materials; they keep struggling for more workers in healthcare, rest houses, nurseries, better conditions, and higher wages.”

Source: [Peoples Dispatch](#)

