

FNV statement: the COVID-19 crisis demands a strong and inclusive Europe

First and foremost, our thoughts go out to those directly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We commend the workers who provide essential services with an incredible sense of responsibility; in particular the healthcare workers, the cleaners and the supermarket workers. We are proud of all those people who work hard every day to keep our society running in these difficult circumstances. We honour these heroes who usually don't get the wage they deserve for this important work and who all too often work in flexible, precarious jobs.

FNV hopes that the labour market measures that the Dutch government has taken, will ensure that workers do not face cuts in income, redundancies or layoffs because of the COVID-19 crisis. We will therefore remain in close consultation with the government and the employers. For FNV it is imperative that all resources are deployed to help the most severely affected people.

Yet trade unions across the European Union are faced with hundreds of thousands of workers who have become redundant or have lost their income without compensation. The situation is even worse for flexible workers and the self-employed, who are unable to benefit from any support measures in most Member States. The situation is even worse for frontier workers and migrant workers. And some governments are introducing legislation that reduces trade union rights and workers protection. The pandemic thus creates a dramatic Europe-wide social crisis, which will soon turn into a protracted economic crisis.

A fragmented national approach is a sure recipe for a long-term disaster scenario. Therefore, jointly and in solidarity, we need to take the necessary EU measures to stop the spread of the virus and to manage the economic effects of this unprecedented situation. Because no Member State can address the COVID-19 crisis alone. Like our economy, the pandemic does not stop at borders.

The FNV notes that Member States with a surplus on their national balance of payments still have some room to take emergency measures, but that this is not the case for all Member States. However, no Member State can and should fail to take measures to protect citizens and workers from the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis. That is why European solidarity is necessary.

The FNV, together with all trade unions in the EU, is therefore calling for a comprehensive emergency package, as the situation of workers affected by the COVID-19 crisis is deteriorating day by day. The last thing we need in this emergency situation is massive unemployment and a further deepening of the economic crisis. Now, more than ever, united we stand!