

di European Interest

Left MEPs have called on the EU and member states to take coordinated action and mobilise resources to halt the spread of coronavirus, expressing solidarity for the victims and all those affected.

Efforts to contain the virus have exposed systemic under-resourcing of public services, which the Left has consistently warned against.

Fears about possible collapse of health services highlight longstanding cuts to funding from governments due to austerity and privatization says the Left Group at the European Parliament. Gig economy workers, who have long lacked adequate protection, now face being placed under quarantine without sick pay or alternative income to make ends meet. Other workers are facing similar pressure and uncertainty.

“Across Europe, austerity has brought our public services to their knees and caregivers are vigorously mobilising against the widespread dilapidation of our health systems. The Coronavirus is striking a blow to hospitals, which have already been suffocating, where doctors now find themselves faced with the atrocious dilemma of having to choose between two patients given the shortage of equipment and staff,” urged GUE/NGL co-President Manon Aubry (France Insoumise, France).

“We call on EU member states, in close consultation with the WHO, to act together with common rules and standards to slow down the outbreak, as recommended by experts such as the Robert Koch Institute. Only collective action will bring the necessary calm and objectivity into the debate. The protection of public health is the absolute priority. In order to counter the expected economic downturn and the resulting decline in demand, we need massive investment across public services, in climate protection and the digital transformation so as to secure jobs and strengthen the economy,” added Co-President Martin Schirdewan (DIE LINKE, Germany).