



Press Release

European Network against the
Commercialisation and Privatisation of Health,
Social Work and Social Security



Brussels, 8 February 2014

A European Campaign for the Defence of Health and Social Security from 8 February to 25 May

On 7-8 February in Brussels, a coordinated European campaign was launched that will run until the European elections on 25 May 2014.

At 9.30 on the morning of 7 February, a new Manifesto was released. Delegations from across Europe had already submitted it to the Belgian Prime Minister. Eleven European ambassadors were given the Manifesto at the same time, and asked to pass it on to their respective governments.

The delegations then met in front of UNESCO's headquarters in Brussels where a demand was made for egalitarian health care and social security, available to all, to be recognised as part of the common heritage of humanity. UNESCO has acknowledged this demand with an email.

The demonstration then made its way to the seat of the European Commission, where our delegation made up of representatives from eight countries submitted the Manifesto. There, we requested a response to our analyses and demands from commissioners Barnier, Andor and Borg.

The afternoon of 7 February and the morning of the following day saw these initiatives consolidated during the Sixth European Conference of associations, unions and civil society groups in defence of health, social work and social security. This conference has allowed us to deepen our understanding of, and elaborate alternatives to, liberal policies through evidence and statistical analysis from a dozen European countries: Portugal, Greece, Spain, Italy, Great Britain, Poland, Belgium, France, Germany the Netherlands, Ireland and Slovenia.

This conference of the European Network against the Commercialisation and Privatisation of Health, Social Work and Social Security ended with an appeal. We invited citizens, associations, unions, political parties, and national and regional joint initiatives defending healthcare to stage a week of action from 2 to 8 April, with the key moment on 7 April: World Health Day. Activities will be planned separately in each country, and in some cases, each region - as in the Spanish case.

The Network has asked that across the period 8 February to 25 May 2014:

- the analysis and claims made in the Manifesto be circulated and debated as widely as possible. To this effect a shorter document, illustrated by chosen testimonies and arguments, will be published.
- that all professionals and staff working in health care, who suffer heavily from the commercialisation and the privatisation of health, be addressed directly.
- the international dimension of this campaign be made clear throughout the activities planned by joint initiatives, notably on 8 March (International Women's Day), and 1 May 2014.

- candidates for the European Elections be questioned vigorously about the issues in the Manifesto, notably during meetings where they have been invited to respond specifically to it.
- the construction of a EU-US transatlantic agreement be opposed because of the particular threat it poses to health, social work and social security.
- the Network expand into as many countries as possible, and draw in the maximum number of associations, unions and parties opposed to privatisation and supporting the mobilisation of the public.

We must all learn from the victories of the Spanish 'White Tide' (*marea blanca*) which defeated plans to privatise six hospitals in Madrid, united around the watchwords: 'Health isn't for sale! Health defends itself' (la sanidad no se vende se defiende). Victory is possible in the face of the rapacious appetites of multinationals, pharmaceuticals companies and health insurances giants if we all fight together.