



**European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)**

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**Contact: Brian Synnott +32 474 98 96 75**

**Subject: *EPSU response to European Commission communication on social services***

## **European Commission Communication on social services does not live up to expectations**

***EPSU response to Communication on social services of general interest***

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Attention: News Editors**

(27 April, Brussels) The European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) expresses its disappointment with the Communication on Social Services of General Interest. This is based on the substance and the process of the Communication on Social Services of General Interest (26 April). In substance the Communication falls short of EPSU's expectations, particularly as this document has been delayed and postponed for over one year. In the process, EPSU wishes to underline the message that this represents yet another example of the European Commission's policy of delaying and prolonging the debate on Services of General Interest. All the while allowing the vacuum to be filled by pro-internal market judgements by the European Court of Justice.

The proposed timeframe of a 'study' over the next 18 months to assess the impact of Community rules on social services is impractical. While the research is being carried out, the European Court of Justice will by default continue to extend internal market obligations into the social services sector.

EPSU General Secretary **Carola Fischbach-Pyttel** stated that; "**this Communication makes assumptions that social services modernisation by definition means increased private sector participation, and yet there is no statistical evidence to prove this**" She added that; "**this Communication makes assumptions that social services need to be *part of the internal market* rather than a *vital counterbalance to the internal market*". Finally, she stated that "**this communication makes no reference whatsoever of the need to invest heavily in fleshing out the concept of solidarity at EU level.**"**

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European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)  
45 Rue Royale

1000 BRUSSELS – BELGIUM

Tel. : 32 2 250 10 80 \* Fax : 32 2 250 10 99 \* E-mail : [epsu@epsu.org](mailto:epsu@epsu.org) \*

Website : [www.epsu.org](http://www.epsu.org)



EPSU political officer for social service **Tamara Goosens** stated that " **the Communication makes reference to increased Transparency in the sector through modernisation. While the Communication makes reference (page 4) to the solidarity principle and fundamental rights, nowhere in the document does the Commission give a roadmap as to how these principles can be given a 'protected space' at EU level. She added that "There is no point in having a 2 year reflection process if at the end there is nothing legally left to define"**!

EPSU calls on the Commission to refocus attention on the need for a framework directive on services of general interest and to finally point a stop to the prolongation of this debate.

***For more information please contact  
EPSU Communications Officer Brian Synnott  
[bsynnott@epsu.org](mailto:bsynnott@epsu.org)  
gsm +32 474 98 96 75***

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*EPSU is the European Federation of Public Service Unions. It is the largest federation of the ETUC. 8 million public service workers and their 213 trade unions are members. They organise workers in health and social services, local and national administration, energy, water and waste*