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European Federation of Public Service Unions

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“Public service unions deplore Parliament’s pro-business vote on internal market strategy”

The 11 March plenary vote on the report on the Internal market strategy priorities 2003-2006 sends worrying signals for the future of social Europe. In an unholy alliance of Christian Democrats and Liberals, the European Parliament voted for an Internal Market that will only serve the private interests of big business to the detriment of Europe’s public interest. This majority block defeated several amendments arguing for a more balanced social Europe. It also makes a farce of the ongoing discussion on the future of public services by defeating an amendment that sought to condition the draft Internal Market of Services Directive upon progress with the legal framework on Services of General Interest, as called for by Parliament in an earlier vote last January.

“This choice for corporate Europe does not bode well with EU workers’ and citizens’ expectations for more social Europe and quality public services. It sends disappointing signals on the eve of the enlargement and European elections with the conservatives arguing for further liberalization of public services despite the negative experience of users and workers.” stated Jan Willem Goudriaan, EPSU Deputy General Secretary. **“The only positive decision is Parliament’s rejection of the water liberalisation proposal, as put forward by Internal Market Commissioner. Mr Bolkestein must now feel lonely. The only sensible thing to do is for the Commissioner to acknowledge the lack of support for this proposal and withdraw it at once ”**, he continued.

European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) is the largest federation affiliated to the ETUC and represents 8 million workers providing services to the public in health and social care, local, regional and central government, and utilities in energy, water and waste.

Contact: Jan Willem Goudriaan T + 32 2 250 10 90