Public procurement, digitalization, young workers, equality on the agenda of EPSU committee on Local Government

(10 October 2017) A first reflection on the themes and priorities for EPSU's upcoming Congress in May 2019 was one of the items on the agenda of the local and regional government committee meeting on 19 September in Brussels. Under this item affiliates exchanged initial ideas about areas of work EPSU should focus on, based on existing work and looking at the future of local services in a changing Europe.

One area where the Committee will undoubtedly continue its work is **public procurement**. EPSU is currently carrying out a survey of members' experiences with social procurement and an update was given about the responses received to date. The survey is well-timed as on 3 October the EC published a new procurement package. This contains a number of different elements, including a Communication, a targeted consultation on the (woolly) concept of 'innovative' procurement and initiatives to improve the professionalization of public buyers. In the follow-up to the EC package, EPSU will focus on improving the inclusion of social aspects, including in the capacity-building and professionalization initiatives. Over half of all public procurement takes place at local and regional level so the sector plays a key role in shaping procurement policies and practices. EPSU is working on public procurement within a broad alliance of different groups, called the NSDPP network. The Committee discussed a recent meeting of the Network and discussed upcoming plans to work together on the EC procurement package.

Digitalisation is another key topic for the Committee. EPSU is working with the OSE (Obsérvatoire Social Européen) to deepen understanding of the impact of digitalisation on job content. The OSE is focusing on employment services and domestic care to illustrate the potential impacts. The research builds on previous EPSU positions on digitalisation and aims to go deeper into the workplace reality of workers. A presentation was given by OSE to the Committee of initial findings. Digitalisation is also an important issue in the social dialogue with CEMR where the social partners recently addressed digitalisation, restructuring and well-being.

Also on the Committee's agenda were the new **gender equality guidelines** being drawn up with CEMR. The aim of the guidelines is to encourage the take up of equality plans at local and regional level. The Committee discussed the latest texts and how the guidelines can contribute to strengthening the commitment of social partners in the sector to gender equality. The meeting also discussed preparations for a **new social dialogue work programme**, to be discussed and adopted - together with the equlaity guidelines - in the upcoming social dialogue meeting on 10 November. For the new work programme, EPSU members want to focus activities on deepening activities around restructuring and well-being and to also contribute to the implementation of the awaited European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), due to be proclaimed by all Member States on 17 November.

Other issues on the Committee's agenda included barriers and pathways to the employment of **young people** in public services (recruitment, quality of jobs) and **just transition** policies.

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