

Introduction to Local and Regional Government and EPSU

Local Government

Mads Samsing, HK Kommunal, Denmark, is the President of the EPSU Standing Committee for local and regional government. Christine Jakob is the EPSU policy officer for the sector.

Find out [who is your national EPSU representative for local government here](#)

What are the main issues for EPSU?

Local public services are, by definition, at the front line of public services. Users have direct experience of those who provide those services, be they fire-fighters, waste workers, community liaison personnel, or local administrators issuing documents and providing guidance. EPSU is committed to ensuring that quality services are provided to all users. We are committed to high quality and efficient public services based on a well-educated and skilled work force. Working conditions for local and regional government employees is a main plank of this commitment but only a part. EPSU is also pledged to the promotion of open, transparent public procurement that puts the aim of the vital services first. EPSU is convinced that assessing public procurement regimes, means assessing their environmental and social impact, as well as the cost.

We are constantly looking to improve the delivery of public services. We vigilantly assess the impact of public-private and public-public partnerships (PPPs and PUPs) in local and regional government and other forms of marketisation.

What is the European context?

While there is some recognition of local and regional government in EU policy – for example in cohesion and inclusion policies - the main policy focus is, unfortunately, on extending aspects of the internal market into the sector. This approach fails to celebrate the cohesive role local government can play in society. The EU

perspective is largely based on the introduction of competition to ensure the lowest possible financial cost for the service. However this does not take account of the social nor environmental perspective. The bias towards the internal market also risks undermining local collective agreements. This is particularly evident when companies are allowed operate from one EU Member State to another without taking account of local regulations and standards.

What is EPSU trying to achieve?

In the local government sector, EPSU has a strong relationship with its social partner; the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). The organisations are jointly committed to ensuring that the value and the aims of local government are both celebrated and protected. In January 2004 a sectoral social dialogue Committee for Local and Regional government was set up between the partners. The Committee is now working on its third work programme covering the period 2008-2010, agreed in the plenary meeting of December 2007. The work programme identifies the following priorities: promoting social dialogue and contribute to the Commission's aim to strengthen social dialogue in the new Member States and candidate countries; evaluating experiences in various forms of local service provision (outsourcing / insourcing, PPPs, inter-municipal cooperation); tackling harassment and violence at work and promoting gender equality and reconciliation of work and family life. The partners have agreed that local government must be promoted in the newer EU Member States, that the sector is integral to the promotion of social inclusion throughout the EU, and that it is important to recruit and retain quality staff with strong working conditions.

Public procurement, local government and the EU - low cost = low standards!

The right of local and regional governments to decide how best they can spend your money is fundamental to a democratic society. It is a direct, perhaps the most direct, reflection of how that locality wishes to organise the delivery of its vital services. Responsible management of budgets are about meeting local needs in a sustainable way. Financial shortcuts have consequences – for the essential service, for the user and in the resultant damage caused to society. EPSU is at the forefront of the battle to ensure that the EU recognises that your local government has the right to provide services directly to citizens as well as ensure that public procurement actively encourage systems where vital services can flourish. Not

protecting these rights will result in ever greater financial, not to mention, societal cost.

- [Log in](#) to post comments

- [Printer-friendly version](#)

Policies

[Local government](#)

Sectors

[Local and Regional Government](#)