



EPSU Statement on International Women's Day – 8 March 2014

Trade Union Action is key to reduce gender pay inequality in Europe

A new EPSU survey commissioned to the Labour Research Department that was recently published to get a better understanding of trade union action to narrow the gender pay gap in the public sector shows that trade unions are simply key to address and reduce gender pay inequality effectively. The report monitors trade union action for public administration, education, national, regional and local government, electricity and gas, water and sewerage and shows that trade unions have taken action in essential areas as e.g. the concentration of women in traditional or stereotypical jobs or measures to improve the proportion of women in more senior positions.

While the European Commission from year to year around International Women's Day monitors and provides us with data, statistics and information about the reasons behind the gender pay gap and tries to convince us that it is at least stagnating. This thanks to mock action it reports in the recently published implementation report on the recast Equal Pay Directive. However, still no further progress was really made since 2010 to improve the situation to reduce pay inequalities for half of the population of the EU, which are women.

Carola Fischbach-Pyttel, EPSU General Secretary says: "Public sector trade unions are well aware of the size of the gender pay gap, the reasons behind and the impact that women's segregation in the labour market has on their pay relative to men's. Essential however is that action has to follow by the employers. Also do our unions consider that outsourcing has had a particularly damaging effect on women and they have called for guaranteed standards of services and gaining representational rights for those who are not directly employed"

She adds: "The new X-Factor in trying to address the effects of pay inequalities are however cuts to equal opportunities programmes intended to improve the women's access to higher qualified and better paid jobs".

The report projects that if jobs and earnings are lost in the public sector, an area which so far has offered better opportunities for women than the private sector, the consequence may well be a widening of the overall gender pay gap. It includes a detailed survey to which 36 EPSU affiliates from 19 European countries responded in a questionnaire in areas of trade union action they took as with regard to labour market segregation, payment systems that are unfair to women, part-time work, training, maternity and parental leave and child care, outsourcing and working time flexibility.

New data has also been collected on the gender pay gap in the public sector for the neighbor countries of the EU as for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Turkey and Ukraine.

To download the full version (55 pages), including its Executive Summary in English, French, German, Polish and Swedish <http://www.epsu.org/a/10142>

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-pay-gap/131209_directive_en.pdf

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EPSU is the European Federation of Public Service Unions. It is the largest federation of the ETUC and comprises 8 million public service workers from over 275 trade unions; EPSU organizes workers in the energy, water and waste sectors, health and social services and local and national administration, in all European countries including in the EU's Eastern Neighborhood. EPSU is the recognized regional organization of Public Services International (PSI). For more information on EPSU and our work please go to: <http://www.epsu.org>

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