

Forget information and consultation rights in EU law Commissioner tells public administration workers

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Public service workers know that the EU coordinated austerity policies lead to restructuring of public administrations, agencies and services. Information and consultation rights are essential to address and understand the reasons, consequences and implications for such acts. However, European Commissioners Valdis Dombrovskis and Marianne Thyssen don't believe that these rights deserve protection in EU legislation if you work in public administration. Employment Commissioner Thyssen said this to me during the roundtable at the [Tripartite Social Summit](#) on 21 March where she defended the [Commission's response](#) to the employers and trade unions who wanted to fill this gap in information and consultation rights through their [social partner agreement](#) intended for EU legislation.

If you are a catering worker in a private care company or public energy company and your employer wants to rationalize your kitchen away, you can rely on a European framework of rights on information and consultation. If you do exactly the same job in a patient safety agency or in energy market regulator, the European Commission does not want you to have those rights. You just have to hope that your national rights are strong enough. As Greek comrades were telling us in the meeting of our National and European Administration committee and as [a study of the European Commission and the ILO \(2012\)](#) underlined, those basic rights were challenged during the crisis, just at the moment when workers need them most.

Public service workers have had it with these sort of paternalistic attitudes. You can read about their actions in our [bi-weekly collective bargaining newsletter](#), a companion to this newsletter. Public service workers are involved in pay disputes and industrial actions in many countries. After years of austerity, public service workers deserve decent pay for their work. It has been years of standstill and loss of purchasing power for millions of workers. Many of you sent messages of support to

our Danish colleagues. If arbitration in their dispute fails then thousands will take strike action on 4 April. However, six days later the employers plan to retaliate with a lock-out of hundred thousands. This is totally over the top, aimed at hurting the unions and seeking government involvement to settle this pay dispute in favour of the state, regional and municipal employers.

Following social media actions, trade union leaders of public service unions in Turkey were released. We have raised the issue with the European Commission. Their reactions to the violations remain feeble. The same is true for the reactions of the European Commission to the attacks on trade unions in the Ukraine. The Executive Committee of our affiliate in the municipal sector was disturbed by around 60 tugs 22 March. President Olexij and other leaders were threatened physically. The police arrived late. Previous investigations did not bring the attackers to justice. We have written to the European Commission to raise the issue with the Ukraine. Our comrades and trade unionists should be able to do their work and we expect more from the Ukrainian government. It is in such contexts that the respect of European Commissioners for high standards of good public administrations is so important. These are crucial to build respect and confidence in our democratic institutions.

The recent [report of the European Court of Auditors](#) on Public Private Partnerships argues in a similar way. Do not touch them. And why the violation of these standards in case of the appointment of the new Secretary General of the Commission and the refusal of the European Commission to follow established procedure in case of the refusal of our agreement are so serious.

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