Decent work and “pay change” on agenda for Local Government workers

(9 October 2018) Members of EPSU’s Local and Regional Government Standing Committee met on 4th October in Brussels to discuss timely matters that concern the 17 million workers in Local and Regional Governments across Europe.

The members elected Angeles Villaverde as vice-chair of the committee. She has been international officer at the FeSP-UGT (Spain) since 2016. In addition to LRG, she follows the NEA committee, as well.

Members exchanged on how non-standard forms of work (e.g. casual employment, zero-hours contracts) affect employment in Local and Regional Governments and the quality and accessibility of services provided by them. Sectoral collective bargaining and social dialogue play a crucial role in filling gaps and tackling non-standard forms of work by e.g. putting a limit to the ratio of workers employed under precarious contracts, or to the number of years a worker can be employed

under such arrangements. Many trade unions have also been active in organising non-standard workers.

Our guest speaker Carlos Carrion-Crespo, Public Services specialist from the ILO, introduced his departments' work on the topic, including a research project on monitoring the use of non-standard contracts in LRG. Some ILO Conventions contain important provisions on public service workers in this regard.

Many unions are still working to repair the damages on pay and working conditions caused by years of austerity measures, with pay in many countries still lagging behind levels prior to the financial crisis (hence the phrase "pay change" instead of "pay rise"). Some recent collective agreements covering municipal and local administrations, introduced in the session on collective bargaining developments, aim to restore pay, working conditions and collective bargaining rights in the sector.

EPSU's work on LRG in Europe is closely connected to the global work of Public Services International (PSI) in the sector. Daria Cibrario, Policy Officer at PSI, gave an overview of recent activities, including on remunicipalisation and organising, and introduced the portal https://peopleoverprof.it/

Members of the committee were also updated on our recent work on digitalisation, and exchanged on next year's European Parliament elections.

The committee will next convene in February 2019.

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