

Unions demand safe working conditions for fire fighters in Europe!

ETUI and EPSU present a brochure on working conditions for firefighters in Europe.

(3 April 2012) The firefighters network of the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) met on 3 April to discuss around themes arising from a recent publication focused on firefighters' working conditions in Europe.

The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) 50 pages brochure has been put together in cooperation with the EPSU. It addresses the 'classic' risks involved in this profession (risks from smoke, heat, etc.), as well as the impact of the organisation, structure and funding of fire services on firemen's health and safety. Fire fighters are usually portrayed as "heroes" while their working conditions are forgotten until it is too late.

"Firefighting is a risky business, and while some of the risks cannot be properly assessed in advance, firefighters' life and health can be better protected. The complex relation between an effective response and protecting workers health is itself a good reason for trade unions to be more involved" says Carola Fischbach-Pyttel General Secretary of EPSU in the preface.

Laurent Vogel, Director of the ETUI Working Conditions, Health and Safety Department adds "most of us give little thought to firefighters' working conditions. The life-and death nature of their job can result in the risks being trivialized and prevention ignored".

The publication, written by ETUI researcher Fabienne Scandella, is based on feedback from union representatives from different EU countries brought together at two conferences to take stock of their working conditions, supplemented by a review of existing literature and information gleaned from union contacts in the EPSU firefighters network.

The brochure includes suggestions and recommendations as to health and risk assessment and prevention and rethinking health surveillance at work in the sector.

- [To read the report](#)

For more information contact : Pablo Sanchez, psanchez@epsu.org 00 32 474 62 66 33 or Denis Grégoire dgregoire@etui.org +32 (0)2 224 05 52

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