

Joint Trade Union study exposes flaws in EU-Canada Trade deal

(Brussels 14 January 2010) – The European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) and their Canadian counterparts have expressed serious concerns about the proposed trade agreement between Canada and the European Union.

The second round of negotiations is due to start on 18 January and will continue for the week. The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), [National Union of Public and General Employees \(NUPGE\)](#) and Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), along with EPSU, **today released a study** arguing that the proposed deal is fundamentally flawed and a thorough rethinking of the whole approach to international trade is needed.

"There must be a thorough evaluation of the possible effects of the proposed agreement before the talks go any further," said EPSU Head of Policy Penny Clarke. *"The only evaluation done so far has been a very one-sided business oriented study with a very narrow focus."* *"We are excited about the level of cooperation and consensus that we were able to develop on this issue; essentially all the biggest public sector unions in both Canada and the EU are of a common mind on these negotiations"* said NUPGE's National Secretary Treasurer Larry Brown. *"When we started to look at what was known about the proposed agreement a lot of alarm bells started going off on both sides of the Atlantic,"* added Brown. *"As we got further into the research it was apparent that we shared a lot of the same concerns about the process and what was being negotiated."* The unions highlight five major concerns with the proposed agreement: - a full evaluation of the social, environmental and labour impacts of the proposed agreement has never been completed; - the negotiations are taking place without public scrutiny and there is a need for greater transparency of the process; - the public needs assurances that the proposed agreement would not interfere with the right of governments to regulate in the public interest, protect existing public services or create new public programs; - it is important that the agreement not contain a provision like Chapter 11 in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which allows an investor or private company to challenge laws or regulations of a government that is a party

to the trade agreement, and receive financial compensation; and - the agreement must not force governments to open public procurement to foreign companies. "*We are demanding full transparency,*" explained EPSU General Secretary Carola Fischbach-Pyttel. "*In past trade negotiations, the public has been kept completely uninformed until the full agreement is reached and then presented with a fait accompli. This is simply unacceptable.*" Canadian and European officials began negotiating a 'Canada-European Union - Trade and Investment Enhancement Agreement' in the summer of 2009. Many analysts expect that it will be an extensive agreement to integrate Canada's economy with the European Union. The talks, described as involving "deep economic integration negotiations", are expected to go beyond the scope of traditional agreements such as NAFTA. As well as encompassing unrestricted trade in goods, services and investment and the removal of tariffs, the aim of the "comprehensive economic and trade agreement" (CETA) will be to also include free movement of skilled people and an open market in government services and procurement. The trade agreement would cover everything from public services to agriculture to copyright laws.

The unions intend to raise these critical issues with the federal, provincial and municipal governments in Canada, and with the EU and EU member states in Europe. As well the unions will be working with allies and other organizations to bring as much force as possible to bear on the negotiating governments to take these concerns into account. To read the full report [click here](#) or open the PDF below. The authors of the report: The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) has 600,000 members across Canada representing workers in health care, education, municipalities, libraries, universities, social services, public utilities, transportation, emergency services and airlines. The European Federation of Public Sector Unions (EPSU) represents some 8 million public service workers from over 250 European trade unions, The National Union of Public and General Employees' 340,000 members work to deliver public services of every kind to the citizens of their home provinces.

NUPGE also has a large and growing number of members who work for private businesses. The Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) represents 165,000 members across Canada and also maintains an international profile through its representation of members who work abroad in embassies and consulates.

- [For the full report](#)

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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 250 trade unions; EPSU organises 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).

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