

# The Future is Public - Democratic Ownership of the Economy



(Brussel, 6 December 2019) With hundreds examples of people taking control of local public services, bringing public services back in public ownership is gaining momentum across the world. Coalitions of unions, social action groups, community organisations, academics and many others are successful in convincing people and politicians that private solutions to running public services are not the way forward. To build the momentum further and to learn from each other's experiences, unions and social movement groups from Europe, the Americans and Asia came together 4-5 December 2019, Amsterdam. The overall aim of the groups which joined is to put people and our planet over profits. And public services are crucial to deliver that vision, to ensure people can enjoy their human rights, to promote just transitions and to underpin our democracies.

When private companies run public services case after case showed:

- Scarce resources are siphoned off in profits and not reinvested.

- Democratic control is weakened and there is a lack of public participation
- Accountability suffers as do innovation and adaptability
- Public policy objectives are not achieved.

And while the economic case for public and municipal ownership is a strong one, it was the importance of responding to the demands of local populations to address poverty, inequality, just transitions, access to public services and in general for a better quality of life that turned the municipalities around to bring back services in municipal control as part of projects to improve local living and working conditions.

The EPSU General Secretary spoke in one of the panels referring to the experience of trade unions and debunking the arguments that the private sector can inherently deliver a better job as public services. There is no empirical evidence and study after study confirms it. Such studies further strengthen the argument that public and municipal services deliver on a whole range of other objectives and the private sector does not. The conference saw many unions attending and PSI and ITG brought a delegation of unions from beyond Europe.

## **For Background**

A group of cities with progressive policies is known as [Fearless cities](#)

Some of those are supporting the [Blue Communities](#) project

The [work of PSIRU for EPSU](#) on public vs private sector efficiency

[EPSU and remunicipalisation](#)

[PSI's work](#) on remunicipalisation

[On the Conference](#) and check out the 15 working papers on remunicipalisation cases.

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