

The Power of Public Services to Redistribute Wealth, Rosa Pavanelli Speaks at EPSU Congress



(Dublin, 5 June 2019) 'Trade unions shouldn't be scared to push for a new relationship between capital and labour,' that was the message of **Rosa Pavanelli**, General Secretary of Public Services International (PSI) speaking at EPSU's congress today.

PSI represents 30 million workers worldwide and is the global sister federation of EPSU.

In her speech, Pavanelli argued that public services and wealth redistribution must be at the heart of current discussions on the future of work.

A recent OECD study showed that up to 76% of the post-tax income of the world's poorest can come from public services. So, cutting and privatising public services is the surest way of increasing poverty and inequality.

Unions in public services are not just holding back these across the globe, we are fighting for the expansion and improvement of public services. Pavanelli pointed to rights for migrants, public housing and remunicipalisation as areas where we desperately need more public provision.

This year marks the hundredth anniversary of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), 'the only place where we are respected as equal partners with employers and governments in the international structures,' remarked the General Secretary. The ILO's conference will mark this with a broad discussion on the future of work.

Such discussions tend to frame technology and digitalisation. Pavanelli underlined her belief that workers cannot be cast as passive victims of these changes. Rather unions must seek to shape new technology and ensure it is harnessed for the public good.

But the future of work is not just about technology. The Italian trade-union leader called for more redistribution of wealth as the basis for updated labour systems. That redistribution must start with a fairer tax system. 'We must not be afraid to name and shame those multinationals who are avoiding their taxes,' she said.

A modern, redistributive model of industrial relations need to be founded on collective bargaining and the protection of the right to strike. By defending and deepening our rights and our public services, unions can mount a genuine challenge to the rise of xenophobia and the far right.

Pavanelli concluded by announcing that PSI will organise [a major event](#) next year to explore how we coordinate our struggles against this retrograde politics and how we rebuild our democracies, across the globe.

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