

Implementing EU pillar social rights needs public investment says EPSU at EU tripartite social summit



(17 October 2018) Member States need to do more to implement the principles in the Pillar to deliver public services like health, elderly, child and long-term care, water and energy. Public investment is needed to ensure people and workers in homes for older people are not wrung out for example. The EPSU General Secretary raised the lack of staff in many public services after years of austerity citing [recent evidence](#) that some companies running elderly care homes provide 3 meals a day for 4-5 Euros delivering poor quality. He pointed out the historic chance to take a step to realise the right to water following the first ever successful European Citizens Initiative [Right2Water](#). He asked the Austrian Presidency to reach an outcome of the Council with regard to the Drinking Water Directive so it can negotiate with the Parliament. The European Parliament will vote 23 October on its

position.

Nearly one year after the proclamation of the EU pillar of social rights and nearly 7 months before the European elections, the social partners, Commission and Council considered the implementation of the pillar. The [directive on posted workers](#) was seen as a major achievement by all. It is crucial to address the exploitation of workers being posted and exploited in another country. Unions insisted that progress needs to be made on key issues such as access to social protection, work-life-balance, European Labour Authority and the [directive on transparent and predictable working conditions](#). The Austrian Presidency is slowing down agreeing a common position in the Council. This could prevent the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council entering into negotiations to find a common approach before the European elections. That is bad. This would suit the employers who do not want to strengthen the position of workers. It also works for the far-right and Euro-sceptics, part of the Austrian government. It undermines the functioning of the European institutions. Effectively the Austrian government and extreme right are blocking measures that would improve protection for many workers and improve their living and working conditions.

The EPSU General Secretary, part of the ETUC delegation reminded participants of the attack by the Commission on [the right to strike](#) of air-traffic controllers, and on European level collective bargaining when [the Commission refused to bring a social partner agreement in information and consultations rights in EU law for workers in public administration to the Council](#). This undermined the confidence of people in the role of the Commission to promote social dialogue and European level industrial relations. As these are part of the principles of the pillar, the pillar itself is put in question. Trade unions want that the Commission and Member States support the strengthening of workers' and trade union rights, social dialogue and bargaining. They are underpinning democratic societies. Ensuring that workers in the new economy have strong rights, can organize and bargain effectively, is a litmus test on how sincere governments and the Commission are protecting workers against exploitation.

Other topics covered by this summit focused on the impact of digitalization on workers and societies and the Multi-Annual Framework for Finance. The social partners further reported that they had reached agreement on a new programme of work for the next years including addressing skills, labour market, psycho-social risks and the impact of digitalization on workers and companies. The respective

social partners will now consult their affiliates if they agree with it.

The tripartite social summit took place 16 October 2018. It brings together the European employers of CEEP, UEAPME and BusinessEurope with the ETUC delegation, the representative of the Austrian Presidency (Chancellor Sebastian Kurz), the President of the European Commission Juncker, the President of the European Council (Tusk) and the respective Labour Ministers from the Presidency (now Austria, Roumania and Finland) and the European Commissioners responsible for Employment and Social Dialogue.

[For the contribution of ETUC](#)

[For the press release and background from the Council](#)

[For the contribution of Commission President Juncker](#)

[For the position of the Visegrad unions on the posted workers directive](#)

Principle 20 of the EU pillar of social rights

Access to essential services

Everyone has the right to access essential services of good quality, including water, sanitation, energy, transport, financial services and digital communications. Support for access to such services shall be available for those in need.

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