

On the way to the 9th EPSU Congress in May 2014

As we are redacting this end of 2013 letter, public attention is directed to the ongoing protest movements in Kiev, Ukraine. We urge the authorities to refrain from any police or other violence against the peaceful demonstrators which include many students and workers. We support the call of the Ukrainian trade unions for a national roundtable in which all interested parties in society can take part, including the trade unions.

We will work with our affiliates in the Ukraine to assist in the understanding of the implications of closer links with the European Union, the role of trade unions in such processes. If the Ukrainian authorities were to decide to sign the Deep and Comprehensive Trade Agreement with the EU, we expect the EU institutions to assist the country, also financially to develop its public services and industrial base. At the latest news the European Commission has suspended negotiations with the Ukrainian government.

Changing subject: Over hundred representatives from EPSU affiliates are gathering this week in the framework of the Annual Collective Bargaining Conference to discuss the impacts and pressures of the Economic Governance Process on public sector pay and collective bargaining. A number of workshops will be held to look into the employment and training situation of young people, pay in social services, the gender pay gap, working time, productivity and decentralization of collective bargaining for example.

The EPSU secretariat is in full swing to prepare the next EPSU Congress which, at the invitation of our French affiliates, will take place from 20 to 23 May in the lovely and vibrant city of Toulouse. Our French colleagues are undertaking every possible effort to welcome delegates from the European Continent to their country.

The EPSU Executive Committee met on 26 and 27 November to consider amendments to the resolutions standing in the name of the Executive Committee. A circular letter with these recommended amendments will be sent to all affiliates. The Executive Committee unanimously elected Annelie Nordström from Kommunal, Sweden, as EPSU Vice President. EPSU Deputy General Secretary, Jan Willem

Goudriaan was endorsed as candidate for the position of General Secretary for election at Congress. Members of the Executive Committee further noted that Annelie is being proposed as candidate for the EPSU Presidency. Congress will also be invited to elect the members of the incoming Executive Committee as well as 2 member auditors (see Congress Circular No. 5).

Throughout 2013, we continued our lobbying efforts in the ongoing revision of the public procurement directives joining forcing with other partner organisations. The directives will now be voted in early 2014. On the positive side we have been able to anchor in the directive the right for public authorities to provide services directly and concepts of 'in-house' and 'public-public cooperation' have been clarified. All parties and operators of public procurement contracts are obliged to meet national employment and labour laws and collective agreements. The most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) is the main basis for contract criteria and no longer the lowest cost or price. We were not able to put through our demand for a specific reference to ILO C94 and hence not all collective agreements can be applied. The internal market committee of the European Parliament also adopted in September the Directive on concessions contracts.

Most of the provisions of the procurement and concessions directive will be the same, not least the affirmation of the 'in-house' provision. We now have to be extremely vigilant that the gains we have been able to make on public procurement are not jeopardized by the conclusion of international trade agreements, such as CETA, concluded between the EU and Canada in September, where the full text is not yet published. EPSU organized a seminar on 15 November in cooperation with the ETUC, the Austrian ÖGB and the AK with participation of Canadian trade unionists. We will continue this work and focus in a next step on the EU-US negotiations (TTIP). PSI has adopted a statement on the plurilateral trade negotiations (TiSA), denouncing the possible consequences for public services. <http://www.world-psi.org/en/public-services-public-good-psi-statement-trade-services-agreement-tisa>

A further showcase piece of EPSU work is on fair taxation. The 'Europe's missing € 1Trillion: we want it back' campaign has sharpened the EPSU profile in tax matters. EPSU is the only European trade union organisation to be represented on a European Commission platform on good tax governance. The latter is heavily dominated by corporate / tax advisor groupings. The work programme includes for

2014 the definition of common criteria on tax havens and aggressive tax planning.

EPSU organized a meeting on 10 October with 40 delegates from 13 countries in participation. It provided an update and evaluation of the EPSU tax justice campaign, in particular activities run by affiliated unions.

The meeting also provided for an update on the state of play on the Financial Transaction Tax (FTT), where notably the French government has scaled down its support for a broad and effective FTT. A joint letter from the French trade confederations and ETUC/ITUC/TUAC has been sent to French President Hollande urging him to keep up the support of the French government for an effective FTT. We would like to thank you for your participation in the European action “Workplaces against austerity - there are alternatives: Public Services, Tax Justice and Collective Bargaining” we organized in October.

Through pictures taken at your work places you have shown that Europe’s public workers and trade unions have a common message to the European Council that met on 24 & 25 October. We need an end to austerity and focus on alternatives such as investment in public services and infrastructure to help economies grow, provide quality care and tackle inequalities. The pictures are a virtual mass-demonstration and a vivid illustration that workers want a change in direction.

We would like to use your photos for other purposes and possible future action. Please let us know should you have any objection. We successfully concluded the European Citizens’ Initiative ‘Water is a human right!’ in September this year, having collected close to 1.9 million signatures. The campaign has been an undeniable success in several ways: firstly, we have been able to show that we can run this type of campaign. Secondly, politically it has been important to bring the message to politicians and the Commission arguing that water is a public good. Water has been excluded from the concessions directive. Thirdly, the campaign has enhanced EPSU’s reputation and visibility. Over 3 million people have visited the www.right2water.eu website. We would like to thank all those unions and activists that have contributed to the success of this campaign, spearheaded by our German colleagues from Ver.di as the main driving force.

Our President, Anne-Marie Perret headed the campaign and has participated in numerous discussions. Colleagues from the EPSU secretariat as well attended a large number of European and national level meetings, organized information

stands and public relations. The publication of the opinion and proposal by the European Commission are expected for March 2014. A lot of intensive work has been accomplished in our sectors and in the CEE constituencies. Particular efforts have been made to include further colleagues from Central and Eastern Europe in the EPSU work, especially in the Standing Committees.

EPSU policy officers attended in a range of subregional seminars and conferences, such as the 13th Energy Round Table in Macedonia (11 – 12 September), the regional conference on health reforms in Serbia (9 – 10 October), a workshop on fair taxation in Moldova (6 March) or the European Prison Conference in Bucharest (25 – 26 September). Some highlights from our sector work: Utilities: Discussion concentrated on binding policy targets for renewables, energy efficiency and CO2 emissions for 2030 and a contribution to the public consultation on nuclear liability and insurance.

Health and Social Services: The final conference to promote the implementation of the Medical Sharps Directive in Barcelona on 20 June successfully rounded up a project to assist in effective implementation of the Directive; we organized for the first time a training seminar on Social Services on 24 – 25 September in Sofia.

National and European Administration: Further progress was made in the social dialogue by the adoption of guidelines for strengthening human resources by better anticipating and managing change; A defense meeting was held on 16 May with a statement approved on defense and trade unions rights adopted in the Standing Committee.

Local and Regional Government: The social partners in local government contributed a joint response on the European Commission's consultation on an Occupational Health and Safety Policy Framework and a joint social dialogue statement on youth unemployment in the public sector.

We have further continued our work on closing the gender pay gap with a major conference on 23 May and a follow-up meeting organized on 15 November in Vienna to look at the impact of the crisis on the pay gap. We have also updated our survey on women's representation in EPSU affiliates decision making bodies.

As most of you will know, I will no longer run for the position of General Secretary at the next Congress. I have been privileged to work with you over a long period of

time. It is through concerted effort that we have turned EPSU into a strong and effective trade union organisation. My thanks go to my colleagues in the EPSU secretariat, who are extremely loyal and competent. I am confident that the new EPSU leadership team will aim to ensure continuity to preserve and further build the viability of EPSU. The challenges are immense, we are facing a major onslaught on workers and trade union rights, in many countries public services are in acute danger as a result of single minded austerity policies. The social welfare state is being undermined as stated recently in an extremely critical analysis by the Human rights Commissioner of the Council of Europe, Muisžnieks.

It is therefore of paramount importance to stand together and to join forces to change policies, to ward off xenophobic and right wing forces. The 2014 elections to the European Parliament will be a key moment for citizens to express their views. We have to continue our campaign for an alternative policy for Europe, a policy that will put a stop to austerity and change track to a path for investment in people, in a renewal of infrastructures, quality jobs and quality public services.

The ETUC have recently presented a recovery plan aiming at creating greater solidarity in Europe, based on principles of democracy, stability and cohesion. I urge you to rally for the ETUC investment plan: A new path for Europe

Wishing you a peaceful festive season on behalf of all members of the EPSU secretariat, I remain

In solidarity, Carola Fischbach-Pyttel,

EPSU General Secretary

EPSU General Circular N°22 (2013) - EN/FR/DE/ES/SV/RU

- [EPSU GenCirc22 endofyear - EN](#)
- [EPSU GenCirc22 endofyear - FR](#)
- [EPSU GenCirc22 endofyear - DE](#)
- [EPSU GenCirc22 endofyear - sv](#)
- [EPSU GenCirc22 endofyear - ES](#)

- [EPSU GenCirc22 endofyear - RU](#)
- [Log in](#) to post comments
- [Printer-friendly version](#)

Sectors

[Executive Committee](#)