

Report EPSU 8th Congress: European Hospital Social Partners announce EU-wide agreement on Medical Sharps injuries

Press Communication

First EU wide text agreed by Hospital trade unions and employers set to prevent over one million injuries per year.

(9 June 2009, Brussels). The European Hospital Social Partners - The European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) represented by the President of EPSU health Committee, **Karen Jennings** and the European Hospital and Healthcare Employers' Association (HOSPEEM) represented by General Secretary, **Godfrey Perera** have announced, before 600 trade union leaders attending the EPSU Congress, a European agreement, which is set to prevent over 1 million medical sharp injuries per year, for healthcare workers.

Welcoming the agreement, Karen Jennings stated that; "this ***represents tremendous progress for the European Hospital social dialogue process, but most importantly it makes a clear and positive contribution to the working lives of Europe's healthcare workers***".

Godfrey Perera said that; " ***this deal is in the interest of the Hospital Employers, who have a moral obligation to protect their workers health and safety, but who gain also in financial terms as good protection decreases any days lost for these highly trained hospital staff***" .

The aim of the negotiations (successfully concluded) was to reach a European-wide agreement on measures to tackle the issue of injuries from sharps (such as needlesticks) in hospitals. This issue has been estimated to cause up to one million injuries to healthcare staff per annum.

The European Social Partners will ask for the Commission to present this agreement to the Council of Ministers to implement it through an EU directive.

The Social Partners (HOSPEEM and EPSU) met with Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs **Vladimir Spidla** on 20 January 2009. Mr. Spidla expressed his support for the negotiations and stated that he was pleased that the European Social Dialogue process was being used to address such an important health and safety issue.

This is the first formal agreement between the European Hospital Social Partners.

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