

Time to Care: towards a Better Deal for Care workers in Europe

EPSU WORKSHOP

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On the eve of International Women's Day, 07 March 2008, EPSU organizes a workshop on pay and working conditions in the care sector to discuss trade union strategies towards a better deal for care workers, a majority of whom are women.

The care sector is an important employer of women. It is characterised by full of precarious and low-wage jobs, irregular working hours and does not offer many career opportunities. Even though staff shortages and the demand for care workers are expected to grow exponentially in the ageing Europe, governments fail to improve the attractiveness of this sector for both male and female workers.

The workshop will present the initial results of an EPSU-commissioned research on pay in a number of EU countries' child, elderly and other dependant care, be it home or residential-based. The research compares on a country-case basis the wage levels in the care sector with the average national wage levels and examine the relationship between wages in the care sector and the gender pay gap.

Research will be further backed up by real life testimonies from EPSU's affiliated unions. A panel of representatives from the European Economic and Social Committee, European Hospital and Healthcare employers' organisation, European Parliament, Social Platform and the European Women's Lobby will present their views on the situation and scope for further initiatives at EU level on the gender pay gap and care services.

“Working women are increasingly facing a care gap while care service worker are undervalued and underpaid. The fact that the two are interlinked is not recognised by EU governments and the Commission. A report by cross-sectoral social partners on work/life balance will be submitted to the Spring Summit on the 13th and 14th of March. This progress report will, amongst others, ring the alarm bell for real actions

to improve public care services. Public care services are critical to any serious strategy aiming at a better work/life balance at work.” says **Carola Fischbach-Pyttel, General Secretary of EPSU**.

The results of the workshop will bring further ammunition to the **ETUC demonstration on 05 April** in Ljubljana for fairer and better pay for workers in Europe.

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