

Lobbying on CETA needed now to protect public services and workers' rights!



This was one of the clear messages from the EPSU/ETUI lobbying workshop on CETA that took place on 7-8 December 2016 for EPSU affiliates from Central and Eastern European countries.

Opponents of CETA are being presented as 'anti-trade' and told they should be content with 'flanking measures' to protect the 'losers' of trade liberalisation. However, the capacity to build and maintain such flanking measures i.e, public services, greater redistribution policies and social protection, are undermined by trade agreements such as CETA. This is because CETA and other EU trade agreements are increasingly reaching into non-trade areas such as investment, public procurement and regulatory capacity, all of which are essential to underpin public services and quality employment and to ensure that all companies respect their social and environmental responsibilities. Another clear message from the workshop was that EPSU's members own experiences with the way public services

are being run is the best entry point to discuss agreements such as CETA and their potential impact. Whether working in healthcare, childcare, eldercare, water and sanitation services, public administration, energy services etc., all members know how important public service principles are – and not free market principles – to the quality, availability and sustainability of services. In many countries public services are already under pressure unregulated competition and the development of ‘two-tier’ systems. Further pressure from CETA will only exacerbate these problems.

The workshop agreed a number of follow-up actions to contribute to the EPSU roadmap against CETA agreed earlier this year and to strengthen demands for quality public services. The immediate focus will be the upcoming votes in the European Parliament in January 2017 and to build awareness amongst members, citizens and politicians of the problems, e.g. using the joint letter on CETA signed by EPSU and many other organisations (see <http://www.epsu.org/article/civil-society-and-trade-unions-europe-and-canada-call-legislators-reject-ceta> available in English, French, German, Czech, Spanish, Italian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Hungarian, Polish, Portuguese and Catalan)

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