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Low pay, understaffing, inadequate opportunities for training and career development, increasing administrative work and health and safety issues are among some of the main challenges facing workers in childcare according to new research commissioned by EPSU. As part of a European Commission-funded project, "Quality Employment and Quality Public Services", EPSU asked the HIVA research unit at Leuven University to carry out four country case studies, investigating the situation of childcare workers in Bulgaria, Italy, Sweden and the UK. There were also positive developments in relation to the promotion of higher educational standards in Sweden, for example, while in Italy there had been a clear policy choice to extend and improve childcare provision. In contrast, low pay and precarious work were widespread in the UK while the sector in Bulgaria was facing a major challenge in recruitment to replace a rapidly ageing workforce. The researchers at HIVA, Monique Ramioul and Yennef Vereycken would be working further on the research following input from EPSU affiliates. Luca Scarpiello outlined how EPSU would develop its work around childcare.

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