

Standing Committee Health and Social Services taking major decisions

(22 October 2018) 54 colleagues from 36 affiliates from 23 European countries, this time also including i.a. Russia, participated in EPSU's Standing Committee "Health and Social Services" organised on [2 October 2018](#) in Brussels. The meeting dealt with a broad range of issues. The participants took several decisions or orientations for EPSU's sectoral work. This article summarises the key points and major decisions.

With a mandate until the next EPSU Congress in June 2019, Maryvonne Nicolle, CFDT-SSS, France, was elected president of the SC HSS and Razvan Gae, SANITAS, Romania, one of the three vice-presidents. Christina McAnea, UNISON, UK, and Kirsi Sillanpää, Tehy, Finland, were not for election and kept their position of vice-president. This is the [new](#) (2018-2019) and this is the [old](#) (2014-2018) Presidential Team SC HSS, with Margret Steffen, ver.di, Germany.

One main point on the agenda was the exchange on the revised [EPSU Programme of Action \(PoA\) 2019-2024](#) "Fighting for a future for all". No major amendments concerning the field of health and social services had been submitted (*N.B.: After the SC HSS the France-Benelux constituency submitted an own affiliates resolution focusing on the sector*). Building on the EPSU PoA 2019-2024, the next Work Programme for the SC HSS will take up and further elaborate on the specific sectoral challenges and priorities. A series of thematic Congress Briefings is being elaborated - the first briefing entitled "[Building union power](#)" and the second briefing dealing with "[Solidarity](#)" have already been issued.

In order to strengthen the links of EPSU's sectoral activities with the work of the PSI, PSI and EPSU had made [written](#) and [oral](#) contributions to the 68th Session of the WHO European Region held from 17 to 20 September 2018 in Rome. PSI and EPSU are supporting the joint efforts of the WHO, OECD and ILO to set up a [International Platform on Health Worker Mobility](#). When it comes to cross-border migration of health workers (from) outside the EU both PSI and EPSU promote instruments and policies to guarantee ethical recruitment and decent working conditions for migrant workers in HSS, in particular means of bilateral agreements between governments.

Preparing the next World Health Day (7 April 2019) the participants decided that EPSU members should be encouraged to do decentralised activities and mobilisations (in health and social care facilities, on the streets, etc.), ideally linked to one of three “common” topics identified: 1) The fight against the negative impacts of policies and measures of privatisation, marketisation and commercialisation of HSS for patients/service users, workers and the quality of the services; 2) The fight for safe, adequate and effective (mandatory) staffing levels; and 3) Campaigning for “Health is a Human Right” linked to the [PSI Campaign "Right to Health"](#). These activities should be brought together and showcased by the EPSU Secretariat, not least in the context of the EPSU mobilisation and policy work in relation to the EP election end of May 2019.

In close coordination with the PSI, an EPSU/PSI Online Platform on safe and effective staffing levels will be launched before the end of the year.

The participants agreed to hold a technical seminar in 2019, organised by UNISON and SIPTU, to provide a forum to discuss on a range of issues in relation to the education, professional qualifications, roles and provisions on CPD for health care assistants/health care support staff. The mutual exchange should start from the insights gained by two studies issued in 2014 and 2018 which DG SANTE had co-funded. In the meantime a virtual thematic platform moderated by UNISON and SIPTU on behalf of EPSU will already be set up to facilitate direct exchange amongst EPSU affiliates. The SC HSS re-confirmed that EPSU is the EU-level (trade union and professional) organisation giving voice to and representing the interests of health care support workers towards the European institutions.

The colleagues agreed to explore with HOSPEEM - in the context of the Sectoral Social Dialogue for the Hospital/Health Care Sector (SSDC HS) - ways to elaborate a “Framework of Actions on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)”, covering all occupational hazards already dealt with by the SSDC HS in the last decade, i.e. efforts to prevent and reduce musculoskeletal disorders, psycho-social risks and stress at work, third-party violence and harassment at the workplace and injuries and infections by medical sharps. In parallel EPSU aims to start an exchange and negotiations with HOSPEEM on a sectoral agreement on the prevention and reduction of musculoskeletal disorders, building on directive 90/269/EEC on the manual handling of loads and on proposals to update these regulatory provisions at EU level and to focus them on specific needs and realities of the health care sector

and workforce.

Aïda Ponce, ETUI, gave a presentation on “The impact of artificial intelligence on the health workforce”. This contribution was instrumental for starting off for the first time in the SC HSS a detailed exchange with and amongst the affiliates in order to orient EPSU’s future work on “digitalisation and robotisation in health and social services”. The main insights and proposals for EPSU elaborated at the FES/ver.di/EPSU [seminar on digitalisation in public services](#) held on 26 and 27 June 2018 in Berlin were presented (cf. [report](#) in EN, currently translated in FR and DE and all [presentations](#)) as well as insights and recommendations from a [report](#) on the impact of digitalisation on job contents the Observatoire Social Européen (OSE) had finalised in June 2018, commissioned by EPSU, and that contains a case study for homecare workers.

Finally, updates were given on two legislative processes:

- The first is on-going and monitored by EPSU, in close cooperation with the ETUC and the ETUI: EPSU shares the view of ETUC concerning the need for a comprehensive EU strategy against work related cancer and support the ETUC policy and lobbying activities, including on the protection of health workers exposed to and handling carcinogenic, mutagenic and reprotoxic hazardous drugs. In the run up to a vote in the EP, [EPSU on 28 August 2018 had sent a letter](#) calling for revisions of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive (2004/37/EC) (CMD) in the 3rd batch of amendments (CMD3). [On 20 December 2017 EPSU had replied to the 2nd phase social partner consultation](#) on possible revisions of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive (2004/37/EC), again in close coordination with the ETUC.
- The second has been concluded with the promulgation of [Directive 2018/958/EU on a proportionality test before adoption of new regulation of professions](#) on 7 July 2018. The EPSU Secretariat had done regular briefings for its affiliates on the state of play and on the outcome of the negotiations first in the European Parliament and more recently in the Trilogue.

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