

Tackling third party violence and harassment in the health care sector in Bulgaria and across Europe

(Brussels, 18 April 2011) EPSU participated in a round table on the organised by Bulgarian member Federation of Trade Unions – Health Services (FTU-HS) and the Bulgarian Association of Health Professionals in Nursing on 22 March 2011 in Sofia. The about 50 participants included trade unionists, professionals in nursing, employers in the health care sector, the chairperson of the Bulgarian Parliament Standing Committee on Health Care, representatives of the Ministry of Social Security and the Ministry of Health and of the labour inspection, patients' organisation and womens' organisations. The seminar led to the establishment of a standing committee in order to solve the problems related to violence in health care, involving the co-organisers, the Bulgarian Medical Association, patients' organisations and relevant ministries/public authorities, as suggested to the Minister of Health by Dr. Ivan Kokalov, President of FTU-HS and Vice-President of the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB).

FTU-HS Vice-President Slava Zlatanova presented a report on “Workplace violence in healthcare – current situation and preventive action, building on data collected by her organisation and the Institute for Social and Trade Union Research. Data give evidence of multiple discrimination of nurses and an increasing probability of violence in the workplace with decreasing educational level and lower position in the hierarchy in the health system. Nurses are often the „buffer” between doctors and patient or between doctors, and that is the reason why they are more. Underlining the high share of nearly 80% of female employment she informed participants that about 7,5% of medical staff in health and medical institutions in Bulgaria has been physically abused in the 12 months prior to the enquiry, three quarters of them are women. Physical violence by patients is the most important form. One third of the health care workers have been confronted to verbal and psychological abuse and harassment, again from patients, but also from line staff up the hierarchy.

EPSU's contribution focused on the Multi-sectoral guidelines to tackle third party violence and harassment at the workplace, signed on 16 July 2010 by European social partners from five sectors (EPSU, UNI europa, ETUCE, HOSPEEM, CEMR, EFEE, EuroCommerce, CoESS) by explaining selected elements and how they have been elaborated. Possible follow-up measures when implementing them on the ground were discussed with participants, i.a. by referring to examples and good practice from other countries. These can be found e.g. in the report to EPSU and UNI Europa or to HOSPEEM, EuroCommerce, CoESS and CEMR under the 2009 RESPECT Project and in a document issued by Danish local and regional government (see publication "Avoiding Harassment and Violence in Danish Municipal and Regional Workplaces"); all three publications are being referred to in EPSU's presentation, see below.

Funding has been secured from the European Commission to organise a series of regional workshops which will raise awareness of the importance of tackling the issue and to allow national social partner organisations from the sectors involved to begin discussions on the national level implementation of the agreement, to be concluded by a final conference on 27 October 2011 in Warsaw.

Have a closer look at EPSU's presentation at the Sofia seminar

- [Tackling 3rd Party Violence Harassment Health Sector Slides Sofia](#)

Read the multi-sectoral guidelines to tackle third-party violence and harassment related to work (available in EN, FR, DE, CZ, ES, RU and SV)

[European social dialogue: Multi-sectoral guidelines to tackle third-party](#)

Letter of invitation to EPSU affiliates for seminars and final conference

- [Tackling 3rd Party Violence Invitation Seminars Conference 2011](#)

Timetable of seminars and final conference organised by European social partners during 2011

- [Tackling 3rd Party Violence Invitation Calendar Conference 2011](#)
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