



## European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)

Calling notice, 12 September 2007

### **Prison Trade Union Delegates meet to plan European action day on Overcrowding in Prisons in 2008**

For Information to Security/ Home affairs/ Justice and EU Correspondents

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**Please note:** National EPSU Prison Network Contacts are attached separately – please contact directly **after** 14 September.

(Brussels, 12 September) Prison trade union delegates from 9 countries across Europe are set to meet in Brussels, EPSU offices, this Friday, 14 September. One of the key **aims of the meeting is to plan for a European action day on 'Overcrowding in Prisons'**. The meeting participants will form a planning group on behalf of all EPSU affiliates in the Prison sector. The date and activities for the Action Day in early 2008 will be agreed. The event will take place in at least 10 European countries.

#### **EPSU WILL ISSUE A JOINT STATEMENT outline progress made at meeting**

This will be available at 17h00 Friday, 14 September.

The reasons for the action day:

- Prisons in the EU are on average, housing **25% more prisoners than the prison was designed for**. This means that on average, each prison is operating with massive strains on operational and security systems.
- This has a catalogue of health and safety implications for staff and inmates.
- Overcrowding in prisons is in breach of fundamental human rights.
- Overcrowding, which can often be directly related to underfunding, or even budget cuts, and growing prison population, is used, perversely as a pro-privatization argument.

#### **Objectives of Action Day**

1. to raise awareness of the human and financial cost of overcrowding, underlining its European ( and global) nature and the human right angle
2. to promote **common trade union demands** (see below) at national and EU levels
3. to underline the role of social dialogue and importance of trade union rights



4. to reinforce the rights to liberty and the presumption of innocence, equal treatment of all citizens in the EU common area of freedom, security and justice, and EPSU campaign for an EU framework on public services.

**Trade union demands on tackling overcrowding (based on EPSU prison action plan – see here for ACTION PLAN language versions <http://www.epsu.org/r/226> )**

- 1 detainee/1 cell
- Minimum worker/detainee ratio (at least 1)
- Right to work and live in a healthy and harmless environment
- Stop increase of detainees by introducing or applying non-custodial measures
- Reduce numbers of pre-tried detainees (1 out of 5 detainees)
- Oppose privatisation
- Application of the European Convention on Human rights and EU charter of fundamental rights (due to become legally binding, except for the UK, as part of the reform of the EU Treaty at the end of 2007)
- recognition of the positive role trade unions and social dialogue play to improve working and living conditions in prisons
- sufficient and even distribution of resources for all prison-related services to avoid competition between different public services (e.g. psychiatric hospitals treating offenders, people with mental illness or drug addicts being treated as offenders)

For **detailed documents** of the 14 September meeting please go to:  
<http://www.epsu.org/a/3074>

For **LANGUAGE** versions (Swedish, Spanish, French and English) of the **EPSU Prison Action Plan**, passed by the EPSU Executive Committee, please go to: <http://www.epsu.org/r/226>

**Contact details:**

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EPSU press ending

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***8 million public service workers from over 200 trade unions are members  
They organise workers in the energy, water and waste sectors, health and social services and  
local and national administration"***

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