

EPSU Standing Committee on Local and Regional Government

31 October 2018

Statement on non-standard forms of work

Decent work in LRG – decent work for all #DecentWorkinLRGbenefitsAll

1. There is indication that non-standard and precarious forms of work (e.g. temporary work, fixed-term contracts, zero-hours/close-to-zero-hours contracts and false self-employment) have gained hold in public services and specifically Local and Regional Governments. In 2015, 28% of all temporary employees were concentrated in (broadly defined) public services in the EU¹. Research also showed that in the UK, over 10% of Local Government employees were employed on a casual/temporary basis². Cost-related pressures, privatisation and outsourcing of public services have all contributed to driving down employment conditions. The quality of work and the quality of services are closely interlinked, and therefore ensuring adequate wages, good working conditions to workers in public services are indispensable to guaranteeing high-quality, affordable and accessible public services.
2. The emergence of non-standard forms of work in Local and Regional Governments endangers the quality of employment and workers' wellbeing, and therefore poses a threat to the quality of public services and their ability to contribute to the well-being of all by reaching all, including the most marginalised. ILO estimates that fixed-term contracts carry a "wage penalty" of 1 to 34 percent compared to permanent contracts³, and precarious contracts also have far-reaching implications for health and safety, workers ability to be organised and have their voices heard. Workers on low pay, on precarious contracts, under unsafe conditions or those who lack access to social protection cannot be expected to live up to such a mounting responsibility that is to provide services on which so much of our well-being depends.
3. In light of this, and in line with the spirit of the EPSU-CEMR Framework for well-being at work adopted in 2016, members of the EPSU Standing Committee for Local and Regional Governments reaffirm our commitment to tackling non-standard forms of work that are detrimental to workers' well-being and to the quality and accessibility of services provided.

¹ Grimshaw, D., Johnson, M., Rubery, J., & Keizer, A. (2016). Reducing precarious work-protective gaps and the role of social dialogue in Europe. Report for the European Commission DG Employment), p. 192.

² Non-standard working in public services in Germany and the United Kingdom/ Malcolm Sargeant and Holger Sutschet; International Labour Office, Sectoral Activities Department. - Geneva: ILO, 2015, p. 28.

³ Aleksynska, M., & Muller, A. (2015). *Nothing More Permanent Than Temporary?: Understanding Fixed-term Contracts*. ILO.

4. This entails:

- Reaffirming our commitment to monitor the prevalence and use of non-standard contracts in LRG on a national level and their impact on workers' well-being and on the quality of services provided. This should include monitoring the types of contracts used, and the trend thereof, paying special attention to female workers and other vulnerable groups such as workers with a migration background, and young workers.
- Organising and recruiting non-standard workers into trade unions and ensuring that they enjoy in practice workers' rights including the right to be informed and consulted on employment conditions
- Seeking discussion and agreements with national and local employers on the use, number and profiles of non-standard workers and making sure that limiting non-standard forms of work is on the collective bargaining agenda.
- Monitoring and exchanging on a regular basis developments in the standing committee using data provided by Eurofound, Eurostat and the ILO.
- Addressing the use of non-standard work with CEMR in the social dialogue committee and mandating the EPSU delegation to seek joint solutions, including agreements.
- Contributing to EPSU and ETUC work to strengthen workers' rights and sectoral collective bargaining, and to improve the quality of work and access to social protection.

Brussels, October 2018