

EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE UNIONS

CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS



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OUR EUROPE

SOCIAL JUSTICE • PUBLIC SERVICES • JOBS FOR ALL



NO TO
austerity



NO TO CUTS
in public services



Hands off our
COLLECTIVE
RIGHTS!



NO TO CUTS
in public services



priorities & demands
at a conference



Make the
employers
PAY!



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A new
EUROPE

Sign!

Water
for people



**PRIORITÉ À L'EMPLOI
ET À LA CROISSANCE**

**PRIORITY FOR JOBS
AND GROWTH**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. An alternative Europe	7
2. Quality public services at the heart of social Europe	11
3. Strengthening workers' rights and employment in Europe through collective bargaining, social dialogue and industrial action	15
4. Economic policy: from austerity towards a more balanced system of economic and social governance	19
5. Climate change – what priorities for sustainable development ?	23
6. Migrant workers' rights	27
7. Working towards gender equality, closing the pay gap and preventing violence and discrimination	31
8. Social services for all	35
9. National and European administration (NEA): reinforcing the general interest	39
10. Local and regional government (LRG): strengthening local democracy	43
11. Health and social services (HSS) : combating liberalisation and meeting future needs	47
12. Utilities (PUT): a key driver for sustainable development	51
13. For a citizens' audit of the public debt in European States	55
14. European treaties	59
15. For the inclusion of binding social and environmental standards in the drafting of bilateral and multilateral European trade agreements	63
16. Youth unemployment – Europe cannot afford to lose a generation!	67
17. Many do more – organising and recruiting	71
18. Defending social protection and the welfare state	75
19. Fighting for a future for all	79



1. AN ALTERNATIVE EUROPE

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- 1 EPSU rejects the brutal austerity policies that are both unjust and ineffective. EPSU reasserts its commitment to build a social Europe where sustainable development, quality public services, full employment, workers' rights, citizens' well-being and the welfare state take centre-stage. Since the end of 2008, public service workers and trade unions have faced a sustained period of attacks from governments and employers under austerity policies which have been imposed across Europe. These policies have had a serious impact on the supply and quality of public services, have led to increased poverty and rising unemployment – especially for young people – and have undermined workers' rights.
- 2 These effects have been compounded by the impact of longer-term structural measures such as outsourcing, privatisation and liberalisation.
- 3 Many EPSU affiliates are not only having to oppose their national governments but are having to organise the fight against the austerity measures that have the collective backing of, and are even imposed by, the institutions of the European Union and/or the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank. These bodies are now involved in unprecedented direct attacks on the collective bargaining rights and pay, pensions and employment conditions of public service workers and the social and political role of trade unions.
- 4 Social Europe is the solution to meet the challenges of the 21st century, but the course it is taking, especially since the emergence of the world crisis, boosts Euroscepticism, and even worse Europhobia, among the European populations, thereby opening the way to all forms of political extremism. We must continue to proclaim the European ideal loudly and strongly and promote the Europe we want, this other Europe which is currently eluding us.
- 5 Social Europe, although far from complete, is being dismantled. This is a central issue of concern not just for trade unions in the European Union, but also for those outside the European Union that use the concept of the European social model as a guiding example for what they want to achieve through their campaigns for better employment and social rights.
- 6 In the face of these attacks EPSU and its affiliates commit to securing answers to the problems and challenges that are facing the Eurozone, the European Union and the broader Europe in the interests of workers, their families and communities. For EPSU, a strong trade union movement goes hand in hand with our vision for an alterna-

tive Europe. Any further European integration must safeguard and widen the social rights of workers and the social and political role of trade unions.

- 7 Europe has to face the emerging challenges of the 21st century. In view of the diminishing natural resources, social inequality, rising unemployment, and demographic challenges, Europe has to reinvent itself and mobilise its strengths for a better, more socially equal, prosperous, democratic and peaceful future.
- 8 A positive European agenda is built on principles of social justice, trade union rights, human rights and democracy, which should take precedence over competition and internal market rules, both in trade agreements in Europe and elsewhere. EPSU wants internal market and competition rules to contribute towards a socially just society, not that these rules are misused and abused to limit the exercise of these rights and limit progress towards a socially just society in the EU itself, in EU external policy, or by other governments in Europe. EPSU supports the ETUC's call for a social progress protocol to be added to the EU Treaty in order to guarantee these principles.
- 9 The alternative Europe is one where the public sector must have sufficient skilled, well-trained, motivated and well-paid staff. This can be delivered through good and transparent management, collective bargaining, social dialogue and trade union rights to information, consultation and negotiation. It also requires measures to ensure equal pay for work of equal value in the same location, support the reconciliation of professional and family life and end insecure and precarious employment. Workers at the same workplace doing the same job should be on the same rate of pay irrespective of their employment status – permanent, temporary, agency or otherwise.
- 10 A positive agenda for Europe is one that fights against poverty and social exclusion and that counters all forms of discrimination whether based on ethnic origin, race, nationality, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age or religious belief.
- 11 Another, social, Europe can also drive and must contribute to a socially fairer world as the European Commission, the European Council and major European countries are influential actors at global level, including in the United Nations, G-20 and international financial institutions. With PSI leading on the global institutions, EPSU and all its affiliates must use their influence and weight to work for change and transform the global agenda. EPSU also demands the transposition of already approved and soon to be approved ILO Conventions into the EU legal order by using legislation under Articles 151-155 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).
- 12 EPSU, consisting of national affiliates and their local and regional organisations, commits to:
 - working towards an alternative Europe at all levels through organising joint actions and in alliances with others that share our views;
 - playing its full part as the European region of PSI and as the public services federation within the ETUC to achieving this goal;
 - contributing with other PSI regions to strengthen PSI's influence on the global institutions; and
 - campaigning, lobbying, negotiating and coordinating activities and actions to organise workers and to defend and promote quality public services in Europe and beyond.



2. QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES AT THE HEART OF SOCIAL EUROPE

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- 1 Quality public services (QPS) are at the core of democratic societies founded on human rights, the rule of law and social solidarity. QPS support the realisation of fundamental rights as set out for example in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from fear, and freedom from want), the European Social Charter and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The development of quality public services must go hand in hand with combating fraud and corruption.
- 2 Quality public services are an essential part of the social Europe because they:
 - provide concrete benefits to society, combining social justice and economic performance, preserving and maintaining equal opportunities, employment, good health and education, thereby promoting well-being of workers and the population;
 - contribute to the shared values of solidarity, gender equality and non-discrimination, thereby harnessing the abilities and specific characteristics of each in favour of sustainable economic development and social and territorial cohesion;
 - are key to fighting poverty and unemployment, especially youth unemployment;
 - are fundamental to meeting the challenges posed by growing inequality in wealth distribution, demographic trends and climate change;
 - are collective assets and ensure the fairer redistribution of wealth;
 - act as a buffer in crises; and
 - play a central and significant role in fostering competitiveness and employment in the private sector.
- 3 In order to sustain and develop quality public services, their funding, organisation and provision must be based on solidarity, respecting shared principles and values of equal access, universality, continuity, adaptability, affordability, proximity, social partnership and democratic control. Central to a well-funded public sector is a fair and efficient system of taxation and tax administration. Where public services are provided by private companies, workers' rights and pay and conditions should be comparable to those of the public sector and eventual profits must be reinvested in the service, not absorbed by shareholders. As a result, they play a redistributive role to ensure a more equal distribution of wealth.

- 4 National, European and international policies must support the development of fair and progressive tax systems, shifting the focus from labour alone to environmental, wealth and capital taxation. It is essential to close tax havens and to better counter tax evasion, fraud and corruption.
- 5 EPSU opposes further liberalisation of public services and is working towards reversing the trend. Marketisation does not improve the efficiency and quality of services. Greater awareness is needed about the consequences of marketisation of public services, as it undermines the principles and values on which quality public services are built, encourages corruption and provides opportunities for capital to shift away from productive, innovative and wealth-enhancing investment. The plurilateral trade negotiations for an International Services Agreement must not undermine public services further. EPSU will contribute to the work of PSI to influence the negotiations.
- 6 Today many citizens question economic policies that increasingly secure wealth for fewer and fewer people while leaving so many in poverty. These policies are also depleting and wasting natural resources, causing climate change, and making people sick. At the heart of the model is the view that public services are not public goods but commodities, to be traded like everything else. The fight for QPS is therefore also the fight for a fairer and more sustainable economic system. This fight includes balancing the use of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) with other indicators of well-being, including access to quality public services.



ACTION POINTS

- ✓ Continue to provide resources for research, training, qualifications, skills, information-exchange, awareness-raising, alliance-building with civil society organisations and campaigning activities in the fight for investment in quality public services and against various forms of marketisation associated with privatisation, outsourcing and contractual public-private partnerships (PPPs).
- ✓ Press for more public spending on public services and the public sector – as an investment and not a cost – through the maintenance and development of solidarity-based systems of financing, fair and progressive taxation, and an end to tax competition, as called for by the EPSU “Tax Justice Charter”, and also support demands for a common corporate tax base, with the minimum level of tax set at least at 25%, the introduction of which must not undermine higher levels set by Member States.
- ✓ The profound changes undergone by public services, the growing demands of users and the changes in their behaviour in relation to public services, call for their renewal. The trade union movement must play a full role in the changes to public services with a view to strengthening them.
- ✓ Take advantage of and encourage positive reforms that deliver better public services more effectively, for example public-public partnerships.
- ✓ Contribute to ‘beyond GDP’ debates that build fairer and more sustainable economic policies.
- ✓ Support the inclusion of social and environmental criteria in public contracts, e.g., requiring companies that win contracts to employ a certain number of unemployed persons or take on apprentices, ensuring that they are employed according to the appropriate collective agreements.
- ✓ Promote the respect of collective agreements and the use of fair wages clauses in public procurement and campaign for all European countries to adopt and implement International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 94 on social clauses in public contracts, including at local level.
- ✓ Explore how to prevent private companies from making excessive profits from public services, especially if they receive state aid or other forms of public subsidies. This is why EPSU calls for the definition and introduction of a legal framework ensuring control, assessment, transparency and freedom of information.
- ✓ Take action so that migrants, including those without documents, are protected from exploitation and have access to the services that they need.
- ✓ Campaign on specific trade agreements with a view to developing with PSI an alternative trade and investment framework based on the protection of public services, human rights, including workers’ rights and sustainable development, and in line with Article 21 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) that stipulates that the EU’s international action shall be guided by the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- ✓ Explore the establishment of a public service platform bringing together the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the Pan-European Regional Council (PERC) and other relevant European Trade Union Federations in order to strengthen cooperation and campaigning to promote and defend public services.



3. STRENGTHENING WORKERS' RIGHTS AND EMPLOYMENT IN EUROPE THROUGH COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND INDUSTRIAL ACTION

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- 1 Collective bargaining is a fundamental means to obtain and ensure decent pay, pensions and employment conditions for public service workers at cross-sectoral, sectoral and company level; it also is an important mechanism for achieving a fair distribution of income.
- 2 However, collective bargaining is under unprecedented attack. Several national governments have torn up collective agreements or frozen negotiations and the European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund have combined in the "troika" to intervene in national processes of collective bargaining.
- 3 The system of economic governance at European level, which is a consequence of the euro crisis, threatens to undermine collective bargaining, particularly in the public sector. This amounts to negative coordination by the European institutions and requires a more effective coordination on the part of the European trade unions.
- 4 Tackling precarious employment and promoting stable, quality and sustainable jobs in public services is needed more than ever, with the provision of training and jobs for younger workers particularly urgent. We will work with the ETUC for a proper implementation of the youth guarantee, also in the public sector.
- 5 There remain important challenges that pre-date the crisis where further action is required, not least in protecting lower paid workers and closing the gender pay gap. New approaches would be valuable in policy areas that we have covered in the past but where more needs to be done, e.g., to ensure training and jobs for younger workers and humane working time patterns.
- 6 Providing affiliates with information and opportunities to exchange experiences and examples of good practice continue to be important elements of our collective bargaining work, along with providing support where possible for initiatives to build active and committed membership at workplace level and co-ordinate collective bargaining work at regional and/or sector level. Unionisation is an essential aspect of our action. Organising is not only about recruiting members and securing their loyalty. It provides the means for their self-empowerment, independence and activism and for the unions to be a source of proposals that constitute a counterbalance to those of the public authorities and employers. Youth networks play an important role in encouraging youth participation across trade union activities including in EPSU's structures. A strong trade union movement contributes to social Europe.
- 7 EPSU affiliates were involved in a major evaluation of the European sectoral social dialogue during 2012 and 2013. The evaluation showed unanimous support from affiliates, both within and outside the European Union, for the European sectoral social dialogue process, indicating its importance not just in terms of what it can

deliver but also in relation to its role as a model for developments at national level. The evaluation, however, also identified the continuing challenges to make it more effective, its outputs more concrete and binding and to get a serious commitment from employers to participate and engage in the process of negotiations and in implementing the results at national level.

- 8 Multinational companies (MNCs) also play a role in delivering public services, particularly in the energy sector but also in other areas such as health, education, justice and local government. This has meant a bigger role for EPSU in coordinating activity in MNCs and European works councils and taking part in negotiations on framework agreements.



Philippe Pochet – ETUI General Director

ACTION POINTS

- ✓ Continue to support affiliates in exchanging information on trade union strategies related to collective bargaining and wage formation through the epsucob@ network and use the collective bargaining conference and working group to examine the potential to coordinate action and campaigning among affiliates on pressing issues, e.g. precarious employment.
- ✓ Assist and coordinate support for affiliates in their efforts to organise and defend workers' rights through collective bargaining, social dialogue and industrial action, including where governments and public employers have ignored or suspended collective bargaining processes, working with the ETUC on using the Council of Europe's complaint mechanism and with PSI to make full use of the ILO complaint system.
- ✓ Re-assert the importance of the general wage bargaining guideline to maintain the purchasing power of salaries and ensure that pay develops at least in line with the private sector and provides workers with a share of national average productivity gains.

- ✓ Lobby, campaign and support the ETUC in achieving changes in the system of economic governance so that there is a balanced approach on wages that does not focus solely on questions of cost competitiveness but takes account above all of decent and fair incomes and the role of wages in maintaining demand and preventing deflation.
- ✓ Campaign against the decisions of the European institutions where they are imposing specific reforms to legal or collective bargaining wage determination systems such as wage indexation, decentralising collective bargaining and linking (nominal) wages more closely to productivity.
- ✓ In the light of the attacks on collective bargaining by national governments and the European institutions, highlight the fact that the EU promotes, in all its policies, the ratification and effective implementation of ILO Conventions on core labour standards and other Conventions. This should include, in particular, Convention 151 that covers collective bargaining rights in the public services.
- ✓ Campaign, lobby and support affiliates in providing lower paid workers with better protection through “living wages”, as well as the improvement of minimum wages in collective agreements and statutory minimum wages where they exist, continuing to assert the aim of achieving legal minimum wages that are at least 60% of national average wages.
- ✓ Support affiliates in their actions to reduce the gender pay gap in the public services.
- ✓ Support any initiatives among EPSU affiliates to co-ordinate collective bargaining work at sectoral and/or regional level.
- ✓ Continue to provide an exchange of information on collective bargaining policy through meetings, conferences, email exchange, the EPSU website etc.
- ✓ Look at different ways of trying to implement collective bargaining policies and encourage affiliates to incorporate common objectives into their collective bargaining plans and to monitor and review this process over a four or five-year period. This could potentially be applied to key issues such as equal pay, precarious work, and training/jobs for younger workers. This would provide a clear structure and focus for our work on these issues and underline the strength and breadth of support among our affiliates for action in these areas in their dealing with employers.
- ✓ Evaluate policy on the reduction and reorganisation of working time and continue to fight against any changes to the definition of working time and for the abolition of the opt-out in the Working Time Directive.
- ✓ Taking up some of the main issues identified in the social dialogue evaluation, work with affiliates to achieve a better implementation of agreed texts and support affiliates in building capacity at national level and improving the participation of both trade union and employer organisations. Work to improve the coordination of policy across sectors where relevant and ensure an exchange of good practice between sectors. We will also explore with affiliates how to extend social dialogue to other priority sectors and address the resource implications that this would imply.
- ✓ Continue to support affiliates in building trade union networks and European works councils and improve coordination within companies and sectors. In consultation with affiliates, also continue to use and review its procedure for negotiating transnational agreements.



4. ECONOMIC POLICY: FROM AUSTERITY TOWARDS A MORE BALANCED SYSTEM OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL GOVERNANCE

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- 1 Austerity measures have undermined any economic recovery in Europe and led to unacceptable levels of hardship in many countries. The challenge now is to ensure that the European countries affected by these measures are not locked into decline. Decisive initiatives are necessary to ensure this in order to create jobs, tackle poverty, and fight for social justice and quality public services. There must be no return to “business as usual”. There is a real need for fundamental changes in national, European and global policy, with a shift especially in the perception of public spending, investment and taxation. These have to be seen for what they can contribute to economic, social and environmental progress rather than as barriers to economic growth.
- 2 It is clear that neither the European institutions – Commission, Council and Central Bank – nor the global institutions like the International Monetary Fund or Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, have come up with any policies to ensure a balanced economic recovery.
- 3 However, the challenge is also to try to answer more fundamental questions about economic progress and how we can move beyond the limitations of the current measures of growth to identify more sustainable and more inclusive measures of economic success, given that gross domestic product (GDP) fails to take account of social and environmental impacts and the added value of public services.
- 4 Economic governance in whatever form has to be democratic and to take account of social and environmental questions. Trade unions have a role to play in this process whether at national, European or global level.



ACTION POINTS

- ✓ Work with the ETUC in relation to the European institutions and with PSI in respect of the global bodies to put forward alternative economic policies with a more balanced approach on public spending, fair taxation and public investment.
- ✓ Strengthen trade union influence on the policies and programmes of the European and international financial institutions.
- ✓ Support the ETUC in its efforts to achieve major reforms in the system of economic governance at European level to ensure a greater role for European and national social partners, national parliaments and the European Parliament at all stages of the European Semester. Social and environmental issues must take precedence over the economic policies and targets set by the European institutions and there needs to be a move away from the narrow focus on budgetary discipline and maintaining a low inflation rate. The European Central Bank's remit should take account of employment to the same extent as price stability.
- ✓ Ensure that any re-negotiation process of the existing Treaties shall:
 - reflect our vision of an alternative Europe;
 - be an open and transparent process with possibilities for broad citizens' consultations and participation in the deliberations on the Treaty; and
 - include a role for trade unions in important areas such as economic governance and social policy as trade unions as social partners play an important role in these areas.
- ✓ Work within the ETUC and broader society to ensure that Treaty reforms contribute to a more democratic, more economically and socially balanced EU and a move away from the blinkered view that profit maximisation and free markets have to be given free reign. Contribute to discussions on alternative annual growth surveys and structural reforms that promote sustainable development, employment, equality and fair distribution of wealth. Within the Eurozone, this means stressing the importance of appropriate mechanisms to assist countries that experience problems to create growth, development and jobs. As an alternative to an economically and socially damaging crisis management policy, support an extensive 10-year investment programme for Europe in the amount of two percent of the EU's gross domestic product, designed in particular to benefit key areas like research, health, education, energy, water, waste, transport, social services and telecommunications. To reduce the dependency of government funding on the financial markets and to improve the financial standing and reduce the interest burden on various EU countries, support the issuing of Eurobonds and initiatives to increase the contribution of structural funds and public investment to sustainable growth. Finally, it is necessary to campaign for the European Central Bank to be able to lend directly to Member States at more favourable interest rates than through the financial markets which take an additional premium.
- ✓ Act to counter the impact of recent legislation on economic governance, and the role of the European Central Bank, European Commission, Eurozone Council and Troika regarding collective bargaining and wage policies and the autonomy of the social partners.

- ✓ Continue to press at European and, through PSI at global level, for more countries to adopt a financial transactions tax as a means of regulating the financial sector and as a major contributor to a fairer taxation system in order to guarantee the public resources for socially useful goods and services.
- ✓ Build on the “no to tax fraud” campaign to continue to pressure public authorities to improve their tax collection rates and close the tax loopholes exploited by corporations and rich individuals.
- ✓ Continue to work with other organisations and experts in order to enrich the debate in developing alternative economic approaches that promote well-being and equality and not only economic growth.



Jan Willem Goudriaan & Yiorgos Archontopoulos – President of EYATH union, Greece



5. CLIMATE CHANGE - WHAT PRIORITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ?

5. CLIMATE CHANGE – WHAT PRIORITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ?

- 1 Climate change is the largest single threat to current and future generations. Many are seriously worried about these climate changes, which afflict everybody to different degrees. It is the poor, particularly in developing countries, who suffer the most as they are the least able to prepare for climate change or to avoid its consequences. We are reaching the 'point of no return' when irreversible changes will take place – or have already taken place – and dominoes will fall, making it impossible to control future developments. Climate change is attributable to the dominant economic model and the pursuit of profit maximisation and growth at all costs. EPSU favours the mainstreaming of the fight against climate change in EU policy and legislation, development cooperation and investment decisions with clear and ambitious targets. Principles of just transition towards a low or even zero carbon society including for workers concerned based on employment alternatives and training, should be integrated in EU policy.
- 2 Public services play a central role in responding to climate change in both the short and long term. They hold the key to shifting from a paradigm of productivity and financial profitability to one of well-being and responding to needs. Public services have an equalising effect on income and well-being and can provide certain services such as healthcare more efficiently than private operators because they focus resources where they are needed. Green transition, the replacement of fossil fuels with renewable energies and energy efficient solutions and other climate actions are part of the solution to the economic crisis. The public sector is responsible for the very services that will be of increasing importance in adjusting to climate change – energy supplies, waste, water, education, health and social services. This is because the transition demands massive investments, at national and EU levels, in renewable energy, in energy efficiency in public workplaces and buildings, in infrastructure and in preventing the consequences of natural catastrophes. Everything should in principle be environmentally friendly, from production to transport and tourism.
- 3 In order to tackle climate change and other environmental problems, EPSU calls for an immediate "Green New Deal" and for a longer-term "Just Transition" towards sustainable development. This transition includes financial reform, green investment and stimulus packages, as well as redistribution of income and wealth. It also means examining the distribution of working time and revamping of the infrastructures that lock industrialized economies into high energy use (through the renovation of building stock, transport systems, and food systems), along with greater involvement of workers and citizens in deciding how goods and services are provided. The

climate question must be at the top of the agenda. The trade union movement has a joint responsibility with environmental, user and other grass roots organisations to refocus on climate matters, find and develop smarter climate solutions and create a climate-friendly society.

- 4 There is a need to demonstrate the interaction between active investment and job creation policies and a green, climate-friendly transition.
- 5 The focus must move away from growth at any price towards sustainable, environment- and climate-friendly growth.
- 6 The answers to the challenges of climate change are global. Even if Europe is in the vanguard with ambitious goals to achieve a low or even zero carbon society, all leading global economic players must contribute. If Europe simply goes it alone competition may be distorted, with consequences for jobs and welfare, and a weakening of political (or popular) backing for ambitious climate objectives.
- 7 Unions do not only have a responsibility in the formulation of national and international policies. We are also responsible for creating a dialogue in the workplace. We know the workplace, our members have the required professional knowledge of how to convert and develop activities. Social dialogue is crucial in the transition process.
- 8 All of us also have a personal responsibility, in our working lives as in our private lives. As individuals we can do a great deal by changing our own climate impact, although many of us need guidance in order to achieve it. Unions could also play an important role in this respect, e.g., by negotiating frameworks that give incentives for change.



ACTION POINTS

- ✓ Continue to develop the public services' and trade union perspective on climate change and sustainable development.
- ✓ Develop in the Standing Committees and sectoral social dialogue specific positions and activities.
- ✓ Demand commitments from governments and the EU to massive public investment in green jobs, in greening public workplaces and infrastructure, renewables' research and development and especially in base-load renewable energy, in technologies that contribute to a low carbon society and in the required skills and qualifications.
- ✓ Explore arguments for a public service (and ownership) role in addressing climate change including in renewables and networks.
- ✓ Support binding energy efficiency targets and linking green energy promotion and energy efficiency campaigns to social and economic campaigns, for example to end fuel poverty and obtain a true right to energy for all, which is a societal responsibility.
- ✓ Integrate social and environmental criteria in public procurement.
- ✓ Define a more detailed position based on the general recommendations and ETUC policy on carbon tax and taxes on environmental polluting products and processes.
- ✓ Continue discussion on the appropriate targets for reduction of CO2 and other green house gas emissions for 2020 until 2050.
- ✓ Participate in the discussion on Beyond GDP, as an element in exploring a different basis for economic policy and the implications of sustainable development for workers and citizens taking account of the global distribution of income, wealth and growth.
- ✓ Develop information on how environmental and climate change can be addressed at workplace level and through collective bargaining.
- ✓ Integrate in trade union policies coming within the scope of EPSU's sectors the concept of social and environmental responsibility of businesses and administrations.



Gloria Mills – Chair of the Women and Gender Equality Committee, UNISON UK



6. MIGRANT WORKERS' RIGHTS

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- 1 Migrants¹ make a major contribution to the economy, to the delivery of public services, especially health and social care, and to the development of a multicultural society.
- 2 Migrant workers must have the right to equal treatment at work, access to health-care, social care, education, training, housing, to civic rights and long-term residency and citizenship.
- 3 The deepening of the social and economic crisis has provided the opportunity for various political forces to encourage a resurgence of anti-migrant, xenophobic politics and even violence as well as restrictions on access to public services such as healthcare and education, access to housing and culture.
- 4 The crisis has also caused a shift in migration with several countries now seeing major increases in emigration that are posing urgent problems in terms of national labour supply, particularly in the public services.
- 5 A decent migration policy should ensure that migration is voluntary, fair and humane and based on global redistribution of wealth, democratic development and decent income and jobs along with the right to quality public services. It should not be based on a narrow assessment of the economic needs of the European Union or receiving or sending countries.
- 6 The role of women migrant workers needs to be acknowledged in particular and consequently the questions of trying to ensure gender equality, tackle harassment and violence as well as provision of child and eldercare.
- 7 EU and national migration policies are often fragmented, selective and repressive, creating a complex hierarchy of workers' rights that makes the job of labour law enforcement and trade union organising more difficult.
- 8 There are serious shortcomings in terms of staffing of migration services and training of workers, particularly in relation to knowledge of fundamental human rights of migrants. There should be public provision of legal and general information and advice for migrant workers, including input from trade unions.
- 9 Trade unions have a responsibility to support and organise migrant workers (documented or not) and fight racism, xenophobia and social dumping.

¹ In the EU legal context the term 'migrant' is used mainly to refer to third-country nationals (i.e., coming from outside of the EU). In practice however the term is used more broadly, i.e., to describe people who move from one place to another in order to find work or better living conditions.

- 10 We condemn the criminalisation and detention of migrants as well as making agreements that seek to retain asylum seekers in third-countries that do not respect basic human rights.
- 11 Asylum seekers should have, to the greatest extent possible, the same rights as other migrants.
- 12 There is a downward trend in refugee status recognition, which is exacerbated by public sector cutbacks. Yet the number of claims for asylum resulting from fear of persecution, climate change, and economic hardship, will not decrease. Resorting to asylum will also increase if legal channels to migration are blocked. The EU should not promote the outsourcing of asylum processing to third countries.



Britta Lejon - Chair of the EPSU NEA committee 2014-19, Sweden, ST

ACTION POINTS

- ✓ Take action so that migrants, including those without documents, are protected from exploitation and have access to the services that they need.
- ✓ Support access to citizenship and civic rights and the ETUC's call for full citizenship after 5 years' residency.
- ✓ Support and encourage the organisation and representation of migrants in trade unions.
- ✓ Support the ETUC's demand for legislation on the rights of migrants, based on the ILO conventions 97, 143 and 189.
- ✓ Argue for legislation to ensure that private recruitment agencies cannot require migrant workers to pay to get work whether in the home or host country and support the PSI call for a stronger framework on the regulation of recruitment agencies in both EU and countries of origin based on the World Health Organisation code of practice.
- ✓ Implement our pledge to condemn detention of undocumented migrants.

- ✓ Coordinate campaigning with the ETUC and PSI for ratification of the UN convention on the protection of migrant workers and ILO convention on domestic workers.
- ✓ Highlight the social and economic impact on migrant workers' countries of origin and maintain the pressure for carefully targeted development aid, cancellation of illegitimate or odious debts, replacing free trade with fair trade and creating a level playing field.
- ✓ Use social dialogue and collective bargaining both at national and EU level to:
 - tackle racism, particularly in the police and justice system;
 - get more training for migration service workers on migrants' human rights and develop a code of conduct of public officials dealing with migrants;
 - argue for the recruitment of a more diverse workforce across the public services; and
 - ensure equal treatment and equal pay for work of equal value for all workers.
- ✓ Exchange good practices on integration and access to the welfare state.
- ✓ Build upon and expand the policy and research recommendations of the Euromed migration project (2010-2012) with a view to develop well-resourced and welcoming migration and asylum public services, which provide the first point of access for newcomers to a good administration and information on labour rights.
- ✓ Continue to work to apply the EPSU/HOSPEEM code of conduct on ethical recruitment in healthcare and to extend its application to other sectors.
- ✓ Critically assess the involvement of trade unions in any forums that discuss the role of migration when diagnosing labour market and skills shortages.
- ✓ Support moves towards the regularisation of undocumented migrant workers and argue for the need for a coherent permanent framework rather than ad hoc regularisation schemes that place sudden burdens on administrations.
- ✓ Argue for the inclusion of social/labour clauses in public contracts for private (not-for-profit and for-profit/commercial) providers in the context of public procurement procedures to support the principle of equal pay for equal work.
- ✓ Argue for a shift in responsibilities so that policy is developed in relation to employment and human rights issues and is not seen as just a question of immigration control.



**7. WORKING TOWARDS
GENDER EQUALITY, CLOSING
THE PAY GAP AND PREVENTING
VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION**

7. WORKING TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY, CLOSING THE PAY GAP AND PREVENTING VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION

- 1 The public sector is a large employer of women, provider of care infrastructures, regulator of the labour market and socially responsible employer. It must guarantee equal treatment between women and men. However, its capacity to defend workers and citizens against all forms of unequal treatment and discrimination has been seriously undermined by the scale of austerity measures in many countries.
- 2 The cuts have disproportionately affected women through job losses, pay cuts or wage freezes, and withdrawal or changes to essential care services. They have also posed major challenges to the ways in which the public sector can tackle other forms of discrimination – on the grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, race, religion or belief.
- 3 Furthermore, social dumping in connection with privatisation and contracting out also tend to jeopardise earlier equality gains for many groups of workers who face discrimination.
- 4 The gender pay gap continues to pose a challenge for trade unions across Europe with women earning on average 17% less than men. There are large variations between countries and the tendency remains for the pay gap to be lower in the public sector than in the private sector.
- 5 Closing the gender pay gap requires action to deal with a number of causes: the undervaluation of women's work, as well as their skills and competence, the impact of career breaks for looking after children or family care, the disparities between full-time and part-time workers and gender segregation in terms of occupation, sector and working patterns.
- 6 It also requires recognising the fact that the difference between women's and men's wages increases with the level of education obtained, the level of hierarchical responsibilities, age, years of service, migrant status and ethnic background but also that the pay of both men and women tends to be lower in those sectors dominated by women.
- 7 All these elements also have detrimental effects on women's pension levels and increase the already higher poverty risks for women.
- 8 Migrant women face multiple discrimination, exacerbated by the vulnerability caused by governments and EU immigration policies and restrictive asylum policies.
- 9 The European Commission's commitment to closing the gender pay gap and tackling other forms of discrimination is undermined by its market-driven policy on public

services and its and the European Central Bank's calls for wage moderation in the public sector.

- 10 The European social dialogue both at cross-sectoral (through the Framework of Actions on gender equality, March 2005) and sectoral levels, through toolkits, guidelines on gender equality plans, and conferences can continue to provide means to make progress. EPSU will build on the sectoral achievements since 2009. These include the adoption of the gender equality guidelines in the local public service sector, the adoption of the statement on transparency and data collection for equal pay in national administration and the signing of the first transnational gender equality agreement in the utilities sector.
- 11 Success in closing the pay gap requires cooperation between all trade union organisations and public authorities and real commitment from the employers.
- 12 While women's representation in EPSU's structures has a good record, more action is needed to reach gender parity in line with the Federation's constitution.



Jan Rudén – Chair of the Public Utilities Committee (PUT), SEKO, Sweden

ACTION POINTS

- ✓ Fight discrimination at the workplace related to gender, age, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, religion, belief and disability and call for the unblocking of the revision of EU anti-discrimination legislation.
- ✓ Implement and promote EPSU's common objectives to achieve equal pay through collective bargaining, stronger EU and national equal pay enforcement mechanisms, and better EU equal pay legislation in cooperation with the ETUC.
- ✓ Highlight the need to deliver equal treatment and tackle discrimination in EPSU's demands for quality and affordable public services.
- ✓ Continue to challenge privatisation and outsourcing and various forms of marketization of the public sector which can exacerbate inequalities of all kinds and leave many groups of workers more vulnerable to harassment and discrimination.

- ✓ Oppose all attacks on maternity and parental rights, such as cuts to occupational pay and leave, and also campaign to protect and improve existing rights.
- ✓ Campaign for an EU right to full-time work and to paid parental leave including paid and non-transferable paternity leave, via legislation and/or social dialogue, and for an improved directive on pregnant workers enshrined in legislation.
- ✓ Lobby for equality clauses in public contracts, in line with EU legislation on public procurement.
- ✓ Call upon the European Commission to survey job classification in care services as is intended in the gender equality roadmap 2006-2010, in consultation with EPSU.
- ✓ Monitor equal pay trends and payment systems, promote the equal pay checklist and provide support and documentation to affiliates working to reduce the gender pay gap, including examples of co-operation between trade unions that have resulted in shifts in relative salaries between male- and female-dominated sectors and how best to increase pay levels in sectors dominated by women workers.
- ✓ Pursue the aim to reduce the gender pay gap by five percentage points by the next Congress.
- ✓ Survey the impact of austerity measures, public sector reforms and the deregulation introduced by the internal market on equality, equal treatment and action against discrimination of all kinds and take active steps to counterbalance their impact.
- ✓ Facilitate training on measures to promote equal treatment and tackle discrimination and harassment, in cooperation with PSI and the ETUI training institute.
- ✓ Promote gender-mainstreaming across EPSU sectors by encouraging a gender perspective when assessing the implications for women and men of any planned activity in any sector, at all statutory levels including finances.
- ✓ Continue to work towards gender parity and/or proportionally representative participation in all EPSU committees and activities.
- ✓ Continue to ensure implementation of the multi-sectoral agreement on third-party violence at work and to consider further sectoral agreements, for example in the health sector and local and regional government.
- ✓ Continue to provide information and support campaigns and grassroots action to prevent and combat any form of physical and/or psychological violence ascribed to third parties.



8. SOCIAL SERVICES FOR ALL

8. SOCIAL SERVICES FOR ALL

- 1 Social services are based on principles of solidarity, equality of access, universality, continuity, affordability, proximity, user protection and democratic control. They include a broad range of specific service areas, ranging from childcare, elderly and homecare to social protection bodies, community services, probation and social integration services. Legal frameworks must underpin these principles and ensure that services are provided to all citizens irrespective of income or geographical location. Only in this way can important societal objectives – such as a high level of employment, equal opportunities, the fight against poverty, economic and social justice, and social and territorial cohesion – be reached.
- 2 Social services are delivered by different levels of government as well as by non-profit and for-profit providers, including multinational companies (MNCs). EPSU is the recognized social partner for the health and social services sectors, irrespective of whether services are provided in private or public form, and for local and regional government and represents workers throughout the different areas of social services irrespective of type of provider.
- 3 Countries with good quality social services and comprehensive social security systems perform better in international comparisons. Social services support and assist people throughout their lives, not only when they are in the most vulnerable situations. Investment in social services pays off through enhanced integration and inclusion. Social services improve people's capacity for work and increase labour market participation, including for disadvantaged groups such as people with disabilities, whether social and/or physical.
- 4 The availability of good quality and affordable child and elderly care means that women are not forced into part-time work, can work full time and gain economic independence, develop a career and stay on the labour market instead of leaving it in order to take care of parents or children. Social services have a fundamental role in supporting gender equality, women's access to the labour market and a better work-life balance of both women and men.
- 5 Social services depend on collective sources of funding from general taxes and/or social contributions. This funding is responsible for a large number of the four million jobs that have been created in health and residential care in the EU between 2000-2010, and it is vital to meet growing demands for services linked to an ageing population and longer life expectancy. Public, non-profit provision of social services

ensures that much needed public funding is spent on the services provided and is not lost to private profits. Profit maximisation is in contradiction with general interest and social welfare objectives and governments at all levels have the responsibility to ensure that regulation is in place to enforce public service obligations, including through evaluation, monitoring, verification and sanctions.

- 6 Social services are needed more than ever in this period of economic recession with people more likely to be affected by unemployment, poverty, ill-health, crime, racism and other forms of violence. Yet social services are being cut. These cuts have a major impact on society, creating social problems and increased social costs in the long term. Emerging research reveals growing levels of social exclusion but also ways in which such exclusion can be tackled, which is driving the development of new services. Greater awareness of the consequences of poverty and growing international commitment to tackle this problem is also playing a role. Cuts in national social protection systems are also shifting responsibilities to the local level, increasing the role that the local and regional government sector plays in funding and providing social services; this role must be supported through appropriate additional resources.
- 7 In many countries the social services sector is predominantly female and characterized by low pay and poor working conditions, part-time work, self-employment, a high level of workforce turnover, an ageing workforce, and problems with recruitment and retention. In many countries the privatisation of social care has led to 'zero hours' contracts, inadequate contact time with clients and wages below the statutory minimum. This has been made worse by low union density and lack of strong trade unions. Unionisation, social dialogue and collective bargaining need to be strengthened urgently in order to improve wages and working conditions. Collective agreements in many countries and for a range of sub-sectors outside the public sector either do not exist, are limited in scope, are not properly applied, or do not reach the workers most in need, for example migrant care workers in households.
- 8 EPSU affiliates strive to ensure that conditions of work and pay are developed through collective bargaining processes and that they can guarantee all workers a decent living. We also support the design of packages of services for frail elderly people, parents needing childcare, handicapped persons, etc. in the context of structured employment relations. This also allows for innovative service policies and to upgrade the quality of work with an essential aim to better reward people whose skills have traditionally been undervalued. For particularly vulnerable workers, such as migrant workers working in households, strong and effective legal protections are needed and public employment agencies need to play a more proactive and supportive role.
- 9 Strengthening and/or developing social dialogue and collective bargaining in the social services sectors at national and European level is key to improving the quality of employment and services. The gender dimension must be highlighted and effective measures to address and overcome the gender pay gap need to be taken given the high percentage of women workers in this area. Improving the quality of work, not least for those employed in personal social services, is a key priority for EPSU and its affiliates. This relates to pay and working conditions, access to initial training and qualification to access social professions and to continued professional development, wellbeing at the workplace, adequate staffing levels, regulated working time and rest periods.

ACTION POINTS

- ✓ Promote and fight across Europe for universal social services as public services, organised collectively on the basis of public service principles and underpinned by clear legal frameworks.
- ✓ Fight against budget cuts in social services and for adequate funding and staff for social services.
- ✓ Pursue the professionalisation of these jobs for better collective guarantees.
- ✓ Organise and increase trade union membership in the social service sector and increase collective bargaining coverage.
- ✓ Explore the viability of EU legal instrument(s) on social services, based on Article 14 of the Treaty to develop regulatory framework(s) for social service providers.
- ✓ Oppose social protection and social insurance bodies from being subject to marketization and competition rules, be it in the EU internal market or in international trade agreements.
- ✓ Advocate the development, implementation and monitoring of standards for the quality of services and jobs, building on the EU voluntary quality framework for social services of general interest (SSGI), which recognises the need for high quality services and employment.
- ✓ Demand and lobby for national and European investment plans to focus on the development of social services, ensuring full respect for collective agreements and legal minimum wages where they exist, and the training, recruitment and retention of qualified staff, in particular in the fields of elderly/long term care, care for people with disabilities, child care and mental health care.
- ✓ Support access to training and qualifications, higher levels of professionalisation, representation and defence of workers' rights by trade unions; and develop effective recruitment and retention policies at all levels.
- ✓ Encourage the collection of further information, knowledge and data about social care providers, employers' organisations, coverage of the workforce by collective bargaining and collective agreements and the representativity across EPSU countries to strengthen EPSU's role in this area.
- ✓ Ensure cooperation on social services within EPSU and in any developing European sectoral social dialogue to build a clear profile based on a holistic and integrated strategy and to support national collective bargaining in social services.
- ✓ Promote the sectoral social dialogue at national and European level with representative public and private employers' organisations.
- ✓ Cooperate with PSI and its affiliates in other regions in further developing trade union strength in the social services area.
- ✓ Develop over the next Congress period further work on employment services, elderly / long term care, care for people with disabilities, child care, drug abuse, mental health care and social housing.
- ✓ Exchange with relevant civil society organisations at European level with a view to promoting a public service approach for social services.



9. NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN ADMINISTRATION (NEA): REINFORCING THE GENERAL INTEREST

9. NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN ADMINISTRATION (NEA): REINFORCING THE GENERAL INTEREST

- 1 In the face of public sector cuts and pressure from EU economic governance, there are strong concerns that, on the one hand, there is a weakening of the social, solidarity-based and regulatory functions of the state, and on the other, an expansion of state repression illustrated in particular through anti-trade union measures, criminalisation of groups in society, and the growing prison population.
- 2 Against this background, the NEA Committee will continue pressing for the state sector and EU administrations to serve the general interest, provide more and meaningful jobs, and be an example for trade union rights. To achieve this, NEA can build further upon its large trade union membership and the EU social dialogue committee for central governments (SDC CGA) established in 2010. It can also base its action on citizens' demands for democratic, fair and transparent governments and good governance free from corruption and commercial interests.



ACTION POINTS

Securing social dialogue and trade union rights and strengthening the EU social dialogue committee in central government administration.

- ✓ Support affiliates in re-introducing or strengthening trade union rights to information, consultation and bargaining including on restructuring by all means available including exchanges of good practice, protest, industrial action, negotiations, and litigation in national, European and/or ILO courts.
- ✓ Seek, in close cooperation with the LRG committee and EU employers, an extension to the public sector of the EU directive establishing a general framework for information and consultation rights of employees and a more effective EU legal framework to manage and anticipate restructuring and changes including via sectoral negotiations at EU and national levels in response to the EU economic governance.
- ✓ Develop a common approach to fair pay, health and safety, quality jobs and combating precarious work, especially among youth; and for tackling inequalities between employees doing equal work or work of equal value, including in outsourced services.
- ✓ Explore best ways to remove remaining obstacles to recruiting non-nationals in the state sector.
- ✓ Continue promoting negotiated alternatives to job and pay cuts on the basis of a better evaluation and anticipation of citizens' needs, public sector jobs and skill needs, a more transparent, participatory management that values staff engagement, skills and competence development.
- ✓ Review productivity measurements that are ill-suited to assess the performance of public sector.
- ✓ Improve inputs of affiliates in the EU social dialogue committee in central government administrations (SDC CGA), ensure a good implementation of its outcomes and convince all or at least 80% of EU employers to join the SDC CGA by 2019.

Promoting the state sector and EU administrations as regulators of the market and providers of public services and jobs

- ✓ Promote the regulatory, protective, and social role of governments and EU administrations through exchanges of good practices and development of common principles on good governance taking account of the needs for both local democracy with the appropriate resources and a coherent national and EU framework.
- ✓ Enhance the profile and value of the public sector for citizens, jobs and sustainable growth with national union centres, the ETUC, national governments and European Commission.
- ✓ Expose and combat, on the basis of evidence-based research, the growing influence of commercial interests in public policy making and service delivery.

- ✓ Maintain and strengthen with the continuing support of affiliates existing networks of groups of state sector workers with a view to give a more concrete image of the sector, improve working conditions via common policies and demands including in the EU social dialogue committee in CGA. Such groups include:
 - Prison services where the Committee will continue promoting alternatives to imprisonment, safe prisons whose primary function is to rehabilitate prisoners, better initial and vocational training of prison staff, decent ratios of staff per prisoner;
 - Defence group where the Committee will seek to represent the interest of all public defence workers, contribute to “normalise” the position of soldiers in society and in relation to trade union rights, argue against privatisation of armed forces and promote further social / labour clauses in defence contracts;
 - Tax services where it will raise its profile as the leading organisation for tax employees in Europe and seek a representative role in the EU tax related policy;
 - Embassy staff where the Committee will continue exploring legal solutions and coordinated campaigns to stop immunity of diplomats being used as a pretext for bypassing labour law.



Mikhail Kuzmenko – EPSU Vice-President, Health Workers Union of the Russian Federation (HWURF), Russia



10. LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT (LRG): STRENGTHENING LOCAL DEMOCRACY

10. LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT (LRG): STRENGTHENING LOCAL DEMOCRACY

- 1 Local and regional government in Europe is operating in a very difficult economic and financial context. Pressures on local and regional government expenditure as a significant part of overall government expenditure will continue, albeit with some variation depending on the country. In some countries local and regional government has been more heavily affected by cuts than the public sector as a whole.
- 2 Across Europe local democracy and the autonomy of local and regional government must be strengthened in order to develop sustainable, inclusive and equitably funded local public services that respond to the needs of citizens, communities, workers and businesses.
- 3 Developing a positive agenda for local and regional government autonomy means recognising that the diversity of local and regional government structures and competences in Europe is a strength, and not a weakness.
- 4 Local and regional governments also play a central and significant role in fostering competitiveness and employment in the private sector. The major part of public procurement of goods and services - which represents more than 18% of EU GDP - is carried out at local level.
- 5 Local regional governments guarantee local democracy and influence people's lives and their surroundings, by producing and delivering a variety of local services to citizens and businesses. Local public services are therefore essential for the quality of life, proximity of service delivery, territorial development and social cohesion.
- 6 Local governments need to be funded appropriately and have the capacity to raise taxes. It is the right of public authorities at all levels to decide how they want to fund, provide and organise their services. Research shows that there are no positive links between marketization, savings and quality; marketisation does not give more value for money. Open competition has not led to higher efficiency and quality. Public procurement is to be used to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth, to support common societal goals, and to provide goods and services of high quality.
- 7 Municipalities are large employers and of great importance for the local economy and to the local community – which means that the local and regional govern-

ment sector needs sufficient, well-trained, motivated and well-paid workers. This demands good and transparent management and trade union rights to information, consultation and negotiation, strong social dialogue and collective bargaining, and an end to all forms of insecure and precarious employment, serving also as a model for employment.



Anders Hammarbäck, VISION Sweden, President of the Local and Regional Government Committee 2009-2014

ACTION POINTS

- ✓ Further develop policies, actions and research to improve public services at local and regional level, asserting the importance of in-house provision and re-municipalisation of local public services and promoting the added-value of municipal companies operating on the basis of public provision of local services. To ensure adequate funding of municipal services EPSU will promote joint NEA/LRG work on a socially just re-distribution of resources between the central and local and regional government levels.
- ✓ Monitor trends of inter-municipal cooperation in relation to restructuring and de-centralization. The current economic context, public procurement rules, decentralization and the expiry of concession contracts have promoted an increased development of inter-municipal cooperation e.g. in waste collection, waste management, water distribution, hospital management or economic development over a wider area than a single local authority. This development can support a more efficient and coordinated provision of public services.
- ✓ Gather information and facilitate exchange of information on local taxation systems and on the allocation of competences and responsibilities based on relevant experience from countries where such taxation systems exist. Local Governments must

have the appropriate resources to be able to finance their various local policies. They must also have the competence and the capacity to raise their taxes. In particular, EPSU will ensure that more information on funding and taxation of local government is gathered from all EPSU constituencies.

- ✓ Raise awareness of the relation between quality services and quality jobs and promote the well-being of workers in local and regional government through more focus on the physical and, above all, the psychological work environment, e.g. stress, influence on own work, harassment, work-life balance and third-party violence, working time and increasing workloads.
- ✓ Maintain and develop networks in key areas of LRG, including in fire-fighting services where EPSU has built up an active network and published a comprehensive comparative brochure on fire-fighting services, the culture sector, and among non-teaching staff in education.
- ✓ Strengthen social dialogue to improve the quality and efficiency of services, to develop sustainable workplaces, to tackle discrimination relating to gender, race, ethnic origin and other equality issues, and to provide jobs for young workers.
- ✓ Support all activities that strengthen the creation of employers at national level for local and regional government, in particular in countries where employers organizations are non-existent.



Isolde Kunkel-Weber – EPSU Vice-President, Ver.di, Germany



**11. HEALTH AND SOCIAL
SERVICES (HSS) : COMBATING
LIBERALISATION AND MEETING
FUTURE NEEDS**

11. HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES (HSS²) : COMBATING LIBERALISATION AND MEETING FUTURE NEEDS

- 1 Increasing liberalisation in the area of health and social services, both within countries and at European level, is weakening solidarity and cohesion, exacerbating inequalities with a negative impact on living and working conditions, as well as on job quality and security. Market principles and commercial interests, including the drive to make profits, clash in many cases with both the public and the workers' interest.
- 2 Demographic change and an ageing population will increase the demand for high-quality health care and social services in Europe. Investment in the sector and its workforce is urgently needed to tackle questions of staff shortages and to address challenges related to qualifications, new skill needs and professions, the right skills mix and shifting tasks between health and social care workers. Improvement in management competence and capacity is also needed.
- 3 The increased involvement of profit-making companies, non-profit organisations and small enterprises in the delivery of health care and social services has also led to a rising number of employers who deny trade union rights to their workers and reject the implementation of collective agreements.



Dave Prentis – EPSU Vice-President, UNISON UK

² The Standing Committee has requested to include a definition of the area covered by HSS, as follows:

“Health care and social services include a wide range of services, including but not limited to the following: Hospital services, primary and out-patient health services, long-term residential care for elderly and/or disabled people, home & community care including home helps, mental health care, community and cultural services, social work, social support services and socio-educational services, child care and child protection services, social housing, employment services.” “Social services” cover a very large number of different areas, provided by different levels of government, non-profit and for-profit providers. The Working Group Social Services has been operated jointly by HSS and LRG.

ACTION POINTS

✓ **Health and social services faced by the crises and austerity measures**

Develop joint action to counter the consequences of the financial and economic crisis and austerity measures with a view to improving sustainable financing of personnel, infrastructure and service quality. Special attention is to be given to women – constituting about four fifths of all workers in the sector – in combating job cuts in the public sector and the decline in the supply of public or publicly financed health and social services which generates negative effects on the possibilities to reconcile work and family life. Continue policy and advocacy work on the HSS aspects of e.g. EU internal market rules, economic governance, and specific policies, such as the “Social Investment Package” (2013), Social Services of General Interest (SSGI), Personal and Household Services (PHS), the Action Plan for a EU Health Workforce (2012) and active inclusion (2008).

✓ **Privatisation and marketisation of health and social services**

Continue the fight for quality health and social services and against various forms of marketisation that worsen or actually lower the quality of jobs or services and undermine the financial sustainability of health and social services. To this effect EPSU will collate trade union strategies and practices to safeguard and improve pay and working conditions, the coverage of collective agreements and the fields and issues included in them, including for workers in private companies. Monitor the development and activities of the different multi-national enterprises in the health care and social services sectors and further support the establishment of European works councils in health and social care in those companies eligible.

✓ **Decent work / sufficient and qualified staff**

Develop and implement strategies for decent work and protection of workers in the health care and social services sectors from inhumane treatment and precarious work.

- ✓ Defend and promote the principle of equal pay for equal work at the same place, as well as equal pay for work of equal value.
- ✓ Promote at the relevant national, regional and/or local level the definition and application of staff-patient-ratios and mechanisms for the forecasting and calculation of quantitative and qualitative needs for certain categories of staff in order to ensure the proper functioning of health and social care institutions/services and specific departments.
- ✓ Call for appropriate funding and long-term public investments in health care and social services.
- ✓ Improve the societal recognition of care work, combat the undervaluation of jobs in the sector and support the professionalisation of the workers.
- ✓ Support recruitment and retention of health and social care workers through improvements in employment conditions, using, among other things, the work of DG SANCO on models of good practice on health worker retention and better human resources management.

✓ **Social dialogue, collective bargaining and collective agreements**

Strengthen industrial relations and social dialogue in the health care and social ser-

vices sectors at European, national, regional and local level, in particular by setting up or supporting joint activities or projects with relevant employer organisations organised at Member States and/or at EU-level.

- ✓ Promote the implementation of and monitor the impact of cross-sectoral and sectoral European social dialogue texts on the role of trade unions and the improvement of employment, working or pay conditions.

- ✓ **Occupational safety and health in health and social services**

Establish a work package on occupational safety and health to be tackled under both EPSU's own work and the activities in the context of the sectoral social dialogue with HOSPEEM. Launch joint actions of EPSU members and with relevant hospital employers to prevent the risk from and to reduce the negative consequences of muscular-skeletal disorders and skin diseases. Develop good practice examples and guidance to implement outcomes of relevant cross-sectoral (e.g. tackling third-party violence and harassment) or sector-specific initiatives (prevention from injuries with medical sharps; ageing workforce). Organise and support activities to further institutionalise the role of trade unions in the implementation and monitoring of national and European legislation on occupational safety and health.

- ✓ **Qualifications/skills/competences of health and social care workers**

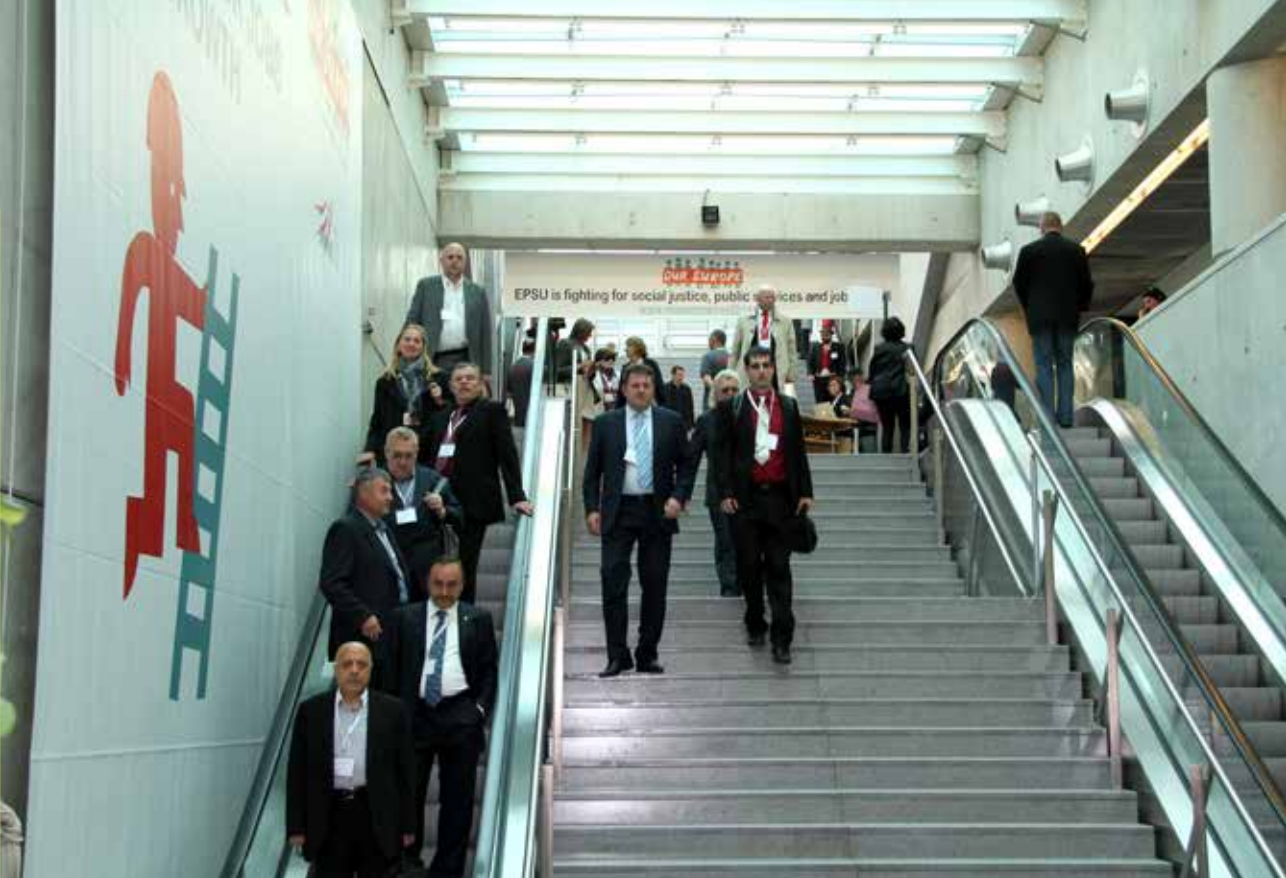
Ensure the follow up to the revised Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications.

- ✓ Influence the work of committees / working structures at the interface of labour market and professional qualifications to deal, among other things, with the collection and exchange of information and where appropriate the preparation of regulations related to skills mix and task shifts.

- ✓ **Cross-border migration of health workers / ethical recruitment practices**

Fight unethical practices in the cross-border recruitment of workers in the health care and social services sectors, by promoting the principles of the EPSU-HOSPEEM Code of Conduct on Ethical Cross-border Recruitment and Retention (2008) and of the World Health Organisation Code of Global Practice of International Recruitment of Health Personnel (2010).

- ✓ Put pressure on the EU and national governments to invest in health care, the attractiveness of health professions and the working conditions of health workers in both sending and receiving countries and improving the cooperation with governments and public authorities at all levels to work towards better legal protection of migrant care workers in private households, in small or medium sized enterprises or for those self-employed (including the bogus self-employed).
- ✓ Support relevant stakeholders in reducing the negative consequences of the flight of skills and qualified persons and "care drain" in the sending countries.
- ✓ Share information on the contents and success of strategies and campaigns for organising, recruiting and integrating migrant workers. Promote the conclusion of bilateral agreements between trade unions affiliated to EPSU and the ETUC, covering a range of issues for the benefit of their members, including the possibility of reciprocal agreements for temporary membership in trade unions.



12. UTILITIES (PUT): A KEY DRIVER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

12. UTILITIES (PUT): A KEY DRIVER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 1 The Utilities sector faces many structural changes due to global developments, regulatory decisions and technological innovation and also the way public authorities and employers react to these changes. They affect work places and impact on workers, their families and communities. EPSU re-affirms that infrastructure for public services should be publicly funded and operated. Public authorities should monitor and evaluate the performance of public service operators. EPSU calls for existing collective bargaining, social and environmental standards to be maintained when remunicipalisation or privatisation takes place. Changes in ownership must not lead to cuts in jobs and training places, pay and working conditions must not deteriorate and company pension schemes must be protected. Workplace or company-based schemes for representation of interests must not be adversely affected. The economic viability of existing undertakings that have proved their worth must be secured.
- 2 EPSU will work to ensure that public service principles and values are part of European policies on environmental services, such as water, waste and energy. Tracking company policies, mergers and take-overs and establishing further European work councils in cooperation with affiliated unions will be important to promote and defend workers interests in multinational corporations. Climate change and access to energy remains a key issue and a particular challenge for the sector. Utilities play a prominent role to achieve a sustainable society.

ENERGY

- 3 Recent evidence indicates that global warming is developing faster than predicted by the International Panel on Climate Change. EPSU supports the zero emission target for the European power sector by 2050 with legally binding intermediate targets for 2030 and 2040. EPSU will work with the affiliates in non-EU/EEA countries, such as Russia, Ukraine and others on global warming and climate change to ensure that all European governments commit to a global agreement for CO2 reductions.

ACTION POINTS

- ✓ Campaign for “just transition”. European governments and the EU should adopt a “just transition roadmap” to accompany the process of restructuring in the energy sector. Companies and governments should make more funding available for workers in fossil fuel sectors to provide training, assist in finding other jobs, and to further the creation of green jobs. Changes in production and especially concerning the energy mix, necessary to reduce greenhouse gases, need to be anticipated (research, training of workers) to support the development of workers.
- ✓ Further strengthen arguments for the role and missions of public services (including ownership), in the energy sector as a whole, including renewables and networks, to protect households in relation to profit-maximising businesses and private equity.
- ✓ Engage in further work, in cooperation with ETUC, on the emission trading scheme

- and energy/ carbon taxes, preventing negative impacts on low-income households.
- ✓ Continue work on fuel/energy poverty in alliance with other organisations striving for more binding targets to reduce energy poverty and to ensure the right to energy for all, which is a societal responsibility.
- ✓ Take action to improve working conditions, health and safety for workers in the renewables, such as wind power, solar industries (production), energy efficiency/savings services but also in subcontracted areas of infrastructure (networks). All workers in the energy sector should benefit from decent conditions of work and pay.
- ✓ Develop policies on smart networks/grids and their implications for the sector and its workers and promoting (municipal) public infrastructure for electric cars powered by renewables.
- ✓ Monitor and respond to the growing integration of the electricity and gas markets and increasing importance of the European regulator (ACER) and bodies, such as ENTSO-E and ENTSO-G (transmission operators) to ensure that the interests of workers and citizens are protected. Develop proposals for a new Energy Treaty and European Energy Agency to consider demand and supply of energy in Europe and a coherent energy policy.
- ✓ Develop a general bargaining agenda for the energy unions, improving regional and EU-wide coordination in view of the European energy market.
- ✓ Improve the quality of the sectoral social dialogue and dialogue with multinational companies. Priorities will be combating subcontracting, low pay, gender equality, training and skills, corporate social responsibility, young workers and improving union strength, in particular in the growing service sector of the energy industry.
- ✓ Build on the achievements regarding a social dimension of the Energy Community for South East Europe, now joined by Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, with Armenia and Turkey as observers.
- ✓ Work and exchange experiences with the affiliated unions in CIS countries (Russia and Central Asia) as liberalisation of energy services moves up the agenda and to ensure a social dimension in energy policies.
- ✓ Overcome the problems in the gas social dialogue where employers have stepped back. These problems can be overcome if affiliated organisations exert pressure on the relevant employers and industry organisations. EPSU Secretariat will coordinate further work to have a vibrant social dialogue in this sector.

WATER

- 4 EPSU defends water as a public service and supports demands for water as global commons, belonging to everybody requiring protection and management in the interest of all. The European Citizens Initiative on the Human Right to Water is a success. The demands of the ECI will be further pursued, in particular in relation to execution by the Parliament, Council and Commission. EPSU continues to build relations with water activist groups. Affiliates in European countries outside the EU are invited to lobby their governments to sign up to the right to water principles of the UN and implement these.

ACTION POINTS

- ✓ Support affiliates by raising awareness of the key role of public water services for society and support affiliates that oppose privatisation of water services.
- ✓ Oppose the creation of a market for water rights as well as any EU attempts to liberalise water services, including opening up hydraulic concessions to competition.
- ✓ Analyse the development of the smart meter market.
- ✓ Move towards establishing a social dialogue in the water and sanitation sector. The unions of the water and sanitation sector of the EPSU will discuss the terms, problems, strategy to be followed and the resources to be assigned for this purpose.
- ✓ Ensure cooperation with the Spanish unions in order that the Spanish multinational water/ waste companies are covered by a European Works Council.
- ✓ Support and encourage initiatives to remunicipalise water distribution services.

WASTE

- 5 The waste sector is part of environmental services and an area of employment growth. It is confronted with many challenges, including cut throat competition on the basis of pay and working conditions. EPSU aims to represent the whole chain, i.e. collection, transport, sorting, recycling, incineration in public and private companies.

ACTION POINTS

- ✓ Update the Basic Principles for EPSU's Waste Policy and advocacy of the public service dimension of waste policies to be adhered to by companies.
- ✓ Support resource efficiency, which remains high on the agenda. In the transition towards a resource efficient society, EPSU will advocate employment creation, green jobs, skills/ training, health and safety as major topics for the waste sector and which should be reflected in EU Waste policies.
- ✓ Make progress towards the objective of establishing a social dialogue in waste. EPSU waste unions will discuss the modalities, issues, what strategy to follow and which resources to dedicate.
- ✓ Establish European works councils in major multinational waste companies not yet covered, especially relevant for major German and Spanish companies.



13. FOR A CITIZENS' AUDIT OF THE PUBLIC DEBT IN EUROPEAN STATES

13. FOR A CITIZENS' AUDIT OF THE PUBLIC DEBT IN EUROPEAN STATES

- 1 Noting with the greatest concern the deepening of the 'debt – deficit – austerity' spiral in several European States and the growing impoverishment of the population of these countries, without the situation showing the slightest sign of improvement.
- 2 Considering that the recent increase in public debts and, consequently, in the proportion of budgets assigned to debt repayment in the majority of European States is caused predominantly by the choices made by governments to save banking institutions at very high cost and unconditionally at the time of the banking crash of 2008 and disastrous fiscal policies, on the one hand, and the economic crisis stemming from the financial crisis and these inappropriate political decisions, on the other.
- 3 Alarmed that the budgetary stringency and austerity measures currently taken by governments under the auspices of the Troika are unfair, ineffective, increase the public debt burden and unravel the social protection and wealth redistribution safety nets, thereby affecting first and foremost women and young people, without for all that achieving any significant reduction in the public debt of the States.
- 4 Knowing that the question of the public debt occupies and will continue to occupy a prominent place in political and social life in the coming years, since the private financial sector continues to speculate freely and fresh recapitalisation of banks is to be predicted.
- 5 Noting that governments, whether left-wing or right-wing, accept being subject to the pressure of the financial markets, one of the priority requirements of which is precisely the continuous repayment of the debt, with this repayment being presented by the heads of state as unavoidable, incontrovertible and obligatory.

- 6 Considering that if it is wished to maintain the social rights won through workers' struggles, to halt the social decline and to guarantee fundamental rights, a radical reduction in public debt is a prerequisite and that it is imperative for the question of public debt to be at the heart of the discussions on recovery from the crisis. This reduction is also essential to implement an economic and social policy for the people, especially by assigning appropriate funding to quality public services.
- 7 Knowing and welcoming the fact that in many European countries, including Spain, France, Greece, Portugal, Belgium and Italy, initiatives for citizens' audits of the public debt are being organised at local, regional and/or national levels, with active participation by the trade unions at all levels, and already knowing that some have led to constructive, significant results. (An audit of the public debt is a process of in-depth analysis of its components, origin, use and the terms and conditions associated with its repayment.)



Reception at the Toulouse Town Hall

CONGRESS CALLS UPON AND URGES THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND ALL THE EPSU AFFILIATES :

- ✓ To encourage and provide active support for the establishment of, and participation by the unions affiliated to the EPSU in, citizens' public debt audit committees, at local, regional and/or national levels, in order to check that the debts contracted by the public authorities are not odious, illegitimate or unlawful.
- ✓ To pay special attention to evaluating measures resulting from erroneous European policies, adopted by the European institutions in relation to public services and their market liberalisation, those resulting from the placement of public services on the market and those which, since 2008, have been adopted in response to the economic crisis and the benefits offered to the financial systems.
- ✓ To accompany this support by an information and awareness-raising campaign on the question of the debt and the importance of audit initiatives. The audit must have the effect of reinstalling the question of the debt at the centre of public discussions. It therefore includes a profoundly democratic dimension.
- ✓ To call on the European Parliament to participate actively in defending the key interests of a Social Europe, respecting the social importance of work and workers and for conditions of citizenship for all.



Françoise Geng – EPSU Vice-President, CGT Santé Action Sociale, France



14. EUROPEAN TREATIES

14. EUROPEAN TREATIES

- 1 Considering that since it was first established as a supranational institutional and political entity, the shaping of the European Union has focused as a priority on constructing a single market, fully embracing, from the mid-1980s and the signing of the Single European Act, the principles of neoliberal economics and strict monetary doctrine.
- 2 Considering nevertheless that this European structure, with regard to a certain number of aspects, has constituted and still constitutes significant progress in the integration of an ever growing number of States and in the progressive development towards identification with common principles and values, in the context of increasingly recognised 'European citizenship'. The election of the European Parliament by universal suffrage and the extension of its powers within the Union, the integration of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU in the Lisbon Treaty and the forthcoming accession to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms all represent genuine progress towards the creation of a Europe of rights.
- 3 Considering however that the various economic governance treaties – ratified in the context of financial recovery of the Union Member States whose deficit and debt levels exceed those laid down by the criteria of the Maastricht Treaty and reformulated more strictly in the Euro Plus Pact and implemented through the European Semester and shortly the Budgetary Pact, or Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance (TSCG) – are imposed on Member States as a priority over protection of employment, respect of human rights, social protection and wage bargaining. The wave of privatisations and drastic cutbacks in public spending are among the main consequences of the application of the measures included in these Treaties, as too are the deregulation of labour law, the increase in the retirement age and the working week, salary cuts and rises in unfair taxes such as VAT.
- 4 Considering that the application of these Treaties and Pacts (the European Semester, the Six Pack, the Two Pack, the Euro Plus Pact, the European Stability Mechanism and finally, bringing together the principles and recommendations of the latter in a single Treaty, the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance or European Budgetary Pact) drawn up by the Commission and/or the Troika, ratified by the Council, and approved by Parliament, has so far made no improvement to the economic situation of the countries subject to these Treaties, on the contrary thrusting the latter into a disastrous spiral of increase in debt, recession and alarming deterioration in living and working conditions, plunging millions of people into poverty.
- 5 Considering moreover the lack of transparency and democratic debate accompanying the adoption of these mechanisms, and the near impossibility for the States, as a result of the introduction of reverse majority voting to counter any sanction imposed on a Member State, to avoid the drastic, antisocial measures of budgetary restrictions imposed via the above-mentioned texts.
- 6 Considering the loss of sovereignty of the States, via the ratification of these Treaties, in drawing up their national budget – and the consequent calling into question of taking into account particularities specific to each country – since this budget first has to be submitted to the European Commission for approval.

- 7 Considering too the restrictive monetary policy of the European Central Bank since its establishment, with its priority objectives of price stability, strictly balanced budgets and market liberalisation having prevailed over the role of protection of national economies, obliging the States to finance on the financial markets at rates which are sometimes exorbitant, while the loans it grants to financial institutions rarely exceed an interest rate of 1%.
- 8 Considering that alongside these budgetary measures, which are as radical as they are significant, the Europe of rights and democracy is receding in a worrying fashion: the openly discriminatory and repressive policies (e.g. against Roma) are not penalised; the popular debate is ignored and even muzzled; the attacks on labour law and the European Charter of Fundamental Rights are not only unpunished, but sometimes even encouraged through certain measures laid down by the Commission on the dismantling of social protection or by security institutions such as Frontex in enacting increasingly inhumane anti-illegal immigration directives. Economic, social and cultural rights and trade union rights are dismissed through an inappropriate, ineffective and counterproductive 'ordoliberal' ideology, with total impunity, and without the voice of the peoples who are constantly mobilising to defend their dignity being heard. Consequently, there is fanning of the trends towards insularity, excessive nationalism, the search for scapegoats and the re-emergence of political parties and movements based on primary ideas which are anti-European, xenophobic, discriminatory, anti-trade union and anti-democratic (cf. Viktor Orban and the Jobbik Party in Hungary, the extreme right movement of Golden Dawn in Greece, and in general, the worrying rise of extreme right fractions more or less everywhere in Europe).



Liza di Paolo Sandberg – President of the Health and Social Services Committee 2009-2014, Kommunal, Sweden

CONGRESS CALLS UPON AND URGES THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND ALL THE EPSU AFFILIATES :

To campaign and exert pressure actively and continuously, together with the ETUC and all the industry federations, with a view to:

- ✓ Bringing about democratic debate within the Member States on European budgetary decisions and Treaties, such as the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance, which condemn the European countries and their populations to being caught up in systematisation of poverty.
- ✓ Providing information as clearly and widely as possible, through readily understandable texts and accessible audio-visual tools, on the dangers of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance and related Treaties and on the reasons to oppose them.
- ✓ Opposing, by all means available, and especially through parliamentary channels, the ratification by the States of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance for as long as it does not guarantee the dominance of human rights over economic interests and does not encourage revival of demand through a true job creation and wealth distribution policy.
- ✓ Increasing the number of European citizens' initiatives, such as that defending the right to water as a common good, in order to demand en masse the protection of fundamental rights and the protection and promotion of quality public services for all.
- ✓ Inverting the order of priority of the articles of the EU Treaty (currently in favour of economic deregulation to the detriment of any human right) and reinstalling in the centre of the European construction full compliance with Article 2 of this Treaty, according to which: 'The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail'.
- ✓ Amending the mandate of the European Central Bank so as to enable it to grant loans directly to Member States at rates as favourable as those that it grants to the financial markets. This will have the effect of curbing financial speculation and of providing real assistance to national economies rather than obliging them to be blighted by loans deriving from speculation.
- ✓ Uniting, supporting, organising, coordinating and communicating as widely as possible through the official and alternative media, the various union actions throughout Europe, in order to ensure that they have a concrete and resounding impact and to promote their repercussions throughout society.
- ✓ Supporting and allying with associative and citizen movements calling for a Europe of rights, dignity and justice, as shifting the balance of power lies in coordination rather than fragmented action. Work is required to combine the campaigns of other European and international organisations.



**15. FOR THE INCLUSION
OF BINDING SOCIAL AND
ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS
IN THE DRAFTING OF BILATERAL
AND MULTILATERAL EUROPEAN
TRADE AGREEMENTS**

15. FOR THE INCLUSION OF BINDING SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS IN THE DRAFTING OF BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL EUROPEAN TRADE AGREEMENTS

- 1 Considering that, as a consequence of the repeated failure in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Doha Round multilateral trade negotiations, the European Union and its member states have for several years focused on free trade bilateral agreements (Economic Partnership Agreements) and bilateral investment agreements with third countries or regions.
- 2 Concerned that the implementation of many such agreements have led to a degradation of users' universal access and rights to public services in terms of quality, security, accessibility, and gender equality (which are common values sanctioned in Protocol 26 of the Lisbon Treaty on Services of General Interest) as a result of their liberalisation and privatization.
- 3 Concerned that free-trade agreements have in many cases resulted in the degradation of living and working conditions because of several simultaneous developments: the loss of jobs (as a direct consequence of privatisations and of increased competition), volatility of prices for food commodities, an increased control by foreign transnational corporations on services and natural resources, the failure to recognise workers' rights and collective agreements.
- 4 Recording the high number of cases reported by trade unions and social movements in countries involved in such trade agreements that testify to a failure to respect the environment and populations, to evident failure to recognise economic, social and cultural human rights and well as trade union rights that ought to be applicable.
- 5 Observing that other negotiations are carried out next to bilateral negotiations between the EU and third countries in order to sign preferential trade agreements, namely,
 - first, resumed WTO multilateral official trade negotiations;
 - second, a new round of multilateral negotiations among 37 countries including the EU on trade in services, in the wake of the liberalisation process that started with the WTO GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) intending to further liberalise exchange and investment in the field of services, in all sectors and for all modes of supply, which will affect up to 90 % of public services;
 - third, the signing of the EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and of the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic & Trade Agreement, two agreements that aim at an increased liberalisation of trade transactions, including in the field of services; and which remove policies aimed to protect workers, citizens, the environment and serve investors' rights to challenge domestic policies.
- 6 Considering that the States ratifying such agreements give up their sovereignty to supranational trade regulations accompanied by economic penalties in case of non-compliance.

- 7 Considering the consequent risk that in the context of these multilateral agreements European law provisions (in particular article 14 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Protocol 26 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union, or Lisbon Treaty) not be complied with.
- 8 Considering the already disastrous consequences that bilateral agreements between the EU and third countries have had on the latter's national laws in terms of protection of workers' and consumers' rights.
- 9 Considering the lack of transparency prevailing in the negotiations on these agreements, which are made public when they are already signed and only have to be ratified.
- 10 Considering the limited attention paid to impact assessments on social and environmental consequences (that were organised so late if at all that their results cannot possibly be taken into account).
- 11 Considering the danger the signing of such agreements represents for the populations if they are not contained by binding provisions and penalties in case of failure to meet the requirements of international conventions on human rights and workers' rights.
- 12 Considering that Protocol 26 of the Lisbon Treaty reminds the EU and its Member States of their shared responsibility in improving their public services in accordance with the provisions within this Protocol and with the horizontal social clause, according to which 'the definition and implementation of the Union's policies and actions must take into account the following social requirements: the promotion of a high level of employment; the guarantee of adequate social protection; the fight against social exclusion; a high level of education, training and protection of human health.



Carola Fischbach-Pyttel handing a gift to the Director of Corporate Europe Observatory, Olivier Hoedeman

CONGRESS CALLS UPON AND URGES THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND ALL EPSU AFFILIATES TO

Actively and unrelentingly campaign along with ETUC so as to :

- ✓ Start a democratic debate within member states about what is at stake in these trade agreements and how they threaten democracy, citizens' and workers' rights, and the preservation of quality public services.
- ✓ Demand the implementation of a transparent and democratic process to inform and consult citizens about bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations in which the EU is involved as soon as they are launched.
- ✓ Demand the effective implementation of existing legal provisions in primary European law, including in the context of multilateral negotiations, so as to maintain social safety nets and make sure that the autonomy and subsidiarity of member states granted in directives on public services be maintained in the face of possible international agreements.
- ✓ Use all provisions for consultation in the context of bilateral trade negotiations between the EU and third countries, as well as initiate and support any form of citizens' mobilisation calling for information, consultation, and an effective response to the risks such negotiations represent for basic social conquests sanctioned by EU Law and international conventions.
- ✓ Maintain a high level of involvement and mobilisation among social and citizens' movements so as to overturn the scale of priorities in the trade agreements between countries and/or regions in favour of socially and environmentally sustainable investments contributing to a human-oriented development.
- ✓ See to it that public services cannot be the target of liberalization measures in the context of the above mentioned agreements.
- ✓ Work to develop social and environmental standards in international law that oblige investors to adhere to minimum requirements.





**16. YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT
- EUROPE CANNOT AFFORD
TO LOSE A GENERATION!**

16. YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT – EUROPE CANNOT AFFORD TO LOSE A GENERATION!

- 1 With 5.6 million unemployed people under the age of 25 in Europe, the EU social model is under threat. However, youth unemployment is not just a problem in the EU, with rates of 50% and more in the Mediterranean and in other countries. Unemployment and precarious jobs are rising everywhere in the world as governments have imposed harsh austerity measures, pushing their countries further into recession with failing welfare systems. Citizens not in employment easily become victims of social exclusion and moreover unemployment paves the way to undemocratic developments. The whole of Europe is in need of a new economic direction: EPSU's vision of an alternative social Europe with high levels of employment is essential for giving the young people of today a decent future. There is a risk of a lost generation. Gender violence between young people is rising. There is also an increase in racism, linked with religion in many cases, as well as discrimination due to sexual orientation. This is something that should have been overcome by the 21st Century.
- 2 There is also a high level of unemployment among young people over the age of 25 who have completed medium or higher education. This group of young people is often forgotten in the European debate on youth unemployment. These young people face many of the same challenges. Furthermore, many young people with an education are compelled to emigrate due to the lack of job prospects. If this problem is not resolved, there is a major risk of a "brain drain" which will in a broad sense adversely impact the economies in Europe in the immediate future leading to further unacceptable waste of human resources and polarization in societies. In some countries young people can only find insecure jobs and this encourages them to go to countries that actually invest in them while these countries need to rely on the experiences and skills of these young people for their development.
- 3 Young people are hardest hit in times of recession. As newcomers to working life, the opportunities available to them to gain work experience decrease with a shrinking labour market. They are more likely to lose their jobs, are often over-represented when competing for temporary jobs and may become the working poor, unable to sustain a minimum acceptable living standard. Internships and other unpaid jobs urgently need regulations to avoid abuse and a rising number of low-paid workers because this is not part of the solution for unemployed young people. Consequently, they are not able to establish themselves on the housing market and depend instead on being able to live with their parents. Young people are facing the greatest impact of austerity measures. Diminishing employment opportunities and labour market deregulations are leading to a loss of welfare among young people now and in the future, with lower entitlements and a requirement to work for benefits. Because this is a breeding ground for exclusion, racism and political contempt, there must be a strong awareness campaign amongst the young of the dangers of fascism.
- 4 For too many years insecurity, the lack of rights, instability and low paid or unpaid work has become a habit for young Europeans if they want to find work. We must

maintain a commitment against the use of precarious work in Europe through social dialogue and collective bargaining.

- 5 In order to reduce unemployment among young people, the EU has proposed a Youth Guarantee Scheme with 6 billion Euros so far being allocated to combat youth unemployment. The Youth Guarantee Scheme aims to guarantee job opportunities, intern or training placements for young people who have been out of work for at least 4 months. This is an important step in the right direction but the International Labour Organisation has estimated that close to 21 billion Euros will be needed to take appropriate action and combat youth unemployment throughout Europe. However, this figure only includes the 17 member states of the Eurozone. Additional actions/changes are therefore required in order to achieve a successful outcome. 1,000 billion Euros have been paid out to save banks from ruin in the current financial crisis. Our young people would only need a fraction of that amount. It is important for young people in Europe to be able to believe in their future and the actions taken must therefore focus on the creation of new job opportunities and training programmes that will provide them with the qualifications they need in order to enter the labour market in future.
- 6 The public sector must play a key role in the battle against youth unemployment and precariousness. Investing in active publicly managed labour market policies also involves financial investment and human resources, devising a plan to recruit young people, deliver services for young people and to create quality employment. This means reversing the policies of cuts and austerity in which the public sector is under attack for too long.
- 7 For the youngest, the focus should be on addressing the causes of absence from school, because without a basic education, young people have little chance of progressing. School satisfaction is essential to prevent social exclusion, and to provide better learning outcomes and skills. Early intervention is an opportunity to prevent social exclusion of young people. This will require more investment in education systems that are free and open at every level, with grants available to ensure that education is accessible for all.
- 8 The transition from school to working life must be as smooth as possible, for example, with the help of apprenticeship schemes. Most countries with well-functioning apprenticeship schemes have lower levels of youth unemployment as their young people are offered a quicker transition from school to working life through apprenticeship placements. Such schemes must provide a complete vocational qualifications and not just training in individual activities. The same applies to the focus of labour-market policy instruments on qualification-related measures. Work placements in companies or local authorities must be paid according to the time spent, and fairly in relation to other workers' salaries. Periods of study, training, work placements or apprenticeships must be taken into account in pension calculations.
- 9 Greater investments must be made into the education, training and monitoring of young unemployed people. Good education requires long-term funding and objectives, not short-term actions using simple tools. So the 6 billion Euros so far allocated is inadequate. European funds eg Regional, Social and Cohesion funds should provide means in an unbureaucratic way to combat youth unemployment. The funding contributed by EU-funds should be higher if member states cannot afford it by

themselves. Money should also be invested to create socially useful and sustainable jobs for young people that pay a living wage and fair employment terms and conditions. This can be funded by more effective collection of unpaid tax.

- 10 Fundamental rules of work shall also apply to young people: A good salary and terms of employment will give our young people an essential basis for economic and social independence.

ACTION POINTS

- ✓ EPSU shall highlight the issue of youth unemployment in its sectoral social dialogues with employers on the basis of the framework agreement negotiated in 2013 by the ETUC, BusinessEurope, UEAPME (European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) and CEEP (European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services). The agreement urges national labour market actors, public authorities and others to take joint actions in order to make concrete progress towards increased employment among young people. The proposals for tackling youth unemployment agreed between the European social partners (ETUC, Business Europe, UEAPME and CEEP) must be given concrete form and expanded. The description of internships and fixed-term employment contracts as a “helpful stepping stone into the labour market” poses problems, as does the lack of commitment to implementation of the Council recommendation on the Youth Guarantee that was adopted at the end of February 2014. There is still no quality framework for internships at EU level.
- ✓ EPSU must maintain its efforts to encourage the participation of young people and their representation within union organizations through the continuation and strengthening of the EPSU and PSI Youth network, promoting the operation and organizing specific initiatives on youth employment.
- ✓ EPSU shall also encourage affiliates to:
 - Promote voluntary training and paid work opportunities, with no age discrimination between rates of pay and benefits.
 - Campaign for investment in the creation of sustainable, socially useful jobs for young people on a living wage.
 - Encourage their young members to campaign actively against populist, nationalist and extreme right-wing and fascist organisations who seek to exploit youth unemployment by blaming migrants and ethnic minorities for the impact of austerity.
- ✓ EPSU member organisations are urged to campaign for suitable measures to implement the Youth Guarantee and ensure an acceptable minimum standard of living and to regulate internships to prevent abuse.



17. MANY DO MORE – ORGANISING AND RECRUITING

17. MANY DO MORE – ORGANISING AND RECRUITING

- 1 Our aim and purpose as trade unions is to be strong in the workplace and to get results for our members and all workers. This applies to negotiations with employers at national and at local levels. It also matters in terms of our capacity to advance the concerns of our members and all workers in relation to politics.
- 2 Our strength is in our membership, in the number of members we manage to organise and in the level of their engagement and empowerment. Everyone who can join the union should be asked to do so. Recruiting and mobilising new members is one of the most important tasks of all elected union officers and of union members themselves. Growing the membership and participating in campaigns and, if necessary, strikes is the basis for successfully advancing our members' demands and the rights of all workers, for increasing wages and improving working conditions, and our influence in politics. To obtain good collective agreements and employment conditions it is essential to have many active union members. This applies equally to small and large workplaces, in the public and in the private sector.
- 3 A strong EPSU requires strong national unions, which are in turn necessary for us to influence European policies, to change and shape improvements for our members, for all workers and for the citizens of Europe.
- 4 We want EPSU to be heard and for EPSU's voice to be taken seriously. We are facing large challenges in Europe. EPSU must be strengthened if we are to provide credible answers and influence politics at the EU level and produce changes that benefit our members and all workers. This can be accomplished by having more unions joining the federation, but will principally be achieved by the current affiliated unions increasing their own membership and becoming stronger at the national level.
- 5 We have a difficult, but important job to organise workers in an increasingly fragmented labour market, in which the terms of employment become increasingly varied and insecure. There is a diversity of employers and suppliers of welfare services in the labour market, both public and private. As EPSU affiliates we defend the workers' interests in the public, the voluntary as well as the private sectors. We must turn weakness into strength!
- 6 An increasingly multicultural society also makes demands of us to stand up for the equal value and rights of all, at a time when migrant workers are becoming the real underclass of our time. Europe is increasingly characterised by xenophobic parties and tendencies. In order to be able to defend our members and prevent competition based on undercutting pay and social dumping we need strong unions and high union density to secure all workers' conditions.

- 7 There are obviously many reasons for not joining a union. It is easy to blame reasons external to ourselves in terms of the development of society or politics. But there are far more reasons dependent on ourselves in the unions. We need to be more visible in workplaces and show workers the benefits of joining a trade union; we need to improve our image and be seen as forward-looking.
- 8 It is our responsibility to ensure that more people join unions. We can do some things to make this happen – by making ourselves attractive, showing the benefits of joining, persuading and showing people that they can influence wages, working conditions and careers through union membership.
- 9 However, this assumes that we dare transform ourselves, that we dare change and develop our organisations, our policies and approaches. This is not an easy task; it demands a great deal of effort, but is necessary to create dynamic, proactive organisations in tune with their time.
- 10 Through their membership each union member signs up to the basis of the trade union – never ever to work at a lower salary or poorer conditions than those we have agreed on in the union. If unions are to survive one of the conditions is that as many people as possible must join the union.
- 11 EPSU's finances and resources are closely linked to the issue of recruitment. Securing EPSU's future finances and ability to play its role in Europe and get results from the social dialogue is dependent on the whole of the trade union movement growing stronger, by more people joining the unions.



ACTION POINTS

- ✓ Recruiting, organising and mobilising must be mainstreamed in all EPSU affiliates' activities and discussions and must be high on EPSU's agenda. This requires entirely new approaches to recruitment, to the relation between organising and the unions' influence, to developing a recruiting organisation and to mobilising members and potential members. We have much to learn from each other in these areas, and EPSU can play a pivotal role in the necessary exchange of information
- ✓ Ongoing networking in which successful unions demonstrate and discuss how they work to increase total numbers and representativity and how they can get more members and potential members to be active. We need to publicise good practice on how to recruit "live" in the workplace, and how to recruit members digitally. It is important to include consideration of migrants in this, for example by translating important messages into the main languages spoken by them. We should talk in a more action-oriented way and do more to put our words into action. We need to research the scope of EPSU's potential and the potential in each individual country to highlight how large they really could be.
- ✓ Together with PSI develop a common recruitment strategy which not only focuses on increasing the total number of affiliates, but also aims at individual affiliated unions recruiting more members and becoming growing trade unions.



Rosa Pavanelli – PSI General Secretary



18. DEFENDING SOCIAL PROTECTION AND THE WELFARE STATE

18. DEFENDING SOCIAL PROTECTION AND THE WELFARE STATE

- 1 The austerity measures imposed by governments across Europe involve harsh attacks on welfare spending and social protection, which provide basic social security guarantees to prevent or alleviate poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion.
- 2 These attacks are based on widely accepted myths promoted by politicians and the media that the welfare state has been responsible for out-of-control public spending, which must be cut back in the name of fiscal sustainability. Universal entitlements to state benefits and pensions are now deemed unaffordable, with recipients demonised as worthless burdens on the state. The protection of a decent standard of living for all, whether in work or out of work, is increasingly viewed as wasteful expenditure which can no longer be guaranteed.
- 3 These myths must be challenged through an even stronger battle of ideas that takes into account each country's context.
- 4 The result has been increased poverty for the most vulnerable people in society: for example disabled people, low income families, lone parents, refugees and the elderly. In the UK, state benefits and pensions are among the lowest in the developed world, and many are losing their homes and their jobs.



- 5 Those suffering the most from welfare cuts were not responsible for the public debt caused by deregulated trading, risky speculations and bailouts of the banks. According to the OECD, welfare spending in its 34 member countries has risen steadily since 1980, but this increase in costs was almost completely offset by GDP growth up until the financial crisis. In other words, there has not been 'out-of-control' public spending. It is corporate tax abuse which is out-of-control, with multinational companies and wealthy individuals routinely using tax havens to avoid paying tax.
- 6 There is a vast sum of unpaid tax in most economies waiting to be collected if there was the political will to do so. The income generated by the introduction of transparent, progressive and properly staffed taxation systems, an international financial transaction tax, the closure of tax havens and effective enforcement to counter tax evasion would render many of these programmes of welfare cuts unnecessary.



ACTION POINTS

- ✓ Actively challenge and discredit welfare myths from politicians and the media and denounce the austerity policies implemented by governments.
- ✓ Encourage affiliated unions to work with appropriate local community, anti-poverty and tax justice groups, and to facilitate the establishment of such groups where they do not exist.
- ✓ Actively campaign for:
 - (i) A minimum income floor as a basic human right;
 - (ii) The defence of universal benefits and social protection standards in European countries;
 - (iii) Full compliance by European states of the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation 2012 (no 202);
 - (iv) Decent liveable benefit levels;
 - (v) Well-funded welfare systems that guarantee a response to people's needs;
 - (vi) An effective general anti-avoidance tax rule introduced into the domestic legislation of each European state;
 - (vii) A ban on high-frequency trading, and a European and international financial transaction tax and an end to tax havens;
 - (viii) Making use of data on the "European tax gap" and to publicise that figure, as part of the on-going campaign to promote tax justice as a real alternative to austerity;
 - (ix) The introduction of country-by-country reporting for multinational corporations so that they pay what they owe in each country;
 - (x) Investment in more public administration staff in tax collection and enforcement as one of the most effective ways of dealing with the tax gap;
 - (xi) For well funded community services that respect the idea of equal access for all.





19. FIGHTING FOR A FUTURE FOR ALL

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- 1 The economic crisis of 2008 has led to the longest economic downturn in a generation. Yet those that caused the crisis – the casino capitalists at the top of our financial sectors – have not been held responsible.
- 2 On the other hand, many governments in Europe, and further afield, have used the opportunity to launch an unprecedented attack on collective bargaining, workplace rights and our public services.
- 3 Our members have faced devastating pay cuts at a time when the cost of living rises ever upwards, leading to sharp declines in living standards for working people across Europe.
- 4 EPSU totally rejects the current austerity addiction. Instead EPSU will continue to campaign for increased investment in our public services and to ensure that we support and protect the most vulnerable in our societies. Job losses and a decline in social guarantees have led to increased poverty among the population. Quality public services are at the heart of the Europe that we want and deserve. The austerity agenda has failed and it is time for an alternative.
- 5 We believe that EPSU should continue to be at the heart of the fight back. Too often there is an attempt to divide workers and isolate public sector from private sector in some form of competing camps over ever diminishing resources. EPSU rejects this approach and will continue to build solidarity across the whole of the European trade union movement in the fight for an alternative.



ACTION POINTS

In addition to continuing to lead the debate against austerity EPSU will:

- ✓ Campaign for a clear exemption for public services, health and education in the current negotiations over the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and will oppose all attempts to include any Investor State Dispute Settlement mechanism in the potential agreement. EPSU will also work with sister unions in the USA in using any opportunity to develop innovative proposals for the extension of the EU social model through these negotiations; for example the extension of the right to representation on European Works Councils to American workers. Oppose the directions being taken on the US/EU free trade agreement. We challenge any downward alignment of rights and regulations, and any liberal move to increase the profits of multinationals to the detriment of people and the environment. We repeat our demand for transparency in negotiations, communication of the European mandate and its discussion among MPs, trade unions and civil society. EPSU will also, at every occasion, act in cooperation with the US trade unions to produce innovative proposals for high-level social guarantees.
- ✓ Play a leading role in the continuing campaigns at national, European and global level for a Financial Transactions Tax to limit speculation and improve the regulation of the finance sector.





EPSU is the European Federation of Public Service Unions. It is the largest federation of the ETUC and comprises 8 million public service workers from over 265 trade unions; EPSU organises workers in the energy, water and waste sectors, health and social services and local and national administration, in all European countries including in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood. EPSU is the recognized regional organization of Public Services International (PSI). For more information on EPSU and our work please go to www.epsu.org

President:

Annelie Nordström, Kommunal, Sweden

Vice-Presidents:

Dave Prentis, UNISON, UK

Françoise Geng, CGT Santé Action Sociale, France

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