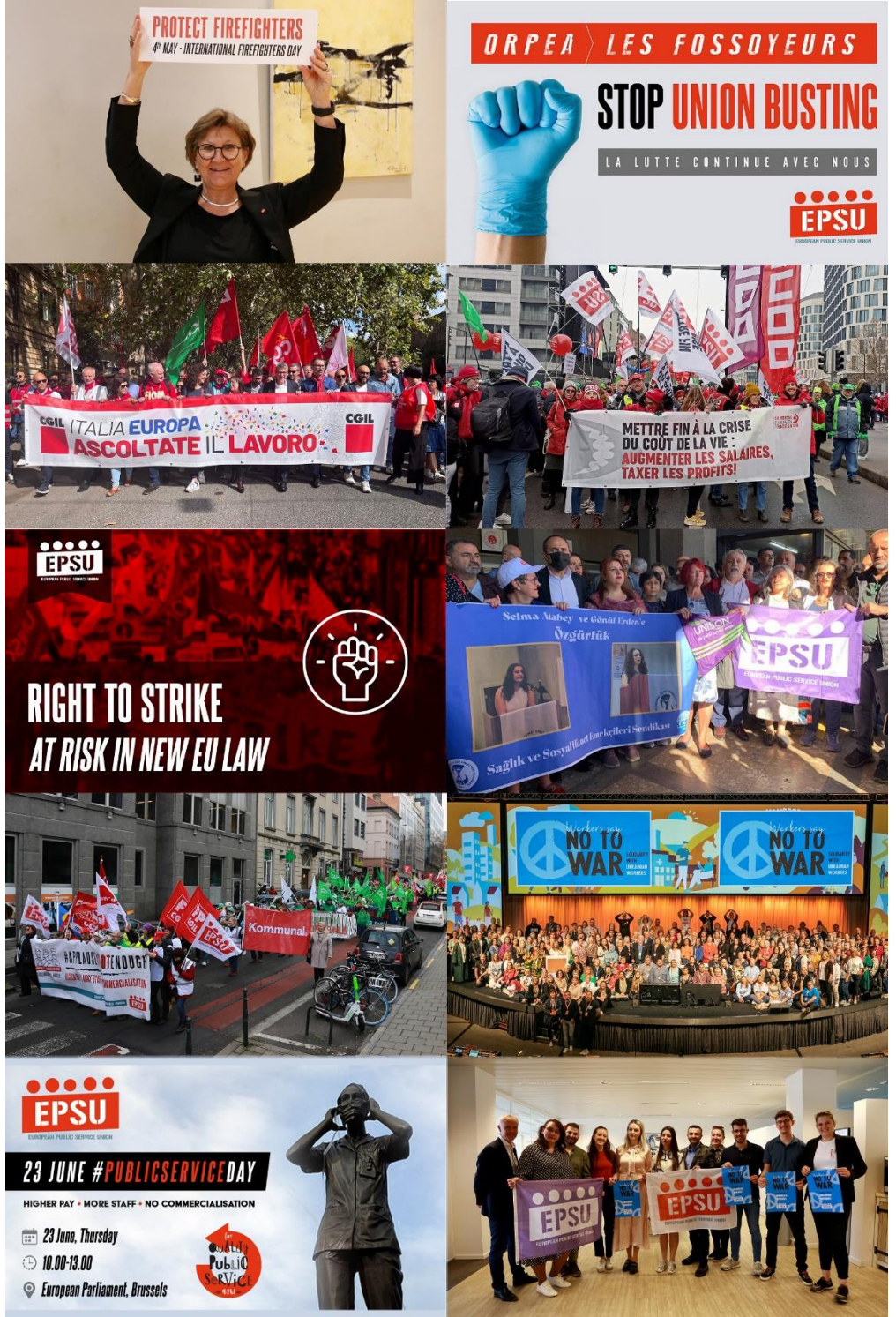


# EPSU Report of Activities

January - December 2022





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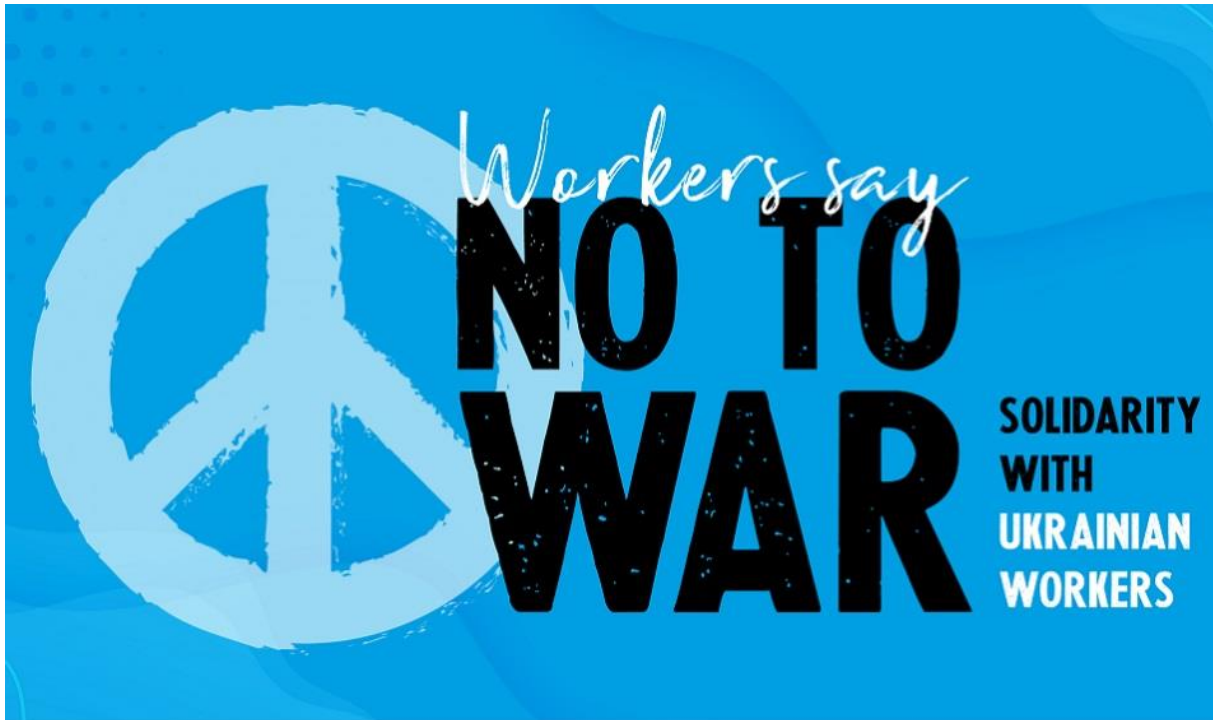
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## Introduction

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### Ukraine – an end to peace and an outpouring of solidarity



Picture 1

European peace as we know it came to a jarring end in early 2022 when Russian troops invaded Ukraine on February 24 and the fallout had major implications for EPSU and its affiliates.

EPSU and PSI were quick to [condemn](#) the invasion in a joint statement that expressed strong solidarity with Ukrainian workers and trade unions and called for the immediate withdrawal of Russian armed forces.

A priority for EPSU and its affiliates was to understand the positions and needs of Ukrainian trade unions. On 2 March, PSI and EPSU organised an online meeting where Ukrainian affiliates [addressed colleagues from across Europe](#) and around the world, expressing their thanks for the outpouring of solidarity. Yurii Pizhuk, President, Ukrainian State Workers Trade Union described the solidarity as “a ray of sunlight for someone who is hiding in a basement.” The perseverance of workers was praised while the precarious nature of Ukraine’s energy sector was highlighted as an area for concern.



Picture 2

Affiliates from neighbouring countries shared their readiness to receive refugees and highlighted the support needed to welcome migrants. Almost [eight million Ukrainian refugees](#) sought safety outside their country, with over 1.5 million fleeing to Poland. The 2001 Temporary Protection Directive was activated for the first time in 21 years, allowing countries to manage the arrival of refugees.

EPSU's sectors issued statements of support for their Ukrainian comrades. The Women and Gender Equality Committee [called for](#) support for Ukrainian women and girls, including those fleeing the conflict. The Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Hospitals and the Healthcare Sector issued a [joint statement](#) of support for their comrades in the sector in Ukraine, condemning attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure. In local and regional government, EPSU and CEMR issued a [statement of support](#) to the Ukrainian people and workers across the whole sector. EPSU [sent letters](#) to the International Atomic Energy Agency calling for safety inspections of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, underlining the need to involve trade unions.

EPSU and PSI joined ITUC and ETUC in calling for donations to [a solidarity fund](#) for workers and trade unions in Ukraine to which public service unions from across Europe generously contributed.

### COVID – dealing with the legacy

Most COVID-related restrictions across Europe were lifted during the year but this didn't mean the crisis was over. Workers still faced unsafe staffing levels, low pay, insufficient resources and inadequate public funding – the factors which had significantly exacerbated the impact of COVID-19 on Europe – and which have yet to be addressed by policymakers.

The year closed with a positive outcome when the European Commission officially recognised COVID as an occupational disease. The move came after over two years of work from EPSU to ensure greater protection for workers and the recommendation should encourage convergence across the EU.

EPSU highlighted the struggle of public service workers – particularly those in health and social care – on Public Services Day (23 June). Workers were celebrated at [an event in Brussels](#) which saw several MEPs pledge their support in front of a powerful symbol of public service workers: a three-metre tall statue representing the plight of health and social care workers.



Picture 3



Picture 4

EPSU organised a major demonstration of [health and social care workers](#) in Brussels on 9 December, as Europe's health ministers met to discuss Europe's pandemic preparedness and ability to promote health. The protestors called for urgent action to deal with the sector's staff shortage crisis.

### The inflationary surge

In the second half of the year prices, particular energy costs, rose sharply leaving many public service workers facing real term cuts in pay cuts. Public service unions were quick to respond and Europe experienced a wave of industrial action running into early 2023. Unions were calling on employers to provide pay rises and for government action to tackle the cost-of-living crisis. Health and care workers in the UK, Latvia, Slovenia, Greece and Finland were among the many taking action and an [EPSU briefing](#) provided details of the full scale of mobilisation in these sectors.



Picture 5

### Building stronger social dialogue for Europe

The European Commission continued its lengthy informal consultation of social partners on the future of social dialogue. EPSU joined other European trade union federations in calling on the Commission to prioritise transparency and clear criteria in dealing with social partner agreements and to ensure continued financial and political support.

In June 2021, EPSU and the Social Employers officially [submitted the request](#) to the European Commission to establish a Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in Social Services. Since submitting the request, we have been busy garnering support for the application and hope to receive a positive decision in early 2023.

In October, EPSU and the European employers in central government, EUPAE, signed an agreement on digitalisation which they submitted to the Commission to put forward for implementation as a directive. Meanwhile, the cross-sector social partners began their negotiations to update the 2002 framework agreement on telework, also foreseen for implementation as a directive.

## European legislation

The adoption of the Adequate Minimum Wage Directive in October marked a significant development in European social legislation. Not only does it include important measures related to the level and setting of national statutory minimum wages but also key provisions that should help trade unions strengthen and extend collective bargaining. The Gender Pay Transparency Directive was also agreed on in late 2022 following campaigns from ETUC with EPSU and was due to be finalised in early 2023.

In March 2022 the Council of the EU adopted the revision of [Directive on Carcinogens and Mutagens](#). The revision expands its scope to reprotoxins and makes reference to hazardous medicinal products following an EPSU-led campaign with Stop Cancer at Work.

In September, the Commission published the first part of the revision of the directive on asbestos. EPSU called for the proposal to lower occupational exposure levels from 100.000 to 10.000 fibres/m<sup>3</sup> [completely insufficient](#) and will continue to work, together with the EFBWW building workers' federation and ETUC, to lower the exposure limits. EPSU continued to push for a dedicated directive on psychosocial risks.

## Right to energy more urgent than ever

Protecting the right to energy has been a longstanding priority for EPSU – a right that became more important than ever in 2022. In January, shortly before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, EPSU [published a briefing](#) with the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) on the right to energy, calling for the EU to

guarantee equal access to clean and affordable energy in its transition towards climate neutrality. As it became clear that Europe was heading into a serious energy crisis, EPSU issued a statement raising our concerns and calling for deep reforms to protect users from energy poverty. We continued to campaign for energy market reform, highlighting the negative effect that austerity and liberalisation has had on our capacity to respond to crises.



Picture 6

## COVID-19 – drawing lessons from a global pandemic

COVID continued to be a major issue for EPSU during the third year since the pandemic began. As Europe's health and care workers struggled to cope with the combined fallout of the pandemic and years of chronic underfunding, EPSU continued to represent these workers on a European level.

### COVI committee

In March the European Parliament [approved the establishment](#) of a special committee on 'COVID-19 pandemic: lessons learned and recommendations for the future'. EPSU first called for such a committee in July 2020 alongside other civil society organisations. We therefore welcomed its mandate to examine the impact of the pandemic on 'care services, care-home residents [and] workers.'



EPSU worked with the COVI committee throughout 2022, welcoming several of its MEPS – including Chair Kathleen van Brempt (S&D, BE) – to our event on Public Services Day, 23 June. In September, EPSU [co-organised an event](#) at the European Parliament with the Left. The event brought together several key MEPs from the COVI committee and European workers from across the health and care system, including emergency medical technicians (EMTs), carers, midwives, cleaners, drivers and more. Speakers came from BBTK-SETCa (Belgium), OSZSP (Czech Republic), FSS-CCOO (Spain), Ver.di (Germany) and CNE-CSC (Belgium).



Picture 7

EPSU and FP-CGIL [delivered a letter](#) to COVI members during a committee delegation mission to northern Italy. With workers absent from the mission agenda, the letter outlined the devastating experiences from workers at the centre of Europe’s first wave, pleading for MEPs to implement urgent changes.

In late November, EPSU [addressed the COVI committee](#) as the representative organisation for workers in the health and care sector. The meeting was the first in a series of discussions on the socio-economic



Picture 8

consequences of COVID. Jan Willem Goudriaan, EPSU’s General Secretary, made it clear that any such assessment must place public service workers at its centre. He emphasised that ‘pandemic preparedness’ requires resilient, robust and equipped public services and social protection systems with safe staffing levels to ensure workers can deliver quality care. Goudriaan urged the COVI committee to prioritise the voices and stories of workers as it moves into its extended mandate.

### COVID as occupational disease

The year ended with a positive outcome when the European Commission officially recognised COVID as an occupational disease. In November 2022 the Commission adopted an official recommendation that Member States recognise COVID as an occupational disease if contracted by workers in disease protection, health and care (including home care). Workers infected by COVID or who have lost family members due to workplace exposures to COVID should also receive additional supports.

The move came after over two years of work from EPSU to ensure greater protection for workers. The official recommendation followed a [tripartite agreement](#) reached in May 2022 by Member States, workers (EPSU and ETUC) and employers in the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work

(ACSH) on the need to recognise COVID-19 as an occupational disease. While most Member States already recognise COVID-19 as an occupational disease, the recommendation will encourage convergence and the recognition of COVID-19 as occupational disease across the EU.

## Health and social care – strategy and scandals

The European Care Strategy, first announced in Ursula von der Leyen’s 2021 State of the Union speech, was a significant priority for EPSU in 2022. In May 2022 we welcomed the European Parliament’s ‘Towards a common EU action on care’, [commending](#) its recognition of the need for better working conditions, social dialogue, respect for workers and public investment in the care sector.



Picture 9

Ahead of the Strategy’s publication EPSU and other union representatives - including workers from ORPEA - [met with](#) Nicolas Schmit, European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights to discuss the European Care Strategy and the ORPEA scandal. In July 2022 EPSU and the Social Employers [hosted a conference](#) on workforce needs and challenges in social services ahead of the Care Strategy. EPSU [released a statement](#) with Eurocarers a week ahead of the Strategy’s publication highlighting the need to address member states’ overreliance on informal carers by investing more in public services.

The European Care Strategy was published on 7 September 2022. In a press release EPSU [welcomed](#) the new focus on workers in the care sector and recognition that good working conditions are vital to the resilience and attractiveness of the sector. We welcomed the call for more public investment in the care sector and support for regional and local authorities’ efforts to invest but regretted that the strategy fell short of placing any limits on the commodification of care.

The work continued with [a debate](#) on the European Care Strategy held with the cooperation of AK EUROPA and ÖGB. EPSU also [discussed](#) the economic potential of the Care Strategy at the European Social Forum.



Picture 10



Picture 11

consequences of the company’s profit-making management: from elder abuse to workers’ rights violations, all supported by creative accounting and a misuse of public funds. The book sparked outrage in France and beyond: share prices plummeted, board members and management were dismissed, several high-level management figures were summoned to address the French National Assembly, several countries launched investigations of Orpea homes and the company was ordered to pay back €55.8 million of public money.



Picture 12

experiences of the company’s poor management practices and industrial relations culture.

EPSU and its affiliated workers in Orpea rallied together to support each other throughout the year, sharing solidarity with the Chair of Orpea German subsidiary Residenz-Gruppe’s works council and of the European Works Council (EWC) as her fight against the company continued through the year. In September 2022 French unions in Orpea (CFDT, CGT and FO) also won a legal case to have the professional elections organised by the company in 2019 annulled due to electoral fraud.

EPSU held a major demonstration on 9 December gathering health and social care workers from across Europe. The demonstration follows the demands adopted by EPSU’s Pan-European Health Conference in October 2022 calling for greater spending on health and social care to address staff shortages – read more in the section on the health and social services sector.

Our work on care was amplified in January 2022 when investigative journalist Victor Castanet published ‘Les fossoyeurs’ (The Gravediggers), a book detailing the consequences of a for-profit care system. The investigation focused on the Orpea Group, Europe’s largest for-profit care provider. The exposé details the shocking

Orpea’s scandals were not breaking news for EPSU. The company repeatedly refused to negotiate a European Works Council and was already engaged in anti-union practices in its German subsidiaries for several years, including a sustained campaign against its works council chair. EPSU, as the representative union in health and care with affiliates across Europe representing thousands of Orpea workers, immediately [brought workers together](#) to call for change. Workers from several countries shared similar

Matters were complicated when Orpea concluded a ‘global framework agreement’ with a non-representative federation and without the input of the representative French unions. Other representative unions in Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain were not involved either, nor were unions in countries where the company is rapidly expanding, such as Ireland and the Netherlands. EPSU described the agreement as [a whitewashing exercise](#) – an attempt to distract from the company’s many scandals.



Picture 13

## Climate change – energy crisis takes centre stage

Energy costs and energy poverty have always been key priorities for EPSU, but 2022 made these issues a greater priority than ever. In January 2022, shortly before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, EPSU [published a briefing](#) with the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) on the Right to Affordable, Clean Energy for All Europeans. The briefing called for the EU to guarantee equal access to clean and affordable energy in its transition towards climate neutrality and the European Pillar of Social Rights and was presented at the Right to Energy Forum.

As it became clear that Europe was heading into a serious energy crisis, EPSU issued a statement raising our concerns and calling for deep reforms to protect users from energy poverty. We pointed out that the price increases were not just linked to the situation of Ukraine but rather are signals of deeper problems linked to our energy policy in Europe, such as liberalisation, austerity or restriction of state control. Our calls for windfall taxes on large profits for companies and caps on energy costs [were addressed](#) in the European Commission’s RePower EU package. It also [recognises several EPSU positions](#) by acknowledging the critical impact of rising energy prices and its contribution towards inflation as well as pledging to address energy poverty.

We [adopted a position](#) against the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) for heating and transport at our utilities standing committee in May, opposing the ETS II and calling for improvement of energy efficiency in buildings instead. While ETS II was ultimately agreed on, we welcomed the establishment of a Social Climate Fund to support those impacted by the ETS system, including vulnerable households.



Picture 14

EPSU’s [Pan-European Conference on Utilities](#) was another key opportunity to discuss the climate and energy crisis. In addition to the energy price crisis and the

liberalisation and commercialisation of the utilities sectors, the audience also heard research and views on how climate change was impacting health and safety in the utilities sectors.

2022 was (yet another) year of record high temperatures and wildfires. EPSU [issued a statement](#) sharing solidarity with firefighters and other public service workers, underlining that austerity policies have undermined the ability of public services to respond to such climate related crises.

EPSU [joined over 270 trade unions](#), civil society and other organisations and individuals to call for fundamental reform of EU rules regulating public spending and investment. The call was part of a manifesto for a green, just and democratic European economy. The aim of European economic policy should not be to simply reduce debt. Climate change, inequalities, the impact of the pandemic and now the fallout from the conflict in Ukraine require a different approach. The EU's fiscal framework should fully support just transitions and a systemic transformation of our economies.



Picture 15

## Digitalisation – negotiating on digital rights, algorithms and more

Digitalisation was again an important focus of work during the year, with the signing of the agreement in Central Government Administrations (see NEA section on social dialogue in CGA) and EPSU's continued involvement in two major projects. The second year of PSI's three-year project – [Our Digital Future](#) – provided further information and training for affiliates covering digital rights, control and monitoring of artificial intelligence and collective bargaining. Meanwhile, significant progress was made with [Digiqu@lpub](#) – the eight-country project coordinated by the Brussels-based research organisation, OSE. This aims to assess the impact of digitalisation on public service workers and specifically those in public administration, hospitals and electricity. The main work during the year included the first draft of country reports, surveys of workers in each country and interviews with trade union leaders. Affiliates had a chance to be updated on all these three developments at an online [meeting](#) in December.

September saw the first meeting in the cross-sector negotiations on [telework](#) and the right to disconnect involving the ETUC, with EPSU part of the team, and the European employer organisations.



Picture 16

The aim is to update the 2002 framework agreement on telework with a view to having it transposed into a directive.

The European Commission's proposals for a [European Health Data Space](#) is raising serious concerns about data privacy and the role of big tech companies and this was the subject of several discussions during the year, including with the [European Commission](#), which also provided experts for a workshop in December jointly organised by EPSU and

HOSPEEM the hospital employers' organisation.

EPSU continued to support initiatives aimed at reining in the power and influence of big tech companies. In September, it joined with many other organisations in endorsing a [10-point plan](#) to tackle media disinformation and address the information crisis and at the beginning of the year welcomed the investigation into the use of [cloud services](#) by public authorities

## Solidarity – actions increase as rising inflation bites

Many EPSU affiliates were involved in various forms of protest and industrial action during the year as they responded to the surge in prices across Europe with pay demands aimed at protecting workers' purchasing power. Health and care workers in [Latvia](#), [Slovenia](#), [Greece](#) and [Finland](#) were among the many taking action and the full scale of mobilisation in these sectors was shown in an EPSU [briefing](#) that was published to coincide with the demonstration in Brussels in December. Health workers in the UK began several actions in that month, including the first ever strike action by the RCN nursing union. They were joined by unions representing ambulance staff with these disputes continuing into the new year, alongside widespread action across the UK civil service.



Picture 17

Other notable actions included that of chemical workers in [Lithuania](#) in the first strike in the private sector since independence, [French](#) energy unions fighting to defend the public energy system and the [Belgian](#) confederations demanding action on pay, to defend their indexation system and extend their scope for negotiation.



Picture 18

EPSU support for its Ukrainian affiliates has already been mentioned and was a major element in the solidarity expressed throughout the year, including financial support to help the trade unions' response to the war. Specific action arose over concerns about safety at the [Zaporizhzhia](#) nuclear plant which is organised by EPSU's affiliate, Atomprofsilka. EPSU sent a message of support to unions and of protest to the government as part of the long-running [campaign](#) opposing legislation that would undermine workers' rights.

The defence of trade union rights was a focus of solidarity in 2022 in several countries where they are longstanding problems, not least in [Belarus](#) and [Turkey](#) and [Kazakhstan](#).

EPSU coordinated action and solidarity for affiliates organising in the French-based care multinational [Orpea](#) which had been exposed for anti-union action in France and Germany in particular.

On 8 October EPSU joined a major demonstration in [Rome](#) to mark the anniversary of the attack on the offices of the CGIL trade union confederation by far-right demonstrators. EPSU also joined a demonstration of Italian care workers in Rome in November.



Picture 19

## Gender equality – no just transition without equality

### Women's participation in EPSU Committees

The table below shows the percentage of women committee participants since 2013.

Committee	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
WGEC	88	82	92	91	95	95	100	100	63	83
NEA	34	24	40	40	46	46	41	36	32	42
LRG	43	40	48	43	44	47	32	39	20	40
HSS	65	58	55	60	62	51	51	54	64	68
SSWG	63	50	49	55	61	54	51	56	58	58
UTIL	33	30	33	31	21	18	14	12	16	10
EC	47	51	49	40	49	43	44	41	35	39

On International Women’s Day, EPSU [published a report](#) highlighting the gender dimension of the climate crisis and the need for gender mainstreaming within the EU Green Deal. The report points out that the instruments adopted by the EU have failed to address the relationship between gender and climate. Just and inclusive transition policies need to address gender inequalities at their roots, while adapting and reducing emissions. The report also provides guidelines for assessing climate policies from a feminist perspective.

International Women’s Day 2022 coincided with a protest of Orpea workers in France. An EPSU delegation joined the protest, calling for the company to step up and improve working conditions for the women dominated workforce.

The undervaluation of women’s work and the work performed in women dominated sectors, like child care, elderly care, social work continues to be a structural problem. On 1 June EPSU organised a joint webinar between the Women and Gender Equality Committee and Recruitment and Organising team to present and discuss cases of successful organising in childcare. Over the years EPSU has been active in lobbying in favour of the Gender Pay Transparency Directive and, in particular, for the recognition of the right to equal pay for work of equal value.

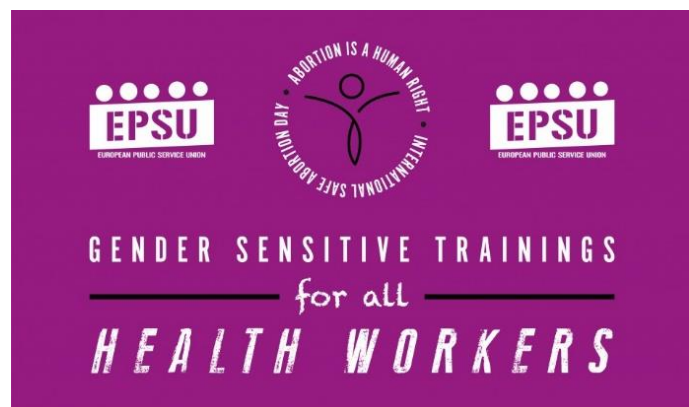


Picture 20

care, elderly care, social work continues to be a structural problem. On 1 June EPSU organised a joint webinar between the Women and Gender Equality Committee and Recruitment and Organising team to present and discuss cases of successful organising in childcare. Over the years EPSU has been active in lobbying in favour of the Gender Pay Transparency Directive and, in particular, for the recognition of the right to equal pay for work of equal value.

EPSU [issued a statement of solidarity](#) with the women of Ukraine. We called on the international community to ensure adequate safety and protection to women and girls in Ukraine.

On International Safe Abortion Day EPSU [published a report](#) that outlined the relationship between gender and healthcare services. This report identifies intersecting power imbalances based on gender, class and racial divisions as major barriers to health service planning and provision and it provides policy recommendations. In order to cater for all, health services must acknowledge power imbalances dominant in society and aim to combat them.



Picture 21

EPSU marked Unequal Pay Day on 15 November. From this day until 31 December, women worked for free – not by choice, but because of the gender pay gap. This adds up to month and a half of unpaid work. Women dominated sectors - like health, care and cleaning – continue to face chronic staff shortages. [In a statement](#) EPSU called for these women workers to be adequately recognised and for gender neutral job classification and evaluation.



EPSU was in Madrid for the final conference of a project exploring third party violence in the workplace. We marked the occasion by joining the national demonstration in the streets of Madrid.

## Recruitment and organising - developing and implementing strategies

The Recruitment and Organising (R&O) team continued its work with affiliates, central to which is the drafting of R&O strategies. This has been developed furthest with a group of unions from Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia who were again brought together in a workshop in November. In [June](#), affiliates from Azerbaijan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Slovakia and Turkey had been involved in their first strategic workshop.

A number of webinars were organised during the year including one focusing on using social media and membership database systems in recruitment and organising (with contributions from Romania



Picture 22

(Publisind) and Finland (UNIOFY). Another focused on the links between collective bargaining and R&O, with input from affiliates from Finland (JHL) and Germany (ver.di). A webinar coordinated with the Women's and Gender Equality Committee looked at issues around organising women workers, with contributions from Italy (FPCGIL) and UK (UNISON).

Three training courses were run in Poland, Romania and Turkey to provide local activists with basic R&O knowledge, tools

and skills and there were many meetings with affiliates from right across Europe to exchange on R&O issues, build contacts and share experiences.

The R&O team continued to work with organisers in Hungary and Poland that have been supporting affiliates in childcare and health. Towards the end of the year, the team was very pleased that Kommunal (Sweden) agreed to fund a three-year project that will enable health unions in Czechia and Serbia to each employ a full-time organiser from March 2023.

Orlagh Fawl, head of organising at Fórsa (Ireland) and Greg Thomson, former head of organising at UNISON (UK) continued to provide invaluable advice. EPSU is particularly grateful for Orlagh's major contribution to the workshop in Zagreb in November while Greg's contributions included an important [article](#) on R&O strategies. The team were also able to benefit from a visit to Fórsa and SIPTU to see how they implement their R&O work in the field.

## Trade – enforcing labour rights

In June the European Commission published a Communication on [trade partnerships](#) that should lead to more pressure on trade partners to respect international labour and environmental standards. The Communication responds to a long-standing trade union demands for enforceable labour provisions with sanctions for violations of labour rights.

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EPSU continued to monitor the impact of Brexit and in February took part in a [webinar](#) organised by the ETUI and the TUC to discuss the findings of a new report that analysed the workers' rights and social provisions of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

## Privatisation – consultancies are hollowing out public administrations

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The fight against privatisation is at the heart of EPSU's work. The form - be it contracting out or subcontracting, public-private partnerships, privatisation, or any other kind of commercialisation -



Picture 23

does not matter. Whether it happens in utilities, health, social care or local and regional government, it leads to negative outcomes. In October EPSU [published a report](#) outlining the impact consultancies on public administrations. The report marks the first time that EPSU has investigated the impact of privatisation in the sector of central and federal governments as well as the EU's own executive branch, the European Commission. The findings outline the frequency, acceleration and cost of this

phenomenon, highlighting how it is weakening the capacity of public administrations. The report also, however, shows that 'in-sourcing' is also a possibility. The European Ombudsman shared our concern for the independence of administrations if such extensive use of consultancies continues.

## Migration – historic activation of EU directive

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Millions of people have been internally displaced since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Almost [eight million Ukrainian refugees](#) have sought safety outside their country, with over 1.5 million fleeing to Poland. The NEA committee was given a presentation of the EU 2001 Temporary Protection Directive which was adopted in Council on 4 March. It is the first time that the 21 year old directive was activated to deal with mass influx of refugees due to armed conflicts. The directive allows for a fast-track procedure to provide refugees access to work, healthcare, housing, education, social welfare, family reunion (in certain circumstances), freedom of movement in the EU and support for persons with special needs (minors, victims of traumatic experience including torture and rape). The temporary protection can last up to one year which can be renewed for another year so until March 2024. It applies to Ukrainian refugees and third country residents in Ukraine.

## Collective bargaining – positive potential in minimum wage directive

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The Adequate Minimum Wage Directive was adopted in October and EPSU had continued to play an active role in the ETUC collective bargaining committee and working group that met regularly to try to shape the legislation. An online meeting was organised in [April](#) to provide affiliates with an update on progress. The resulting directive provides important new rights on collective bargaining that could benefit many affiliates and EPSU commissioned an initial study on the potential impact on the social

care sector in Central and Eastern Europe that was due to be presented to the Social Services Working Group in February 2023.



Picture 24

The joint [project](#) on trade union rights with the European federations for police and military personnel – EuroCOP and EUROMIL – continued into 2022 with three further regional meetings and a [final conference](#) in Skopje in September. The European Commission funding for the project enabled the federations to commission research from the University of Ghent which included a [report](#) on trade union rights in the public services submitted to the European Committee of Social Rights of the Council of Europe. This

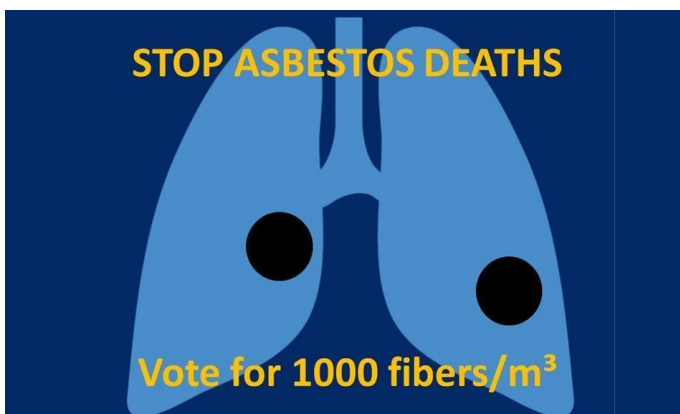
was the first time that a horizontal report of this nature had been compiled and provided to the Committee.

EPSU's fortnightly round up of collective bargaining developments across the public services was published throughout the year with over 300 articles in the 26 issues of the [newsletter](#).

## Health and safety – fighting to end occupational cancer

The recognition of COVID as an occupational disease by the European Commission was a significant victory for EPSU – see above for more information.

In March 2022 the Council of the EU adopted the revision of [Directive on Carcinogens and Mutagens](#). The revision expands its scope to reprotoxins and makes reference to hazardous medicinal products (HMPs). This followed an EPSU-led campaign with Stop Cancer at Work which eradicate occupational exposure to deadly substances and end work-related deaths caused by cancer. As part of the campaign EPSU has actively participated in the preparation of the European Guidelines on HMPs that will be published in March 2023.



Picture 25

In 2022 EPSU continued to advocate for binding legislation to protect workers from asbestos, [calling for a directive](#) to be included as part of a broader legislative package. In September, the Commission published the first part of the revision of the directive on asbestos. EPSU called the proposal to lower OEL from 100.000 to 10.000 fibres/m<sup>3</sup> [completely insufficient](#) and will continue to work, together with EFBWW and ETUC, to lower the exposure limits.

EPSU continued to push for a dedicated Directive on Psychosocial Risks in 2022. We contributed to a European Agency for Safety and Health at Work [study](#) examining the main occupational safety and health (OSH) risks for the human health and social work sector in Europe. The report finds that the acknowledgement of psychosocial risks at the workplace, especially in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, is crucial to cultivate a culture of acceptance and reduce the stigma around mental health issues.

In July EPSU [joined other trade unions](#) under the EndStress.eu platform (ETUC, Eurocadres, EFFAT and industriAll) to call on Commissioner Schmidt to propose legislation for the prevention of psychosocial risks. EPSU also [appeared in a video](#) calling for legislation to prevent psychosocial risks.

EPSU also participated in the launch of an ETUI report on psychosocial risks in the healthcare and long-term care sectors. The report presents evidence on work-related psychosocial risks and analyses the conditions and circumstances that give rise to these risks. EPSU used the report to call for a dedicated Directive on Psychosocial Risks.

EPSU joined several other organisations and MEPs to [issue a statement](#) on skin cancer prevention on World Cancer Day, February 4. The statement calls on the European Commission to act on several areas for an adequate EU policy and regulatory framework in Europe's Beating Cancer Plan – particularly to protect outdoor workers.

EPSU concluded a multi-sectoral project on third party violence with a conference held in Madrid on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women – read more in the section on NEA.

Finally, in order to facilitate improved exchange on OSH, EPSU established an [Expert Group on OSH](#) which first met in December 2022.

## **Social dialogue - lengthy consultation and delay by the Commission**

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The European Commission continued the long process of informal consultation of EU social partners over the future of social dialogue that it had begun in 2020 in response to challenges raised by EPSU's legal action over the refusal to submit the agreement on restructuring in Central Government Administrations for implementation as a directive. The Commission initially promised that it would publish a Communication on the European social dialogue together with a recommendation on national collective bargaining in the summer but these were repeatedly delayed, with publication finally expected in January 2023. EPSU adopted a position paper at the May Executive Committee that set out 16 action points, six of which were also agreed as part of a joint approach with the other European trade union federations. The main demands focused on the need for transparency and the use of clear criteria in the European Commission's procedures on the legislative implementation of social partner agreements as well as the Commission's support for the running of sectoral social dialogue, both politically and financially.

In the meantime, EPSU and the European employers in central government, EUPAE signed their agreement on digitalisation that want the Commission to put forward for implementation as a directive. Cross-sector social partners began their negotiations on telework, also foreseen for implementation as a directive.

## Tax justice – Orpea under fire

The Orpea scandal extended to the company’s finances. In February a [report](#), released by EPSU affiliate unions CGT and CFTD with CICTAR (Centre for International Corporate Tax Accountability and Research), revealed that the company is quietly building a property empire.



Picture 26

Research revealed that the group used 40 Luxembourg subsidiaries to expand their European property portfolio – and that 37 of these subsidiaries were not disclosed in Orpea’s public reporting. EPSU’s General Secretary Jan Willem Goudriaan [said](#), “While Orpea’s creative accounting practices may not be illegal, they highlight the structural inequalities present in a for-profit care system.”

In May 2022 the French government fined McDonalds [a record €1.1 billion](#) for tax avoidance. The fine followed [a report](#) published by EPSU, EFFAT, SEIU and War on Want in 2015 which detailed the tax avoidance practices which cost Europeans over €1 billion between 2009 and 2013. EPSU issued a press release welcoming the new sanctions, urging the Commission to revise tax competition rules and further investigate McDonalds and other companies employing similar tax-dodging practices.

EPSU also continued to promote the work of CICTAR, the Centre for International Corporate Tax Accountability and Research. In addition to several ground-breaking reports into the financial practices of ORPEA, CICTAR [published a report](#) revealing Microsoft’s use of subsidiaries and other ‘hollow company’ structures to avoid paying taxes. The findings make a strong argument for governments to demand transparent reporting of revenues and tax payments when awarding contracts.



Picture 27

In December 2022 the Council reached an agreement on the implementation of the OECD’s minimum corporate tax rules. While EPSU and PSI have long campaigned for this international tax reform, the agreement did not meet our expectations. A new UN mandate for international tax reform was welcomed by PSI.

## SECTOR: National and European administrations

NEA committee continued to lead a multisectoral project on the role of social partners in preventing and tackling third-party violence and harassment at work alongside eight sectoral social partners. The

project, funded by the European Commission, aimed to assess the scale and impact of external violence and harassment in the workplace; legislative and policy responses; and the extent to which the multisectoral Guidelines adopted in 2010 remain relevant. Project partners put forward an action plan based on insights from six theme-based webinars, project research findings and new data from Eurofound.



Picture 28

The final conference was held in Madrid on 25 November – the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Ninety conference delegates adopted [the action plan](#) which reaffirms a zero-tolerance policy toward violence and harassment at work and concludes that the 2010 Multisectoral Guidelines on the prevention of third-party violence and harassment at work must be updated and that the 2002 cross-sector autonomous agreement on violence and harassment at work would also benefit from a review. At

the end of the conference, the project partners committed to submitting the action plan for adoption with their respective EU sectoral social dialogue committees in the first half of 2023. Six webinars were held in the framework of the project – find more information [here](#).

In July EPSU, EuroCOP and EUROMIL [submitted a report](#) on violations of trade union rights to the Council of Europe’s European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR). The report outlines the common concerns regarding the protection and extension of basic trade union rights to organise, negotiate and take collective action, as well as an even application of EU social minimum standards to all public services workers.

The NEA Pan-European Conference [was held in September](#) in Skopje under the framework of the EPSU/EuroCOP/Euromil project on strengthening trade union rights. The conference saw public service trade unions from across Europe agree to continue to work together to defend and strengthen trade union rights for employees, civil servants and all uniformed staff, from firefighters and health workers to police and military personnel. Over 80 participants joined the conference and agreed a document on the next steps, setting out the kinds of actions which the federations and their affiliates could take to tackle the challenges they face in promoting trade union rights in the public services. The 80 participants represented 49 different affiliates from the three federations, coming from 24 countries.

The report titled ‘[Outsourcing the state sector to private firms](#)’, reviewed by the NEA Committee members, was launched at a press conference in Brussels on 5 October with the participation of the European Ombudsman’s services.

## Central government administrations social dialogue

On 6 October the EU social partners for central government – Trade Unions’ National and European Administration Delegation (TUNED) for the trade union side and European Public Administration Employers (EUPAE) for the employers - signed the [agreement on digitalisation](#) with the participation of the European Commission (Stefan Olsson, Deputy Director General, DG EMPL). The agreement was



Picture 29

signed by the Belgian and French Ministers for public administration (on behalf of EUPAE) and Marco Ouwehand, FNV, and Jan Willem Goudriaan, EPSU (on behalf of TUNED).

The agreement provides for new or stronger protection on the rights to telework; to disconnect; to training; to health and safety; to the protection of personal data; and to a human in-command and more strategic approach to artificial intelligence. Increased public investment is needed to develop public

sector IT skills to develop a more strategic approach to digitalisation better adapted to employees, the administration and citizens. The agreement (which was based on discussions started in 2017) was negotiated for over a year, starting in January 2021 until the end of January 2022, exclusively online due to the Covid-19 pandemic context. The negotiations benefited from the financial support of the European Commission (online platform meetings, interpretation). The signatories submitted a request to the Commission for implementation of the agreement via directive so that 9 million public workers and civil servants can benefit from it in a coherent and consistent way.

## Prison Services Network

A meeting of the EPSU Prison Services Network was organised by Norwegian prison union NFF on 25 August in Oslo. The meeting was held in conjunction with a visit of a delegation of US prison trade unionists to discuss post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD). The delegates discussed research findings in the US and Denmark, which highlight that in both countries PTSD to be more prevalent amongst prison officers than amongst war veterans or police forces.

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## SECTOR: Health and social services

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It was another extremely busy year for the health and social services sector. The highlight of the year



Picture 30

was a large demonstration of health and social care workers on 9 December 2022. As Europe's health ministers met in Brussels to discuss Europe's pandemic preparedness and ability to promote health, [health and social care workers](#) from across Europe marched from Place Madou to Rond-Point Schuman to call for action to deal with the sector's urgent staff shortage crisis. Delegations met with [Commissioner Schmit](#) and representatives from the [Czech Presidency](#) to present their [demands](#), based off the declaration adopted at the Pan European Conference on Health and Social Care. The demonstration was covered in [several news outlets](#) including Brussels Times, Social Europe and RTBF.

To mark World Health Day, EPSU [issued a statement](#) on 7 April calling for investment in adequate, needs-based staffing and a reversal of the commercialisation of healthcare. A statement [was issued](#) on International Nurses Day on 12 May calling on policymakers to urgently improve the working conditions of health professionals.

In June 2022 EPSU joined a Europe-wide consortium including employers, trade unions, professional organisations, civil society bodies, research institutions, vocational education and training providers, higher education institutions and health authorities [to launch the BeWell project](#). The four-year project aims to create a blueprint for upskilling and reskilling health workforce in preparation for the green and digital transitions. The first version of the strategy should be ready for evaluation by June 2023.

EPSU participated in the WHO Europe region's annual conference in Tel Aviv from 12 – 14 September where [our statement](#) on the WHO New Strategy was co-signed by seven other European organisations and presented. EPSU and the ILO organised a conference in Batumi, Georgia in September on strengthening healthcare systems following the COVID pandemic. The conference targeted trade unions from Western Asia and the Caucus region and was attended by representatives of the WHO, Commission and employers.



Picture 31

EPSU met with Czech officials several times during their presidency. We discussed issues such as the European Care Strategy, the European Health Data Space, staff shortages and COVID as an occupational disease with Deputy Health Minister Josef Pavlovic in [July](#) and [October](#). An EPSU



delegation [met with](#) Czech Deputy Minister of Health Jakub Dvořáček ahead of the demonstration on 8 December to raise the concerns of carers and demand that the Council of Ministers of Health put our issues on its agenda.

The Pan-European Conference on Health and Social Care was held on 24 October. The conference gathered 90 participants from across the continent from Norway to Kazakhstan. Among the speakers were representatives of all relevant organisations including ILO, the Commission, the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, Eurofound and the European Agency on Safety and Health at Work. Panels discussed improving the resiliency of the health and care sectors post-COVID, tackling staff shortages and strengthening collective bargaining and trade unions in the health and social care sectors. Delegates [adopted a declaration](#) stating that it is imperative to move from applause to concrete action to save the health and social care sector.

EPSU organised a [joint seminar on live-in care](#) in March 2022 which was attended by over 60 participants. Speakers included representatives from affiliate unions ver.di (Germany), VPOD/SSP (Switzerland) and VIDA Flex (Austria), Eurofound and the European Commission. The seminar was an important first step in coordinating and stimulating a European-wide exchange on the improvement of long-term care.

### Hospital and Health Services Sector Social Dialogue

The Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in Hospitals and Healthcare met in March to discuss the work



Picture 32

programme and the Commissions hazardous medical products (HMPs) guidelines. In May, the committee [adopted](#) the Updated Framework of Action on Recruitment and Retention which aims to support European health unions and employers to develop adequate, needs-based staffing levels.

EPSU and HOSPEEM sent a letter presenting the document to Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety. The updated FoA includes aspects related to COVID-19, work-life

balance, gender equality and digitalisation, focusing on the increasing OSH issues which are important for health workers. Members of the committee were also informed about the EU Health Data Space.

In February 2022 EPSU [hosted a joint seminar](#) with HOSPEEM on the European Health Data Space. The seminar provided an opportunity for sectoral social partners to exchange information on the forthcoming file.

### Social services

The EPSU working group on social services met in March and October 2022. Key discussion points were the European Care Strategy, the European Parliament's COVI committee and the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in Social Services. there was a presentation on results from a staff shortages survey and a discussion on what EPSU's position should be on the increasing preference for home care over residential care.



Picture 33

In June 2021, EPSU and the Social Employers officially [submitted the request](#) to the European Commission to establish a Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in Social Services. Since submitting the request, we have been busy garnering support of the application. In February 2022, we met with representatives from the Commission to discuss the more technical side of the application process. In March, we met Commissioner Schmit, to discuss the next steps in our joint application. A decision was expected in

spring of 2022 – however, it has been postponed on several occasions. Non-representative organisations outlined their intention to challenge the committee’s establishment without their involvement. EPSU has attempted to compromise in the interest of setting up the committee in a timely manner, but offers have not been acknowledged. Instead, discussions have continued on a political level. A decision is now expected in early 2023 along with the Communication on Social Dialogue.

EPSU and the Social Employers [hosted the final conference](#) of the SOWELL project in Brussels. The project, which has 7 partners, looks at the care services sector from an employment relations perspective. researchers from the University of Milan and University of Macerata presented the main findings from the research from a comparative perspective. The final panel looked at how social partners at national and EU level can improve employment and working conditions in ECEC and LTC services in the EU.

EPSU, as part of the FORESEE project consortium launched a report on the impact of the COVID pandemic on social services and the role of social dialogue in alleviating the crisis. The report was drafted by the Working Life Research Centre (FORBA) and includes an analysis of expert interviews carried out with employers' organisations and trade unions. The report shows that pre-existing difficulties and a lack of anticipation worsened the negative impact the pandemic had on the social services sector and its workforce, leading to an increase in staff shortages.

A continuation of our report on the post-COVID resilience of the long-term care sector was published in 2022. The continuation focuses on Austria, Belgium, Croatia, France, Italy, Turkey, Ukraine and includes important recommendations on working conditions and care delivery.

EPSU hosted a [recruitment and organising training session](#) for 28 members of Ukraine’s Social Workers’ Union (SWU) in August. The session took place in Khmelnytskyi, around 320 kilometres west of Kyiv at the trade union training centre which only weeks before had been welcoming refugees from the war.

In November, the multinational care provider Korian [became a European Company](#) (SE), and formally established its new works council (CE SE). as the trade union organisation representing the social services sector EPSU was reappointed in its permanent role to accompany and assist the works council.

## Childcare

The EPSU Childcare Network [met in June](#) to discuss the monitoring and evaluation of early childhood education and care, the capacity of ECEC systems to welcome Ukrainian children and ECEC staff, and child to staff ratios.



Picture 34

## Healthcare Assistants Network

EPSU continued its work with the Healthcare Assistants Network with a meeting in May 2022. It discussed the definition of healthcare assistants as workers not performing jobs of other health and social care professionals. Participants were also presented with the draft of a report on the regulation of

health care assistants. The report is focused on five countries: Ireland, UK, Spain, Sweden and Poland and recommend careful regulation of HCAs. The report will be published in early 2023.

## SECTOR: Local and regional government

The LRG Standing Committee [met in March](#) and elected a new Presidential team. The new Presidential team is composed as of President Eva-Lotta Nilsson (Vision, SE) and Vice-Presidents Matthieu Fayolle (CFDT, FR), Christian Jedinger (Younion, AT) and Joana Mor Biosca (UGT, ES).

A project titled 'Insourcing and outsourcing: the role of social dialogue in strengthening public services and defending employment quality' was approved by the Commission and it presented at the standing committee in October 2022. The project is in partnership with PSI and aims to build an online training module on insourcing based on the PSI Guide 'the future is public'.

## Local and regional government social dialogue

The Committee assessed the implementation of its current work programme and midterm progress and discussed the Social Dialogue Work Programme, including digitalisation, third party violence and gender equality. The Committee met again in October where it [approved](#) the aforementioned work programme 2023-2025 for the sectoral social dialogue with CEMR. The Committee also adopted a joint statement with CEMR on climate change and emergency services.

In March EPSU and CEMR held the final event of the 'EU Dialogue, Local Solutions' project. During the meeting, EPSU and CEMR insisted on the importance of capacity building and to work on the enforcement of joint agreements to ensure proper local implementation. The final report and other related documents can be found [here](#).



Picture 35

A new project on digitalisation has been approved and will start in early 2023 with the goal to conclude possible joint guidelines.

### Firefighters' Network

The Firefighters Network committee was held in June with a key focus on professional cancer and decontamination. It followed a day of lobby activity in the European Parliament, where Commissioner Schmit presented the revision of the Asbestos Directive to the EMPL committee. A delegation of fifteen firefighters went to the hearing and had six bilateral meetings with MEPs. The delegation met Commissioner Schmit. The actions convinced MEPs to hold an official public hearing on working conditions of firefighters in the EMPL Committee, expected in the first half of 2023.

Following a successful campaign that led to the inclusion of firefighters in the legislative report on protecting workers with asbestos, EPSU and a network representative (Arno Dick, Ver.di, Germany) met with Rapporteur and European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) to discuss the next steps.



Picture 36

In September, the Commission published the first part of the revision of the directive on asbestos. This part focuses only on the Occupational Exposure Level (OEL); the second part on the legislative framework and renovation of building will be published in spring 2023. EPSU called the proposal to lower OEL from 100.000 to 10.000 fibres/m<sup>3</sup> [completely insufficient](#) and will continue to work, together with EFBWW and ETUC, to lower the exposure limits.

To mark International Firefighters Day, EPSU [translated](#) the UK Fire Brigades Union's (FBU) report on minimising firefighters' exposure to toxic effluents into Czech, Albanian, Serbo-Croatian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Russian and Turkish. We also held a photo action at our Executive Committee and [published a statement](#) sharing solidarity with firefighters across Europe.

## SECTOR: Utilities

The [Pan-European Conference on Utilities](#) was held in May. During the Pan-European Conference, participants discussed a range of topics with direct consequences for workers and their unions in the



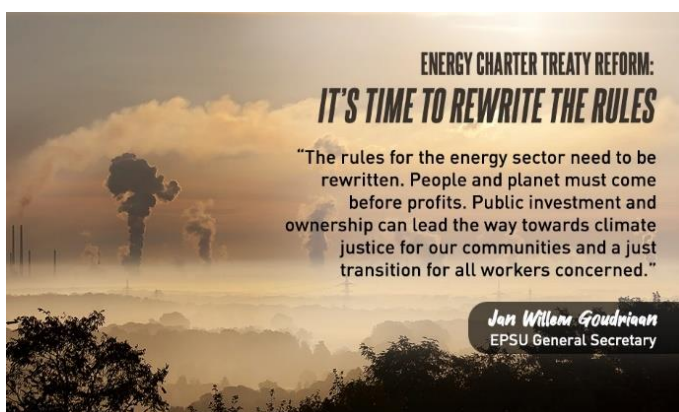
Picture 37

Utilities Sector. Panels were streamed online and included the energy price crisis; liberalisation and commercialisation of energy, waste and water; ways to strengthen unions through solidarity and cooperation and health and safety in utilities under the increasing pressures of climate change.

To mark Public Services Day we organised a conference on just transition in south-east Europe in Bucharest together with Gaz Romania. Colleagues from affiliated energy and water unions from Romania, Hungary,

Slovenia and Bulgaria were present and joined by government representatives, employers, regulators and civil society organisations.

The energy crisis was a significant priority for EPSU in 2022, as outlined above. EPSU [issued a statement](#) in early March expressing solidarity with Ukrainian energy workers and calling for controls, price regulation and windfall taxes on the profits of corporations. We also called for an open debate on our energy future which seriously examines energy market alternatives. The European Commission presented its 'RePower EU' package in May – a package which recognised some of our long-term concerns such as windfall taxes and energy price caps, but ultimately [failed to meaningfully examine](#) the negative consequences of Europe's liberalised energy market.



Picture 38

EPSU expressed its opposition to the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS 2) throughout 2022, [welcoming](#) its suspension for households in May. EPSU also called for an end to the Energy Charter Treaty in 2022. The ECT provides a multilateral framework for energy cooperation between 50 member and observer countries. It, however, was a cause of great concern among several labour unions and environmentalist organisations as it favours fossil fuel energy production, gives disproportionate

power to companies to sue countries and does not favour foreign investments as intended. EPSU [called for treaty reform](#) in July 2022. We [hosted a petition](#) where users could directly send national policymakers their requests to end the ECT.

## Electricity sector social dialogue

The European Sectoral Social Dialogue in the electricity sector was held in October. The focus was on the energy crisis and the new workplan. There are concerns regarding the employers' continued commitment to the social dialogue. In the interest of reinvigorating an important social dialogue committee, we consulted with social partners and put forward a workplan that combines our goal to continue exchanges with the Commission around energy policy and the common desire to have more tangible outcomes. It is built around a project on workforce and skills planning in the electricity sector, with a special consideration of women in electricity. The workplan is in a process of written adoption.

## Gas sector social dialogue

The plenary meeting of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in the gas sector was held in September with the focus also on the energy crisis and new work plan. Based on the findings of our project on 'Challenges and opportunities for employment in the gas sector in the context of the European energy transition: ensuring a just transition for workers' we will be looking at negotiating a European collective agreement in the gas sector. This should focus particularly on skills and women in the gas sector. A new workplan was adopted



Picture 39

focused on the energy price crisis as well as the mentioned collective agreement.

## Right to energy

EPSU is continuing its work with the Right to Energy coalition; a group which unites trade unions, anti-poverty groups, social housing providers, environmental campaigners, health organisations and progressive NGOs to end energy poverty across Europe. The coalition is an important part of EPSU's advocacy efforts towards the European institutions. The Right to Energy Forum was held January 24th to 28th January 2022. During the opening session of the forum, EPSU and the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) presented their [new joint briefing](#) on the Right to Affordable, Clean Energy for All Europeans. The briefing lays out why energy poverty cannot be solved by 'letting the market play its game'. EPSU used the coalition to focus on energy efficiency and renovations, especially the Social Climate Fund and the extension of the EU carbon trading scheme to household heating (ETS 2).

## Right to water

To mark World Water Day 2022, we [shared the story](#) of Yorgos in Thessaloniki, Greece. Following a long fight for public ownership, the Council of State voted 19 to 1 that the public must have the right to control the water companies.

We sent a letter to the MEP Water Group demanding that the non-formal group of MEPs take the voices of almost two million citizens into account, as expressed in the Right to Water campaign. The group, supported by MEPs from different groups (ECR, EPP, S&D and Greens), mentions the Sustainable Development Goals on water in their mission statement - but fails to talk about the UN resolution of the human right to water.

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## European Works Councils

With the European Parliament discussing an upcoming Legislative Initiative Report on the revision of the European Works Councils Directive, EPSU worked with other ETUFs and the ETUC to make sure that the enforcement mechanisms of the EWC directive are strengthened in a meaningful and significant way. EPSU also worked with other ETUFs, the ETUC and the Workers' Participation Fund on a project that will lead to the creation of a website that will offer tips and guidance to EWC members on different challenges that they might encounter. EPSU continued to work with affiliates to set up EWCs in multinational care companies.

An EWC network meeting was held in October where we presented the EWC coordinator guidelines from 2001. Following a discussion in the network, these will be updated and sent out for written comments.

## Company developments



Picture 40

The waste sector is growing with large companies emerging and reorganising. EWCs can be a useful tool for shop stewards and unions to anticipate and react to such developments more quickly. Following a report on waste by PSIRU and a workshop with waste unions and the ETUI, we will consider expanding EWCs in the waste sector. We brought together unions organising workers in Prezero, a rapidly growing German waste company, to set up an EWC. The formal demand has already been sent and negotiations should

start soon. We are also supporting ongoing renegotiations of the EWC agreements in Suez, Engie, and Veolia.

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## Youth network – a focus on training



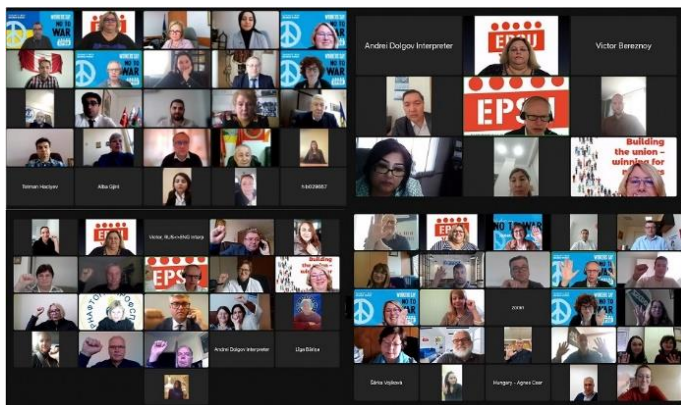
Picture 41

In June, the EPSU youth network [met](#) in Tirana, the European Youth Capital of 2022. This was the first in-person gathering since 2019. Participants discussed the main trends in the world of work, ways to strengthen the inclusion of young workers in trade unions and how to address digitalisation through collective bargaining. The meeting was part of a project supported by the German-based Friedrich Ebert foundation. New members were appointed to the [steering group](#) which had met earlier in the year to plan

the conference and the work of the network. In February, members of the network took part in the

[ETUC's youth training week](#), working on material on unpaid internships for a campaign supported by EPSU.

## Central and Eastern Europe



Picture 42

The impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine dominated the discussions of the four constituencies in Central and Eastern Europe which each met twice during the year – South East Europe ([15 March](#) and [29 September](#)), North East Europe (NEE) ([10 March](#) and [28 September](#)), Central Europe and Western Balkans ([30 March](#) and [20 September](#)) and, following the suspension of Russian affiliates, the Central Asia constituency ([28 June](#) and [28 September](#)). The first meetings in the year, particularly that of the NEE constituency, heard in detail about the challenges facing EPSU's Ukrainian affiliates. The wider effects of the war – particularly the surge in energy and other prices – were also the focus of discussions in all the meetings. In the second round of meetings, affiliates took the first steps in preparing for EPSU's Congress in 2024.

## Communications

EPSU continued to adapt its communications to the changing times in 2022. The year which started with the lockdown brought a shift to a new normal, with more in-person events and a surge in the number of actions throughout Europe. We utilised the experience we gained in digital communication last year to give greater visibility to European labour movement's achievements. We continued the production of in-house videos and branded visual content this year.

The EPSU website kept last year's audience size, with 277,970 visits by 123,096 users – this represents a slightly higher number of visits, but 10,26% more users compared to 2022. We published 515 articles, including meeting documents articles but not including newsletter editorials. 24 EPSU newsletters and 25 collective bargaining newsletters were sent in 2022. In order to deliver our messages more precisely, we organised two workshops for policy staff on writing skills with Andrew Manasseh from Formative Communications.



Picture 43

EPSU's Telegram news channel, which gave us access to reach audiences who may not be on traditional social media, was actively used throughout the year. EPSU also continued to publish its podcast series that started last year. In addition to seven of last year's episodes, six more on various themes, including



health and safety, gender-based violence, the crisis in the care sector, and waste management, have been published. In order to reach a larger audience, we started to publish our podcast series on Apple Podcasts, Spotify and Google Podcasts, in addition to SoundCloud.

The growth in social media continued over 2022, supported by improvements in visual content. Similar to last year, we saw significant audience growth across all platforms. Twitter followers increased to 9100, representing a 25.5% growth in 2022. During the previous four months, we have reached an average of 250K impressions monthly on this platform. Facebook followers increased to 7823, representing a 6,5% growth; Instagram followers were up by 872, an 18,6% increase, and LinkedIn followers grew to 1121, up 48,5%.

EPSU continued to receive good press coverage throughout the year. A range of articles and op-eds were published in Brussels based media to mark international days such as World Health Day (7 April) and Global Day of Action for Care Workers (29 October). Moreover, EPSU published its views in the mass media channels about the agendas concerning the European labour movement, such as European Care Strategy, Asbestos Directive and EU's dependency on private consultancy firms, to impact the decisions in European Parliament. Furthermore, the action on Public Services Day (23 June) and the European Protest of Health and Care Workers (9 December) were covered in different countries such as Austria, Belgium, Italy, Spain and Turkey.

## Executive Committee

The [May](#) meeting of the Executive Committee was enlarged to enable increased participation for the mid-term review between Congresses and this was the first physical meeting since the end of 2019.



Picture 44

The Russian invasion of Ukraine dominated the discussions on the first morning and the Executive Committee strongly condemned the action, called for an end to hostilities and withdrawal of all Russian troops. The meeting considered the profound impact on peace and security arrangements in Europe, the consequences for workers in all European countries and the need for solidarity. The Executive Committee agreed a proposal of the leadership of the Federation to suspend work with the Russian affiliates

who had failed to stand up for the values and aims of the Federation. The Executive took a similar decision with regard the work with the affiliate from Belarus which had also failed to protest against the arrests of the entire leadership of the independent trade union confederation BKDP and several of its affiliates, including the SPB health union whose affiliation to EPSU was approved.

The other key discussions at the meeting included preparations for Public Services Day on 23 June; the European Commission's review of social dialogue and its position following EPSU's legal action and agreement on a proposal from the Finance Working Group for a limited increase of the affiliation fees.

In [October](#), the Executive Committee was joined by ETUC deputy general secretary Esther Lynch and



Picture 45

discussed the cost of living crisis and the ETUC's six-point plan that included urgent action by the European Commission and national governments as well as the negotiation of higher pay through collective bargaining. In preparation for the ETUC Congress, the Committee supported the nomination of Esther for the position of general secretary, endorsed key points on public services for the ETUC programme of action and set out the main requirements for EPSU's Congress delegation.

The meeting approved the midterm budget for 2022 and the budget for 2023 and agreed the nominations for the EPSU committees working on EPSU's Congress in 2024, the agenda for Congress and the general outline of the Programme of Action for 2024-2029.

There were important discussions on work in health and social services, noting the declaration of EPSU's Pan-European Conference in the sectors, and endorsing the action on 9 December at the Council of Ministers for Health in Brussels. The Executive also endorsed EPSU's campaign to stop the commercialisation of care and preparations for input into the 29 October Global Care Day.

## Working with other organisations



Picture 46

EPSU continued its close collaboration with PSI in 2022. PSI and EPSU immediately issued a statement condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine and both joined ITUC and ETUC to launch a solidarity fund for workers and trade unions in Ukraine. We also [sent a joint letter](#) in support of striking health workers in Turkey.

EPSU was active across many of the ETUC's committees and its Executive Committee and in the mid-term conference that took place in November. In addition, EPSU participated in a number of working groups that met regularly to discuss draft EU directives including on Adequate Minimum Wages, Gender Pay Transparency, Asbestos and Artificial Intelligence. EPSU works regularly with other European trade union federations, including with industriAll Europe in the gas and electricity social dialogue committees and a number of other European federations on events and webinars. EPSU worked with Eurocop and EUROMIL on a two-year project on trade union rights. The BeWell, Foresee and FORBA projects also brought EPSU together with a number of stakeholders including employers and other civil society organisations. EPSU also led a multisectoral social dialogue project with seven social partners on prevention of third-party violence and harassment at work.



Picture 47

## Organisational matters

### Finances

To keep EPSU as a Federation that can deliver for Europe's public service workers and its members in the long-term, the Executive Committee meeting on 04-05 May 2022 agreed to increase the affiliation fees with 1,5 Eurocent in 2023 and 1,5 Eurocent in 2024. EPSU ended the year with a surplus. EPSU contributed financially to the humanitarian aid for Ukrainian workers and refugees.

### Membership

The Executive Committee endorsed the affiliation of nine trade unions: Belarusian Free Trade Union (SPB) (1156 members), Union of Finnish Rescue Professionals (SPAL) (5091), Fédération des Finances et Affaires Economiques (FFAE, France) (5939), Sindicato dos Trabalhadores da Saúde, Solidariedade e Segurança Social (STSSSS, Portugal) (1070), Trade Union of Workers of Electroistribucija Srbije (EDS, Serbia) (8214), Federazione Nazionale della Sicurezza (FNS-CISL, Italy) (9000), Lithuanian Federation of Law Enforcement Officers (LTPF) (4000), Trade Union of Professional Firefighters of Slovenia (SPGS) (500) and All-Russian Health Workers Trade Union 'Action' (Deystvie) (3500). There were only two disaffiliations agreed by the Executive Committee during the year – APIT (Portugal, 1082 members) and Prospect (UK, 28741).

### Staff

Campaigns and communications officer, Pablo Sanchez, returned from paternity leave in March and in the following month the temporary contract communications assistant Can Kaya, was extended to September 2023. Personal assistant Roxana Drug went on maternity leave and celebrated the birth of her son, Mattia, in September. Gloria Grasso was appointed as a temporary replacement with a contract running to mid-April 2023.

Eight stagiaires contributed to the work of the federation as part of their academic studies: Simon Munkler (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), Imogen Woods and David Fox (Global Labour University), Nola Byrne (University College, Dublin), Fulvio Esposito (Université Libre de Bruxelles), Philip Freeman (Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Grenoble), Sanat Sogani (Central European University, Vienna) and Zita Baronnet (University of Groningen).

## Photos captions

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1. Workers say No to War – Solidarity with Ukrainian Workers (EPSU banner)
2. EPSU-PSI joint online meeting with Ukrainian affiliates, 2 March 2022
3. Public Service Day, Brussels, 23 June 2022
4. EPSU Demonstration with Health and Social Care workers from accross Europe, Brussels, 9 December 2022
5. Health workers from EPSU affiliated union LVSADA, Latvia action for higher wages, Latvia, 27 July 2022
6. Cover EPSU and EAPN joint briefing on the Right to Affordable, Clean Energy for All Europeans, February 2022
7. STORIES FROM THE COVID FRONTLINE: Workers’ Rights and Privatisation of Health Services, event co-organised by The Left and EPSU, 29 September 2022, European Parliament, Brussels
8. COVI Committee meeting, 14 November 2022, European Parliament, Brussels
9. EPSU Delegation meeting with Commissioner N. Schmit, 8 July 2022, Brussels
10. Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour (AK EUROPA), European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU), the Social Employers and Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB) joint debate “On the way to a gender-sensitive and sustainable European Care Strategy”, 17 November 2022, Brussels
11. Affiliated unions delegations at the EPSU Demonstration for Health and Social Care workers, and meeting with European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights N. Schmit and Commissioner for Health S. Kyriakides, Brussels, 9 December 2022
12. French unions action in front of Orpea’s head office to demand a change in the company’s industrial relations, 8 March 2022, Paris
13. French unions action in front of Orpea’s head office to demand a change in the company’s industrial relations, 8 March 2022, Paris
14. EPSU Opinion on the provisional agreement on the REPowerEU
15. Manifesto for a Green, Just and Democratic European Economy, March 2022
16. EPSU and HOSPEEM joint online informative session on the European Health Data Space (EHDS), with the European Commission (EC), 3 February 2022
17. Cost of Living demonstration with Belgian unions, Brussels, 16 December 2022
18. Nuclear power plants employees actions of solidarity and support to Energodar residents and employees of Zaporizhzhya NPP, 21 March 2022, Ukraine
19. EPSU delegation attends hearing in trial of Turkish health union leader, SES, of the confederation KESK, Gönül Erden , 4 July 2022, Ankara
20. International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women - EPSU delegation joined a march organised by the Spanish unions FSS-CCOO, FSC-CCOO, UGT-SP and several others, 25 November 2022, Madrid
21. EPSU Report “Gender Sensitive Health Services”, 27 September 2022
22. EPSU Report “Organising and Recruitment: getting the strategy right”, April 2022
23. EPSU Report “Outsourcing Public Administrations to private firms”, October 2022
24. Trade Union rights project - Defending and strengthening trade union rights across the public services, EPSU-EUROMIL-EUROCCOP Final conference, Skopje, 22 September
25. EPSU calls on the Commission to stop asbestos deaths, March 2022
26. French unions action in front of Orpea’s head office to demand a change in the company’s industrial relations, 8 March 2022, Paris
27. CICTAR report “Gaming global taxes – Microsoft”, October 2022

28. Joint project “The role of Social Partners in preventing third-party violence and harassment” final conference, Madrid, 25 November 2022
29. EU Social Partners adopt new agreement on digitalisation for central government with Belgian Minister Petra De Sutter, Brussels, 6 October 2022
30. EPSU delegation meet with representatives from the Czech Presidency of the European Union, Brussels, 8 December 2022.
31. EPSU delegation meet with Commissioner Schmit, Brussels, 9 December 2022
32. EU sectoral social partners in the hospital and healthcare sector, EPSU and HOSPEEM, signed the updated Framework of Actions on Recruitment and Retention, 1 June 2022
33. FORESEE project training on how to develop independent social dialogue structures in social services, June 2022
34. Child care workers action, Oslo, 18 October 2022
35. Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee meeting in Local and Regional Government, 16 November 2022, Brussels
36. Stop cancer at work campaign, EPSU Executive Committee 4-5 May 2022, Brussels
37. EPSU Pan-European Conference on Public Utilities “Fighting for a Future for all”, 10 May 2022, Brussels
38. EPSU calls for Energy Charter Treaty reform, July 2022
39. Solidarity with Ukraine Workers, Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in the Gas Sector meeting, 21 March 2022
40. European Works Council meeting with French care company Korian, 29 June 2022, Paris
41. EPSU Youth Network meeting, 15 June 2022, Tirana
42. EPSU Constituency meetings SEE, CA, NEE and CEWB, 2022, online
43. EPSU Newsletter
44. EPSU Executive Committee support Ukraine, 4-5 May 2022, Brussels
45. EPSU Executive Committee support Health and Care workers, 25-26 October, Brussels
46. PSI Executive Board, 8-9 November 2022, Geneva
47. ETUC Executive Committee and Public Services Day, 22-23 June 2022, Brussels

Cover page, from left to right and from top to bottom/

1. Mette Nord, EPSU President, supports Firefighters – 4 May 2022, Brussels
2. ORPEA “Stop Union busting”, EPSU banner
3. Demonstration against far-right following fascists attack CGIL headquarters in 2021 - 8 October 2022, Roma
4. Belgian unions demonstration against cost of living, 16 December, Brussels (European solidarity delegation)
5. Right to strike at risk in new EU law, 13 September 2022
6. EPSU delegation attends hearing in trial of Turkish health union leader, SES, of the confederation KESK, Gönül Erden , 3 October 2022, Ankara
7. EPSU Demonstration Health and Care workers, 9 December 2022, Brussels
8. Solidarity with Ukraine, Kommunal congress, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022, Sweden
9. EPSU event Public Services Day, 23 June, European Parliament
10. First EPSU Youth Steering Committee meeting after pandemic, 28 April 2022, Brussels



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 260 trade unions across Europe. EPSU organises workers in the energy, water and waste sectors, health and social services and local, regional and central government, in all European countries including the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood. In our sectors we organise workers in the public, the non-profit, mixed and private sector including in multinational companies. It is the recognised regional organisation of Public Services International (PSI).

For more information please go to: [www.epsu.org](http://www.epsu.org) .

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EPSU is a member  
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and represents  
PSI in Europe