



EUROPEAN PUBLIC SERVICE UNION

# Report of Activities

January - December 2015





## EPSU Annual Report 2015

### Contents

Introduction .....	3
Priorities.....	5
Tax – growing momentum behind the tax justice campaign.....	5
LuxLeaks and the European Parliamentary Committee.....	5
McDonald’s – the unhappy meal .....	5
Transparency.....	6
Common corporate tax rate and base .....	6
Global initiatives.....	7
Tax training project .....	7
Water – the fight for the right to water continues.....	7
Trade – lobbying and campaigning on several fronts.....	8
Information and consultation – agreement in Central Government Administrations .....	10
Climate change – progress in Paris .....	10
Migration – urgent call for policy change and more resources .....	11
Other key areas of activity.....	12
Economic governance – no end to austerity .....	12
Trade union rights – attacks spread.....	13
Digitalisation – threat or opportunity? .....	14
Procurement – implementing the directive.....	15
Working time – a pause.....	15
Women and gender equality – maternity leave directive dropped.....	15
Social dialogue – waiting for the relaunch.....	16
Collective bargaining – impact of economic governance .....	16
Health and safety – tackling stress and more .....	16
Young workers – monitoring the youth guarantee.....	17
Organising and recruitment – building EPSU from the bottom up .....	17
Sectors .....	18
Health and social services.....	18
Hospital social dialogue .....	18
Social services.....	19
Local and Regional Government .....	19
Local and Regional Government Social Dialogue .....	20
Firefighters – improving safety .....	20

National and European Administration.....	20
Central Government Administrations Social Dialogue .....	21
Prisons – safety and staffing .....	21
Embassy and diplomatic staff – exposing rights violations .....	21
Utilities.....	22
Waste .....	22
Electricity social dialogue .....	22
Transnational corporations and European works councils .....	22
Organisational matters .....	24
Finances.....	24
Membership.....	24
Staffing .....	24
Communications.....	25
Cooperation Committee EPSU-PSI .....	25
Central and Eastern Europe.....	26
Main documents published in 2015.....	28
EPSU Events 2015 .....	30
List of photos .....	33

## Introduction

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The year will be remembered above all for the terrorist attacks in France and Turkey and the massive surge in refugees desperate to reach Europe to escape the horrors of civil war in Syria and other oppressive regimes. In one of the most brutal incidents, 97 people were murdered in the bombing of an anti-war demonstration in Ankara. Among the victims were activists from the DISK and KESK confederations. EPSU condemned the attack, sent condolences to the affiliates and protested to Federica Mogherini, the European Commission's High Representative, over the continuing persecution of the Kurdish people by the Turkish government ([www.epsu.org/a/11733](http://www.epsu.org/a/11733)).

France was hit twice – first in January with the murders at the Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine ([www.epsu.org/a/11049](http://www.epsu.org/a/11049)) and then in November when 130 were killed and hundreds wounded in various attacks across Paris. EPSU, along with many affiliates, sent condolences to those affected by the attacks and solidarity with French affiliates ([www.epsu.org/a/11805](http://www.epsu.org/a/11805)).

EPSU and PSI reacted on a number of occasions to the refugee situation, calling in particular for more resources to welcome refugees and for a change in policy to relieve the pressure on those countries trying to cope with the main influx .

Despite it being a challenging year, EPSU had some very important victories to celebrate. In particular the European Parliament's vote in support of the right to water and the signing of an agreement with the employers in Central Government Administrations on minimum rights to information and consultation . In both cases, we will continue to work to make further progress in 2016 with lobbying of the European Commission for legislation in both areas.

Our tax justice and trade lobbying and campaigning were the focus of much work during the year. On taxation, EPSU now has an excellent profile and is a key actor in the tax debate at European level, particularly on developments in tax administrations. Our report on McDonald's as part of a coalition with the SEIU service employees' union of the United States and the EFFAT European trade union federation covering food workers became the standard source of information for MEPs and the European press.

The various trade deals – TTIP, CETA, TiSA – have been closely monitored and EPSU has worked very effectively with our sister organisation Public Services International (PSI) and other organisations and with national affiliates to focus on the main issues – protecting public services, defending workers' rights and trying to block any investor state dispute settlement mechanism.

The EPSU delegation played a very active part in the ETUC Congress in Paris in September which elected a new leadership team. There were a number of important debates where EPSU was able to secure votes in favour of key amendments on tax and, in the case of procurement and transparency, a successful vote despite the ETUC Executive Committee's recommendation to reject.

We have yet to see the back of austerity and our colleagues in Greece were very active during the year in trying to resist the further rounds of cuts and privatisation that were part of the latest bail-out agreement. EPSU sent messages of support during the year, along with the statement of the Executive Committee in April and a delegation visited Greece in October to get a true picture of the harsh impact of continuing austerity there.

There was close collaboration with PSI throughout the year, particularly in relation to our work on taxation, trade, climate change and water, all areas where PSI has helped advance the agenda in important ways.

Many of our affiliates were very active during the year organising strikes and protests to defend their rights and/or improve their members' pay and conditions. EPSU sent messages of support to affiliates in Greece, Italy, Finland, Norway, Lithuania, the UK, Belgium, Turkey, Kosovo and Hungary.



### **Hans Engelberts**

It was with deep sadness that EPSU learned of the death of Hans Engelberts on 13 April 2015.

Hans had been general secretary of PSI between 1981 and 2007. Having started his trade union career in the predecessor of AbvaKabo in the Netherlands, Hans dedicated his life to the PSI. He contributed to the development of the organisation in major ways. PSI membership grew significantly during his time of office and Hans was instrumental in building relations with trade unions in Central and Eastern Europe after the fall of the wall and in developments that led to EPSU becoming the voice of Europe's public service unions working with the PSI to defend workers' interests.

## Priorities

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### Tax – growing momentum behind the tax justice campaign



The campaign for tax justice saw a number of very important developments during 2015 with the prospect for further progress on the issue in the coming years.

#### LuxLeaks and the European Parliamentary Committee

2014 ended with the Luxleaks revelations about industrial-scale tax avoidance deals agreed by Luxembourg governments over many years and 2015 began with a European Parliament debate about setting up a special committee to examine the issue. Disappointingly the main political groups worked together to block a full parliamentary enquiry committee and so the resulting special committee (TAXE) lacked the powers to force representatives of companies or of governments to respond to MEPs or provide national documents on tax rulings ([www.epsu.org/a/11152](http://www.epsu.org/a/11152), [www.epsu.org/a/11069](http://www.epsu.org/a/11069)).

Nevertheless, the TAXE committee has been instrumental in keeping the focus on tax avoidance and its report, published at the end of November, was a damning indictment of those member states that have violated basic EU rules and principles of genuine cooperation by granting multinationals secret tax deals ([www.epsu.org/a/11840](http://www.epsu.org/a/11840)). The committee was due to continue working throughout the first half of 2016 and EPSU planned to maintain its close cooperation with several of its members.



#### McDonald's – the unhappy meal

The leaked Luxembourg tax rulings showed how major European, US and other corporations and private equity funds avoided paying their fair contribution to society. This was further exposed in *Unhappy Meal*, the report on the McDonald's fast food company, published in February. EPSU was part of the coalition behind the report which included the SEIU service workers' union from the US, the EFFAT, food and agriculture trade union federation and anti-poverty campaigning charity War on Want. The report, became the standard source of information for the media and the European institutions, and explained how the company's tax structure allowed it to divert revenue for years, costing European countries over €1 billion in lost taxes between 2009 and 2013 ([www.epsu.org/a/11173](http://www.epsu.org/a/11173)).

The report called, amongst others, upon the European Commission to launch an investigation into McDonald's tax dealings under the suspicion that a tax ruling with Luxembourg was at play. EPSU and coalition members participated in a series of meetings with MEPs and European Commission officials, as well as testifying in a hearing at the EP TAXE Committee in April.



In November a representative of McDonald's appeared before the European Parliament's special committee but failed to respond to key questions on its tax structure in Europe ([www.epsu.org/a/11806](http://www.epsu.org/a/11806)). Then at the beginning of December, on the basis of the *Unhappy meal* report and additional information from the coalition, the European Commission decided to open an investigation into the corporation to examine whether its tax

dealings have effectively been illegal state aid ([www.epsu.org/a/11854](http://www.epsu.org/a/11854)).

## Transparency

The Luxleaks scandal revealed the urgent need for greater transparency over tax matters and EPSU made its position clear in March when it and its affiliated trade unions in government and EU administration expressed their solidarity with Antoine Deltour who exposed what was going on in Luxembourg. While there were no immediate steps taken against the corporate tax dodgers, Deltour was facing the prospect of five years in prison and a massive fine ([www.epsu.org/a/11264](http://www.epsu.org/a/11264)).

In October, EPSU joined with War on Want in submitting a statement to European Union finance ministers calling for multinational companies to be required to adopt public country-by-country reporting on profits, losses and taxation. This was in the context of the Shareholders' Rights Directive which was under discussion in the triologue negotiations involving the European Parliament, Council and Commission ([www.epsu.org/a/11767](http://www.epsu.org/a/11767)). This was followed up in December with the setting up of an online petition ([www.epsu.org/a/11918](http://www.epsu.org/a/11918)).

EPSU also responded to a European Commission public consultation on corporate transparency that largely dealt with public country-by-country reporting (September 2015). The majority of responses came out strongly in favour of obliging companies to open up their accounts to the public. The Commission was due to follow this up in the first half of 2016.

In December, EPSU called on the European Parliament to strengthen the proposed directive on Automatic Exchange of Information on tax rulings. This would involve making the information fully public, giving the European Commission a central role in receiving and analysing the information on tax rulings and ensuring that additional human and material resources are allocated to tax authorities to effectively provide, and make use of, the information ([www.epsu.org/a/11771](http://www.epsu.org/a/11771)). However, in the end the European Council agreed a weaker proposal to keep the exchange of information to national tax administrations.

## Common corporate tax rate and base

The EPSU delegation at the ETUC Congress in September won support for an amendment to the ETUC programme calling for a common corporate tax rate of 25% across the European Union ([www.epsu.org/a/11714](http://www.epsu.org/a/11714)). In June the European Commission had published its *Action Plan for Fair and Efficient Corporate Taxation* to which EPSU and ETUC reacted jointly, arguing that the Commission needed to specify concrete measures to implement the plan ([www.epsu.org/a/11504](http://www.epsu.org/a/11504)). The Commission did then launch a public consultation to



identify key measures towards implementing a common consolidated corporate tax base to which EPSU planned to respond early in 2016.

## Global initiatives

EPSU works with Public Services International in the Global Alliance for Tax Justice that includes trade unions and other campaigning organisations. In the lead up to May Day the Alliance circulated a statement on tax justice that highlighted, among other things, the cuts in jobs tax administrations and the McDonald's case ([www.world-psi.org/en/working-people-pay-taxes-corporations-must-pay-their-share](http://www.world-psi.org/en/working-people-pay-taxes-corporations-must-pay-their-share)). In November, the Alliance published a report exposing the impact of US corporate tax avoidance on countries in the G20 group of leading industrial nations ([www.epsu.org/a/11782](http://www.epsu.org/a/11782)) this followed the successful PSI Global Labour Tax Summit in September ([www.world-psi.org/en/global-labour-tax-summit](http://www.world-psi.org/en/global-labour-tax-summit)).

## Financial Transactions Tax

It was another disappointing year for those hoping for progress on a Financial Transactions Tax – three years after the proposal was first put on the table. An announcement of an agreement by 10 instead of 11 countries was expected at December meeting of the Economy and Finance Council of the European Union. Unfortunately, Commissioner Moscovici simply said that he hoped for an agreement by the summer of 2016 ([www.epsu.org/a/11859](http://www.epsu.org/a/11859)).



## Tax training project

EPSU has been involved in a three-year, European Commission-funded training project on raising awareness of tax dodging in Europe and sub-Saharan Africa. The project was run jointly with War on Want and involved EPSU affiliates from the UK, Ireland, Sweden, Austria and Spain as well as PSI's affiliate from Ghana.

The final conference took place on 9 October

([www.notaxfraud.eu/node/51](http://www.notaxfraud.eu/node/51))

## Water – the fight for the right to water continues

This year saw another important milestone in the campaign to implement the human right to water and sanitation across Europe. In September, the European Parliament voted to support the report calling on the European Commission to make concrete legislative proposals to recognize the human right to water and sanitation. This was a major victory for EPSU and the Right to Water Campaign. Not only were several amendments to weaken the report rejected but the report also called for water to be excluded from the Concessions Directive and from the TTIP and TiSA trade negotiations ([www.epsu.org/a/11659](http://www.epsu.org/a/11659)).

Lynn Boylan, the Member of the European Parliament who was rapporteur for the report, spoke at the EPSU Executive Committee in November underlining the campaigning and lobbying required to secure the successful vote. She noted in particular that it was also the first European Parliamentary report to draw attention to the importance of public-public partnerships and the trend towards re-municipalisation of water companies ([www.epsu.org/a/11775](http://www.epsu.org/a/11775)).



There were several campaigns at national level that continue to push for the right to water and against privatisation of the sector.

## Trade – lobbying and campaigning on several fronts

While the EU-USA talks on the TTIP trade deal have grabbed many of the headlines, EPSU has also had to follow other negotiations that pose a threat to public services. These include the CETA agreement between the EU and Canada, the EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement and the TiSA multi-country negotiations on services. EPSU key positions on these are clear. The agreements should exclude public services and have no Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism. Neither should they provide any scope for further deregulation or privatisation but they should respect labour and environmental standards.

EPSU has been making every effort to get these views across in appropriate meetings, hearings and conferences. In February alone, for example, this involved participations in European Commission Civil Dialogues on TTIP, TiSA and the EU-Japan treaty, a meeting with US Ambassador to the EU, a hearing at the European Economic and Social Committee on ISDS and a hearing at the European Parliament trade committee on TiSA. These kinds of

contacts and meetings continued throughout the year.



At the beginning of the year EPSU and the ETUCE education federation organised a conference in Vienna bringing together over 100 trade unionists, campaigners and experts from more than 25 countries to debate the major concerns about the various trade negotiations

([www.epsu.org/a/11100](http://www.epsu.org/a/11100)).

In March EPSU signed a statement with many other trade unions and campaigning organisations calling on the European Parliament to adopt a limited definition of what trade secrets are and to prioritise freedom of information ([www.epsu.org/a/11284](http://www.epsu.org/a/11284)). In the same month, as discussions in the European Parliament were underway, EPSU was part of an alliance of 375 trade unions and civil society organisations that sent a letter to MEPs calling on them to protect citizens, workers, and the environment from the threats posed by TTIP ([www.epsu.org/a/11208](http://www.epsu.org/a/11208)).

In May EPSU linked up with its Austrian affiliate (younion), environmental organisation Friends of the Earth and the Austrian workers' organisation Arbeiterkammer to promote an online tool to make it easy to people to contact MEPs to show their opposition to ISDS ([www.epsu.org/a/11419](http://www.epsu.org/a/11419)). EPSU and the ETUCE followed this up in July with a joint letter to all MEPs repeating the main demands ([www.epsu.org/a/11546](http://www.epsu.org/a/11546)).



The European Commission has repeatedly claimed that TTIP and CETA don't pose a threat to public services but EPSU remains to be convinced by the vague reassurances coming from both sides of the Atlantic ([www.epsu.org/a/11286](http://www.epsu.org/a/11286)). A report published in October clearly reveals how these deals could endanger citizens' rights to basic services like water, health, and energy for the sake of corporate profits. The report was commissioned jointly by EPSU and several civil society organisations and shows how CETA, and the TTIP could lock public utilities into irreversible

commercialisation and remove governments' ability to regulate services ([www.epsu.org/a/11731](http://www.epsu.org/a/11731)).

EPSU has been working with Canadian trade unions and civil society groups since 2009 trying to uncover the details of the CETA agreement which were finalized in 2014 but it was not until December this year that the European Parliament's trade committee (INTA) held a first debate on the concluded agreement ([www.epsu.org/a/11868](http://www.epsu.org/a/11868)).

At the beginning of June, there was a major leak of documents about the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) negotiations. Both the European Union and the US had been making general statements about the protections afforded to public services but these leaks provided little support for that claim. In fact, the scope and nature of the proposed liberalisation suggested by these leaks simply served to heighten trade union concerns ([www.epsu.org/a/11480](http://www.epsu.org/a/11480)).

EPSU and PSI worked hard during 2015 with many others in the union movement to keep the spotlight on trade with a global day of action on 18 April ([www.epsu.org/a/11364](http://www.epsu.org/a/11364)) and then using Public Services Day (23 June) to focus on the dangers posed by trade deals. In a further collaboration with the ETUCE, EPSU put out a statement ([www.epsu.org/a/11507](http://www.epsu.org/a/11507)) and organised a photo action with PSI indicating the widespread concerns of public services unions about the various trade negotiations (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/94657608@N02/sets/72157653466865189>).

During the year EPSU has provided support and/or input into a number of events organised by affiliates and other campaigning organisations in Ireland, the UK, Belgium ([www.epsu.org/a/11392](http://www.epsu.org/a/11392)) and Germany. It has also tried to ensure that affiliates are kept informed of all the latest developments by issuing regular updates ([www.epsu.org/r/231](http://www.epsu.org/r/231)).

## Information and consultation – agreement in Central Government Administrations

December saw a major step forward for workers' rights in public administration. In line with the NEA standing committee's 2014 Congress resolution, EPSU was able to sign an agreement on common minimum standards for information and consultation rights with the employers in Central Government Administrations ([www.epsu.org/a/11913](http://www.epsu.org/a/11913)).



The Social Dialogue Committee in Central Government Administrations decided in 2014 to discuss the prospects for an agreement on information and consultation. This was in the light of the European Commission's consultation on three directives on workers' rights to information and consultation which, in the main, exclude workers in public administration. Progress was made in early in the year with formal negotiations on a draft agreement beginning in January. A draft was agreed in September supported by

both the trade union and employer delegations with the exception of the Italian employers. Following a small amendment it was possible to secure agreement on all sides. The text was drafted in anticipation that it could be transposed into a directive and this will be an important issue for both sides to follow up in 2016.

## Climate change – progress in Paris

The main focus of activity during the year was the build up to and participation in the COP 21 climate change talks that took place in Paris at the beginning of December. As part of this, the ETUC, with support from EPSU and other federations, was successful in lobbying both the European Council and the European Parliament to get them to adopt sections on Just Transition and Decent Work in their positions on COP 21. Earlier in the year EPSU had urged affiliates to take part in the global lobby week coordinated by the International Trade Union Confederation ([www.epsu.org/a/11458](http://www.epsu.org/a/11458)).

The PSI and EPSU trade union delegations were very active in Paris in the lead up to the formal talks ([www.epsu.org/a/11675](http://www.epsu.org/a/11675)) and the final agreement includes, in its preamble, a reference to "just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs" ([www.epsu.org/a/11867](http://www.epsu.org/a/11867)).

EPSU was also successful in negotiating a joint statement on COP 21 with the electricity employers, emphasising that social partners need to work together to address climate change and particularly its social and employment impacts ([www.epsu.org/a/11679](http://www.epsu.org/a/11679)).



Climate change was on the agenda of the EPSU Firefighters' Network meeting in Hannover in June which agreed a statement on the impact of climate change and disaster reduction on fire, emergency and other public services ([www.epsu.org/a/11501](http://www.epsu.org/a/11501)).

## Migration – urgent call for policy change and more resources

The civil war in Syria and other conflicts in Africa and the Middle East led to an enormous upsurge of migration to the European Union and the tragic deaths of thousands who risked their lives on sea crossings to southern Europe.

The EPSU Executive Committee agreed a statement at its meeting in April ([www.epsu.org/a/11383](http://www.epsu.org/a/11383)) which set out a number of key demands, including:

- immediate restoration of EU-funded search-and-rescue operations;
- sufficient and well-trained public service workers in reception and asylum processing centres;
- increasing efforts to ensure suitable living conditions for asylum-seekers and refugees;
- compliance with the UN Geneva Convention establishing safe, legal routes for those who flee war and persecution, and increasing the number of recognitions of refugee status; and
- immediate suspension of the Dublin Convention according to which the EU country of arrival is responsible for processing the asylum claims of applicants.

EPSU and PSI also issued two statements before and after the extraordinary Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting of 14 September ([www.epsu.org/a/11670](http://www.epsu.org/a/11670) and [www.epsu.org/a/11673](http://www.epsu.org/a/11673)). These called for a fair distribution of resettlement of refugees across the European Union supported by sufficiently staffed public services. The two organisations also used International Migrants' Day on 18 December to draw attention to the situation of refugees and to urge governments to ratify and implement the United Nations Convention on the protection of rights of migrant workers ([www.epsu.org/a/11893](http://www.epsu.org/a/11893)).

EPSU and PSI also held a meeting in Armenia, in cooperation with the International Labour Organisation's Workers' Activities bureau in Moscow, on 24 November. This was to discuss the current state of affairs in relation to labour migration of health workers to and from Russia and other countries in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and its impact on health service delivery amid the refugee reception crisis in Europe (<http://world-psi.org/en/psiepsu-ilo-roundtable-labour-migration-and-trade-union-rights>).

## Other key areas of activity

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### Economic governance – no end to austerity

While there were some indications that the European economy was moving out of recession, there was no indication of any major shift in policy from the European Commission. The Commission had made clear in the Annual Growth Survey published at the end of 2014 that the focus would continue to be on fiscal consolidation, structural reforms and investment.



The major debate during the year was around the European Fund for Strategic Investments and EPSU worked with the ETUC in trying to ensure that the legislation included clear references to social and environmental criteria as well as quality employment.

EPSU also worked with the ETUC in a number of forums (Macroeconomic Dialogue ([www.epsu.org/a/11162](http://www.epsu.org/a/11162), [www.epsu.org/a/11520](http://www.epsu.org/a/11520)), Annual Growth Survey consultation ([www.epsu.org/a/11701](http://www.epsu.org/a/11701)), Tripartite Social Summit ([www.epsu.org/a/11283](http://www.epsu.org/a/11283)), stressing above all the urgent need to boost public investment and particularly social investment in areas like childcare, about which EPSU published a briefing later in the year . EPSU also underlined this message in its collaboration with a group of civil society organisations in the Semester Alliance (<https://semesteralliance.net/>).

EPSU worked with other organisations as well, with its suggestion for a seminar on alternatives to austerity taken up by the ETUI research institute (<http://www.etui.org/News/How-to-break-the-austerity-consensus>) and contributing to a seminar organised by Eurocities ([www.epsu.org/a/11990](http://www.epsu.org/a/11990)).

There were significant developments in Greece where elections, first in January and then again in July, resulted in the anti-austerity Syriza party winning most seats and leading a coalition government. EPSU supported the initiative launched by German trade unions to use the outcome of the Greek election in January to call for a change of course by the European institutions ([www.epsu.org/a/11160](http://www.epsu.org/a/11160)) and this was also reflected in a statement by the Executive Committee agreed in April ([www.epsu.org/a/11384](http://www.epsu.org/a/11384)).

In the end, even after a referendum rejecting more austerity, the Greek government was unable to make any significant changes to the harsh conditions set by the Eurogroup for a further bailout deal. EPSU affiliate ADEDY along with the GSEE private sector confederation organised several general strikes in protest at the continuing cuts to jobs and services and attacks on workers' rights ([www.epsu.org/a/11851](http://www.epsu.org/a/11851), [www.epsu.org/a/11781](http://www.epsu.org/a/11781), [www.epsu.org/a/11573](http://www.epsu.org/a/11573)). An EPSU delegation visited Athens in October and met with ADEDY to get a full update on the devastating impact of austerity in the country ([www.epsu.org/a/11763](http://www.epsu.org/a/11763)).

The European Commission had made "modernising public administration" one of the main themes of its European Semester in previous years and EPSU secured Commission funding for a project to assess the impact of this policy at national level. A report from the Brussels-based OSE research organisation examined how public administration had featured in the country specific recommendations and looked in detail at the impact in five countries ([www.epsu.org/a/11811](http://www.epsu.org/a/11811)).

## Trade union rights – attacks spread



During the year EPSU expressed support for many of its affiliates facing pressure on their rights to organise and negotiate. These rights continued to be under attack particularly in Turkey where, in February, workers protesting over the dismissal of 98 colleagues from Maltepe Hospital in Istanbul were brutally removed by police ([www.epsu.org/a/11183](http://www.epsu.org/a/11183)). In May, an initial ruling from the courts called for the hospital to reinstate or pay compensation to a third of those dismissed ([www.epsu.org/a/11435](http://www.epsu.org/a/11435)).

EPSU also expressed its solidarity with the KESK and DISK confederations that faced court action simply for calling for support for May Day celebrations in 2014 ([www.epsu.org/a/11153](http://www.epsu.org/a/11153)).



Trade unions in the UK and particularly public sector unions are facing a major assault on their right to strike as well as on established rights to time off for trade union work and check-off deductions of trade union dues. Both EPSU and PSI wrote to the UK government and European Commission and contributed to government and parliamentary consultations over the Trade Union Bill, voicing their strong criticism of the proposals ([www.epsu.org/a/11835](http://www.epsu.org/a/11835)).

EPSU also sent messages of support to affiliates and/or letters of protest to governments in reaction to the following incidents:

- Air traffic controllers in Romania denied rights to information and consultation over restructuring ([www.epsu.org/a/11182](http://www.epsu.org/a/11182));
- Workers at the European Patent Office in the Hague denied rights to negotiate and losing a case in the Dutch courts which had ruled that the organisation was not covered by European legislation ([www.epsu.org/a/11201](http://www.epsu.org/a/11201) and [www.epsu.org/a/11777](http://www.epsu.org/a/11777));
- Trade unions in Lithuania facing major changes to the Labour Code that remove or weaken many employment rights ([www.epsu.org/a/11669](http://www.epsu.org/a/11669));

- Trade unions in Ukraine protesting against proposed legislation to restrict unions' rights to organise ([www.epsu.org/a/11649](http://www.epsu.org/a/11649)); and
- Finnish trade unions campaigning against unprecedented attempts by the government to intervene in collective bargaining ([www.epsu.org/a/11672](http://www.epsu.org/a/11672)).

At global level, employers created controversy in the International Labour Organisation with their unwillingness to acknowledge that core ILO conventions provided the basis for the right to strike. EPSU gave its support to the international day of action in February ([www.epsu.org/a/11167](http://www.epsu.org/a/11167) and [www.epsu.org/a/11161](http://www.epsu.org/a/11161)).

One of the longest-running cases of industrial action during the year involved members of the PCS civil service union working at the National Gallery in central London. The workers took over 100 days of strike action in 2014 and 2015 in protest at plans to outsource visitor services affecting 400 of the Gallery's 600 staff. Although they didn't prevent the outsourcing they did secure an agreement to protect pay and conditions and to reinstate a sacked union activist ([www.epsu.org/a/11285](http://www.epsu.org/a/11285)).

EPSU also joined with PSI in calling for support for public service unions in Korea who faced particularly acute attacks on their rights with arrests of union leaders, invasion of offices and banned demonstrations ([www.epsu.org/a/11855](http://www.epsu.org/a/11855)).

## Digitalisation – threat or opportunity?



The process of digitalisation is set to have major implications for the public services. EPSU commissioned a literature review from the ETUI and took the initiative to start up an informal network with the ETUC and other European Trade Union Federations. EPSU was also part of a delegation that met with representatives of the European Commission's DG Connect in May, in advance of the publication of the

Digital Single Market package. The delegation underlined the need for the Commission to ensure that the employment and social impacts of digitalisation are given due regard ([www.epsu.org/a/11389](http://www.epsu.org/a/11389)).

In September, EPSU and the CEMR local government employers' body organized a seminar on digitalisation of local authority services as part of their joint project "New forms of service delivery for municipalities, the contribution of social dialogue and good practice for well-being at work". Following the seminar EPSU and CEMR agreed a joint statement on digitalisation at their December social dialogue meeting. The statement emphasised the need to ensure a fair distribution of the benefits of digitalisation ([www.epsu.org/a/11865](http://www.epsu.org/a/11865)).

There were initial discussions about developing an EPSU position on the impact of digitalisation on public services for adoption by the Executive Committee in 2016 as well as organising a conference to discuss trade union strategies across EPSU sectors.



## Procurement – implementing the directive

Transposition of the procurement directive revised in 2014 was the priority for the year and EPSU's Public Services Network and Standing Committee for Local and Regional Government collaborated with the Network for Sustainable Development in organising a workshop in Brussels in June to discuss implementation ([www.epsu.org/a/11270](http://www.epsu.org/a/11270)). EPSU was re-appointed to the European Commission Stakeholder Expert Group on Public Procurement.

## Working time – a pause

At the end of 2014, the European Commission unexpectedly launched a consultation on the working time directive although they had still not published any of the studies that had been commissioned during the previous summer. Following discussions within the ETUC's working time task force, EPSU along with the majority of European trade union organisations took a position in favour of no major change to the Directive. This was seen as a tactical move whereby the current Directive and relevant European Court rulings would be maintained rather than undermined by, what in the current political climate would likely be a major negative revision to the Directive. By the end of the year, no proposals on the Working Time Directive had emerged and nor did the Commission's work programme for 2016 make any reference to working time.

(<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=333&langId=en&consultId=14&visib=0&furtherConsult=yes>)

## Women and gender equality – maternity leave directive dropped

One of the biggest disappointments of the year was the European Commission's decision to drop the proposed maternity leave directive. It had been on the negotiating table since 2008 but fell victim to the "better regulation" agenda. The directive would have established a minimum of 18 weeks' leave across Europe ([www.epsu.org/a/11550](http://www.epsu.org/a/11550)). The threat of withdrawal became apparent earlier in the year and EPSU was instrumental in ensuring that this issue was taken up by the ETUC and urged all affiliates to write to their governments over the matter ([www.epsu.org/a/11301](http://www.epsu.org/a/11301)).

The Gender and Women's Equality Committee continued to monitor the impact of austerity on women in the public services with an update of the report by the Labour Research Department originally published in 2013 assessing the situation in seven countries.

In January EPSU was involved in a final round of negotiations over a transnational agreement on gender equality at the Suez Environment multinational with the final version signed at an extraordinary meeting of the company's European works council in March ([www.epsu.org/a/11125](http://www.epsu.org/a/11125)).

EPSU monitors the gender breakdown of participation in its main committees and the results are shown below, indicating the average percentage of women attending the committee meetings. The Social Services Working Group (SSWG) is included for the first time.

Committee	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
WGEC	100%	63%	83%	80%	69%	88%
NEA	36%	32%	42%	30%	28%	39%
LRG	39%	20%	40%	34%	30%	36%
HSS	54%	64%	68%	73%	64%	66%
SSWG	56%	na	na	na	na	na
UTIL	12%	16%	10%	16%	19%	17%
EC	41%	35%	39%	38%	38%	41%

## Social dialogue – waiting for the relaunch

The European Commission organised a conference in March as a first step in an initiative to relaunch the social dialogue. As part of the follow up EPSU has taken part in ETUC delegations in working groups looking at concrete ways in which to improve the social dialogue and to broaden and deepen the consultation of social partners in developing EU policy ([www.epsu.org/a/11227](http://www.epsu.org/a/11227)). EPSU and CEMR, the local government employers, issued a joint statement indicating their support for Commission's initiative ([www.epsu.org/a/11214](http://www.epsu.org/a/11214)).

At cross-sector level EPSU was involved in the discussions and negotiations around the In-depth Employment Analysis and the new work programme (<https://www.etuc.org/press/eu-employers%E2%80%99-organisations-and-trade-unions-agree-work-programme-2015-2017-depth-eu#.Vpjwdbncs3E>) which were both adopted by the ETUC in July.

## Collective bargaining – impact of economic governance

The latest in EPSU's conferences on collective bargaining took place on 13-14 January in Brussels. The conference included sessions on economic governance and collective bargaining, the relationship between and trends in public and private sector pay and working time ([www.epsu.org/a/10310](http://www.epsu.org/a/10310)).

EPSU continued to produce regular updates on collective bargaining developments in its electronic newsletter ([www.epsu.org/r/121](http://www.epsu.org/r/121)). While there was some evidence of public sector unions beginning to restore some of the pay and conditions that were cut as part of austerity, it was also clear that some affiliates continued to face a very challenging bargaining environment.

## Health and safety – tackling stress and more

EPSU and HOSPEEM, the social partners in the hospital social dialogue, have been working together on a two-year European Commission-funded project on how to address musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), psycho-social risks and stress at work. Measures to tackle MSDs were discussed at a conference in Paris in March ([www.epsu.org/a/10895](http://www.epsu.org/a/10895)) while a conference in Finland in November discussed preventive actions, risk assessment and good management of psycho-social risks and stress at work ([www.epsu.org/a/10896](http://www.epsu.org/a/10896)). The main themes or instruments for follow-up activities with HOSPEEM or to be suggested to the European Commission were to be decided upon by mid 2016.

EPSU collaborated with the ETUI research organisation on a special edition of its health and safety magazine, *HesaMag*. The issue focused on the physically and mentally challenging

work of nursing staff, made all the more difficult as a result of austerity measures ([www.epsu.org/a/11211](http://www.epsu.org/a/11211)).

## Young workers – monitoring the youth guarantee



Members of the EPSU youth network took part in the Back to Our Future project with other European Trade Union Federations. This focused on campaigning around unemployment and precarious work and produced a number of outputs, including a guide to campaigning – *Just do it* ([www.back2ourfuture.org](http://www.back2ourfuture.org)).

A steering group of 10 people from across all EPSU sectors was elected at the 7th meeting of the youth network in Madrid in June ([www.epsu.org/a/11736](http://www.epsu.org/a/11736)). The meeting also agreed to focus the work of the network on the youth guarantee, youth employment and unemployment and organising and recruitment. There was also a meeting of the network earlier in the year which had discussed youth employment and transitions and EPSU's contribution to the Back to Our Future project ([www.epsu.org/a/11154](http://www.epsu.org/a/11154)).

## Organising and recruitment – building EPSU from the bottom up

EPSU took a number of initiatives to begin implementing the Congress resolution on organising and recruitment. In January, it cooperated with the ETUI's training department on a two and a half day seminar in Zagreb. This brought together affiliates from South East Europe, predominantly those organising in the social services sector.

In response to a request at Congress, EPSU asked the Labour Research Department to compile a briefing on examples of organising and recruitment initiatives around Europe. The draft briefing was presented to the November meeting of the Executive Committee and it will form part of a new section on organising on EPSU's redesigned website due for launch in early 2016.

In the summer EPSU was joined by Eddy Stam, on secondment for a year from FNV in the Netherlands. Eddy brings many years of organising experience to EPSU and it was planned to involve him particularly in providing advice and support to affiliates in Central and Eastern Europe .

## Sectors

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### Health and social services

The key issues in health during the year, on top of those covered in the hospitals social dialogue (see below and in Health and Safety section above), were:

- work programme for 2015-16 ([www.epsu.org/a/11210](http://www.epsu.org/a/11210));
- continuing work on health care assistants (HCAs) – setting up of working group to respond to survey on the interest and feasibility of common minimum training requirements for HCAs carried out by the European Commission and to prepare future work in this area;
- safe and effective staffing levels – preparation of a concept paper and follow-up to the PSI seminar in London in May ([www.world-psi.org/en/nurse-patient-ratios-save-lives](http://www.world-psi.org/en/nurse-patient-ratios-save-lives)), with the possibility of organising a thematic seminar in 2016; identifying links between safe staffing levels and priorities of EPSU’s work, such as health and safety and the workplace, access to continuous professional development or the funding of health care services;
- further discussions on bilateral cooperation between EPSU affiliates for the benefit of their members moving to another country;
- following up country-specific recommendations on health in the European Semester; and
- planning a possible media-friendly action in 2016 to fight the privatisation, commercialisation and marketisation of health and social care.

An article ([www.epsu.org/a/10139](http://www.epsu.org/a/10139)) summarises highlights from the September Standing Committee Health and Social Services.



Decent recruitment and employment conditions were the main theme of joint work with the European Public Health Alliance and Wemos, a Dutch health rights foundation, leading to EPSU signing a call to action in October ([www.epsu.org/a/11569](http://www.epsu.org/a/11569)) and a joint workshop in the European Parliament in May ([www.epsu.org/a/11209](http://www.epsu.org/a/11209)).

### Hospital social dialogue

The main issues tackled by EPSU and the HOSPEEM employers’ organisation in the Hospital social dialogue committee during the year included:

- the joint project on psycho-social risks, stress and musculoskeletal disorders ;

- recruitment and retention – further mainly social partner-based good practice was compiled in relation to the Framework of Actions agreed in 2010 and a final report agreed at the meeting in December ([www.epsu.org/a/11944](http://www.epsu.org/a/11944)); and
- continuous professional development (CPD) and lifelong learning (LLL), with an initial draft joint statement on CPD and LLL for all health workers discussed at the December meeting.

Further information on EPSU's health and social service work can be found here: [www.epsu.org/r/2](http://www.epsu.org/r/2) and specifically on the hospital social dialogue here: [www.epsu.org/r/20](http://www.epsu.org/r/20). The main activities and outcomes for 2014 and 2015 have been summarised ([www.epsu.org/a/11943](http://www.epsu.org/a/11943)) to facilitate broad dissemination with affiliates and other interested organisations.

## Social services

The work has further developed based on the thematic priorities work programme for 2015-16 ([www.epsu.org/a/11212](http://www.epsu.org/a/11212)). The question of social dialogue in social services was again a major item of debate with non-profit employers in the sector continuing to explore the potential through further European Commission funded projects (Pessis II, [www.epsu.org/r/684](http://www.epsu.org/r/684), leading to Pessis III, [www.epsu.org/a/11909](http://www.epsu.org/a/11909)).

In order to be clear about EPSU's approach the Health and Social Services and Local and Regional Government Standing Committees discussed a document, *Goals and principles of co-operation*, and also a "Strategy and Action Paper", planned for adoption by the two Committees and then the Executive Committee in the course of 2016. EPSU published a brochure to outline its main activities and policy objectives in social services ([www.epsu.org/a/11677](http://www.epsu.org/a/11677)).

The main areas of work in social services during the year included:

- childcare, with the publication of a briefing highlighting the economic and social benefits of investing in childcare ([www.epsu.org/a/11729](http://www.epsu.org/a/11729)), with a statement issued in October ([www.epsu.org/a/11728](http://www.epsu.org/a/11728));
- organising and recruitment, with examples of successful campaigns reported to the working group and included in an EPSU briefing;
- elderly care, long-term care and personal care and household services;
- ethical recruitment and employment conditions for migrant health and social care workers.

The Social Services Working Group met in March ([www.epsu.org/a/11239](http://www.epsu.org/a/11239)) and September ([www.epsu.org/a/11019](http://www.epsu.org/a/11019)).

## Local and Regional Government

In following up its work programme EPSU's standing committee for Local and Regional Government decided to focus on three areas:

- potential campaigning for a living wage in cities;
- publicising cases of re-municipalisation and failed public-private partnerships; and
- deepening work started on digitalisation .

In December, a workshop on re-municipalisation was organized jointly with the ETUI, examining specific cases where services have been brought back under public control and looking in particular at the implications for workers.

The committee's discussions also included the impact of TTIP and other trade deals on local services, procurement and co-operation with the Health and Social Services Committee on social services (see above).

In November, representatives of EPSU and PSI met with all policy staff of United Cities Local Government to start building relations with the global representative of local government.

## Local and Regional Government Social Dialogue

EPSU, with its counterpart in the social dialogue, CEMR, agreed a joint statement on improving social dialogue and a joint position on digitalisation. They also began work on a two-year project looking at new forms of service provision in municipalities.

In November, the President of the LRG Committee together with the President of the CEMR Employers' Group met with a member of Employment Commissioner Thyssen's cabinet to discuss the relaunch of the social dialogue.

Further information on EPSU's local and regional government work can be found here: [www.epsu.org/r/3](http://www.epsu.org/r/3) and specifically on the local and regional government social dialogue here: [www.epsu.org/r/73](http://www.epsu.org/r/73).

## Firefighters – improving safety



The EPSU Firefighters' Network was active during the year particularly around health and safety as well as climate change. The meeting in Hannover in June agreed a statement on climate change as well as discussing occupational cancers, fatalities at fires and personal protective equipment (PPE) ([www.epsu.org/a/11501](http://www.epsu.org/a/11501)). At the end of the year a number of colleagues from the network took part in a forum organised by

the Enprotex association active in the (public) procurement of protective textiles and PPE ([www.epsu.org/a/11864](http://www.epsu.org/a/11864)).

EPSU wrote to the European Commission in April to express its concern that there was no workers' representation at the European Civil Protection Forum ([www.epsu.org/a/11368](http://www.epsu.org/a/11368)).

More information on the Firefighters' Network can be found here: [www.epsu.org/r/315](http://www.epsu.org/r/315).

## National and European Administration

Information and consultation rights, tax justice and migration dominated much of the work in this sector during the year. The NEA standing committee also discussed:

- digitalisation;
- modernising public administration in the context of the European Semester;
- tackling corruption in the context of a hearing at the European Economic and Social Committee; and

- the draft work programme for 2016-17 for the Central Government Administrations social dialogue committee.

## Central Government Administrations Social Dialogue

By far the most important development during the year was the negotiation and final signing of the agreement on information and consultation rights . The social dialogue committee also agreed recommendations for a quality administration for people in a vulnerable situation (asylum-seekers, young unemployed and low income pensioners) and a proposed joint health and safety project, focusing on psycho-social risks.

Further information on EPSU's national and European administration work can be found here: [www.epsu.org/r/4](http://www.epsu.org/r/4) and specifically on the central government administrations social dialogue here: [www.epsu.org/r/566](http://www.epsu.org/r/566).

## Prisons – safety and staffing



Health and safety, staffing levels, union membership and collective bargaining were among the main issues covered during a meeting of the EPSU Prison Services Network in February and featured in a survey and report on prisons. Thirty delegates from 11 countries attended the meeting which was organised in London jointly with the RCN nursing union ([www.epsu.org/a/10944](http://www.epsu.org/a/10944)). The POA prison staff union of the UK also attended the meeting and agreed later in the year to affiliate to EPSU for the first time.

More information on the Prison Services Network can be found here: [www.epsu.org/r/226](http://www.epsu.org/r/226).

## Embassy and diplomatic staff – exposing rights violations

EPSU has previously highlighted the problems faced by embassy and diplomatic staff in asserting their trade union and employment rights in a context where employers claim immunity from basic employment legislation. This year saw the publication of a new report which provides further evidence of the violations of the rights of these workers. These include non - payment of salaries, dismissals on sick leave, no employment contracts, no pension entitlements and little or no holiday or rest breaks. The report was produced by the Amsterdam International Law Clinic and commissioned jointly by EPSU and Dutch affiliate FNV Overheid ([www.epsu.org/a/11470](http://www.epsu.org/a/11470)).

EPSU has also raised the issue of lack of trade union and information and consultation rights in European bodies like the European Patent Office ([www.epsu.org/a/11201](http://www.epsu.org/a/11201)) and European Central Bank ([www.epsu.org/a/11252](http://www.epsu.org/a/11252)).



## Utilities

Climate change and water were major issues for the utilities committee during the year along with:

- the Energy Union and the need to ensure that it takes account of social and employment questions, with EPSU twice participating in ETUC delegations that met with Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič;
- the Commission's energy package covering emissions trading, energy efficiency, consumer rights and the energy market design;
- energy poverty – the committee agreed to join Trade Unions for Energy Democracy and agreed to support Droit a l'Energie-SOS Futur, the international lobbying and campaigning group of the right to energy while also taking part in a meeting with MEPs, the European Anti-Poverty Network and representatives of the Cabinet of Vice-President Šefčovič.

Further information on the Utilities standing committee can be found at: [www.epsu.org/r/16](http://www.epsu.org/r/16) and on energy here: [www.epsu.org/r/34](http://www.epsu.org/r/34).

## Waste

EPSU, along with many other organisations was highly critical of the European Commission's decision to withdraw a proposal on the circular economy. Later in the year the Commission did carry out a consultation to which EPSU responded, highlighting the failure



to address employment issues ([www.epsu.org/a/11628](http://www.epsu.org/a/11628)). The Commission finally produced a package at the end of the year that acknowledged the role of social dialogue and the importance of a skilled workforce but EPSU stressed the need also to ensure protection against low pay and poor health and safety standards ([www.epsu.org/a/11882](http://www.epsu.org/a/11882)).

Further information on the waste sector can be found here: [www.epsu.org/r/34](http://www.epsu.org/r/34).

## Electricity social dialogue

Apart from the joint statement on climate change, the committee also worked on developing a quality framework for traineeships, discussed a pledge on apprenticeships and agreed a joint letter to the European Commission calling for a social impact assessment of the new energy market design.

Further information on the electricity social dialogue can be found at: [www.epsu.org/r/99](http://www.epsu.org/r/99).

## Transnational corporations and European works councils

EPSU has been involved in negotiations at the Suez Environment multinational on gender equality ([www.epsu.org/a/11125](http://www.epsu.org/a/11125)), strategic workforce planning ([www.epsu.org/a/11466](http://www.epsu.org/a/11466)) and skills ([www.epsu.org/a/11720](http://www.epsu.org/a/11720)). EPSU was active in the negotiating team at the ENGIE multinational (formerly GdF-Suez) aiming to reach an agreement on labour relations following the restructuring of the company.





During the year EPSU worked with the Syndex consultancy in a European Commission-funded project aiming to support European works council members and trade unionists in strengthening their capacity and skills in social dialogue. The project, "Working together for European recovery", was targeted at representatives with three different levels of experience ([www.epsu.org/a/11055](http://www.epsu.org/a/11055)).

In March EPSU organised a workshop in cooperation with the ETUI research organisation on multinational corporations involved in infrastructure with a focus on the energy sector. The debate highlighted the need to invest in public infrastructure and services, new technologies, training and skills ([www.epsu.org/a/11235](http://www.epsu.org/a/11235)).

## Organisational matters

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### Finances

EPSU has continued to adjust its finances to take account of declining membership. Affiliation fees to EPSU increased by two eurocents per member per year. As in 2015 the draft budget for 2016, presented to the November Executive Committee, was drawn up to link the main items of expenditure with the political priorities. The draft budget for 2016 was established on the basis of 6.5m members compared to 6.7m for 2014. The member auditors' report for 2014 and presented to the Executive in November noted that: "The accounts continue to be kept with the greatest professionalism. They are clear, precise and allow very rapid access to all the supporting documents and information requested with the greatest transparency."

### Membership

EPSU continues to work to recruit public service unions to membership as well as supporting affiliates in way to improve the organising and recruitment of new individual members . During the year it was particularly satisfying to welcome into membership the GENOP electricity union in Greece and the POA trade union for prison staff in the UK, two unions with whom EPSU had been developing a relationship over many years. We also welcomed into membership the Industry, public utilities and business workers union of Kyrgyzstan, our second affiliate in that country. Overall, paid membership declined mainly as a result of the loss of individual membership of our affiliates who then affiliate fewer members to EPSU. However, two affiliates did decide to disaffiliate during the year. These were CNV Connectief in the Netherlands and the Central Union of Special Branches within AKAVA in Finland.

### Staffing

There were several developments relating to staff during the year. EPSU said a final goodbye to former general secretary Carola Fischbach-Pyttel. Carola stood down at the Congress in May 2014 but her contract ran until the end of 2015. Utilities officer Jerry van den Berge left EPSU to return to the Netherlands and Guillaume Durivaux was appointed to replace him but was not due to take up the position until January 2016. Jan Willem Goudriaan covered the utilities work during this period.

Press and communications officer Pablo Centellas Sanchez applied for a year's sabbatical and left EPSU on 29 October. Ruby Waterworth was appointed to replace him on a one-year contract and began work at EPSU at the beginning of December. Patrick Orr, who had worked as a stagiaire for EPSU in 2014, was appointed as a policy assistant on a four-month contract to assist with work on the tax justice campaign and to cover some of the youth work. The contract was initially due to run until January 2016 but it was agreed to extend it to June 2016.

Anaïs Arcon Diaz received in January 2015 a permanent contract.

Eddy Stam assists EPSU through FNV in the Netherlands for a year to work on organising and recruitment.

Six stagiaires provided some helpful support during the year. There were four from Odense University in Denmark – Cathrine Festersen, Daragh Hamilton, Xenofon Zimoziogas and Francisco Pando Junco – while Natascha Henry was from Maastricht University in the Netherlands. There was one from Science Po Rennes: Morgane Goret Le Guen.

Peter Marchsteiner from one of our Austrian affiliates, younion (formerly GdG-KMSfB), worked at the EPSU offices for a month to gain experience of European trade union issues.

## Communications



Further work was done to increase EPSU's visibility in high profile areas of work including tax, trade and water and affiliates continued to be kept up to date with regular newsletters bringing together all the latest press releases and statements on key policy areas. More effort was also directed at putting information out using Twitter and Facebook.

EPSU brought its trade union journalists' network together in Madrid at the beginning of June. However, rather than just a meeting to discuss communication issues and techniques, the group was active in making a number of video and audio reports about the situation in Spain. Colleagues from several different countries met local activists and discussed the impact of austerity and the Ebola crisis, trade union rights, privatisation and tax justice among other issues ([www.epsu.org/r/267](http://www.epsu.org/r/267)).

## Cooperation Committee EPSU-PSI

The EPSU-PSI Cooperation Committee established with the EPSU-PSI-Europe merger in 2009, met in February 2015 with the main points for discussion including:

- continuing discussions to address the concerns of Russian affiliates, with the focus on identifying common issues of relevance around for example, migration, wage developments, health and safety in the workplace, the Customs Union;
- the meeting for young trade union representatives organised jointly between EPSU, PSI and the ETUI in Bucharest in March;
- consideration of shifting priorities and resources, with the Cooperation Committee reflecting a shift towards greater engagement by EPSU and affiliates on organising and recruitment;
- strengthening cooperation mechanisms within the secretariats and policy staff to ensure effective coordination; and
- the contribution the European region is making to the efforts to tackle the financial pressures faced by PSI.

## Central and Eastern Europe

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Most of the issues of concern for affiliates in Central and Eastern Europe are reflected in EPSU's main areas of activity such as trade, tax, water, health and safety. However, there are certain areas of a particular importance to affiliates in the region which EPSU addresses through specific actions and discussions in the constituency meetings.

At the Executive Committee in November, EPSU began a debate about the future orientation of work in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Organising, recruitment and campaigning were seen as important areas that needed to form a larger element of the work of regional staff as well as a priority for projects organised in CEE constituencies. Further debate on these questions was foreseen for the Executive Committee meeting in April 2016.

The issue of organising and recruitment featured prominently on the Constituency Meeting agendas and was the focus of a new initiative involving Eddy Stam, an experienced organiser seconded from the FNV in the Netherlands. Affiliates in the health and social services sector in Central and Eastern Europe were invited to take up the offer of direct advice and assistance from Eddy and health sector affiliates from Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia agreed to commit to the project. The initial step was a seminar planned for February 2016 in London followed by visits to each affiliates.

Eddy was available to provide advice and support to other affiliates and by the end of the year he had made presentations and took part in meetings in Hungary and Ukraine as well as getting involved in the project with the ILO Training Centre (see below) where he ran sessions on organising and campaigning at the regional workshop in Sofia in September and the final conference in Turin in December.

The November Executive Committee had a preliminary discussion about the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) which currently consists of Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (in EPSU's Russia and Central Asian constituency) and Belarus and Armenia (in EPSU's North East Europe constituency). The Executive noted the report and agreed to monitor further developments particularly in relation to the social dimension of the EEU.

In June EPSU submitted a response to the European Commission's consultation on its European Neighbourhood Policy which is relevant to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine ([www.epsu.org/a/11545](http://www.epsu.org/a/11545)). The response focused on quality public services and the role they play in developing sustainable, democratic and cohesive societies.

EPSU collaborated with the ILO Training Centre in Turin on a major European Commission funded project involving affiliates in Central and Eastern Europe. This was the first time that the Training Centre has worked with EPSU and the project covered a wide range of issues including ILO conventions, collective bargaining developments, organising and recruitment, campaigning and communications and trade union rights (<http://actrav-courses.itcilo.org/en/p4-57675>). The project was funded by the European Union but additional funding from EPSU meant that a number of affiliates outside the EU were able to participate in the launch meeting and the regional workshops. These included trade unions from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine.

During the year EPSU supported a number of actions, strikes and protests by affiliates in Central and Eastern Europe including:

- the campaign and protests around the sackings at Maltepe Hospital in Istanbul ([www.epsu.org/a/11435](http://www.epsu.org/a/11435), [www.epsu.org/a/11183](http://www.epsu.org/a/11183), [www.epsu.org/a/11053](http://www.epsu.org/a/11053));
- the right to information and consultation on restructuring for the air traffic control union in Romania ([www.epsu.org/a/11182](http://www.epsu.org/a/11182));
- the campaign for pay increases for culture workers in Hungary ([www.epsu.org/a/11081](http://www.epsu.org/a/11081));
- the health strike by FSSHK in Kosovo ([www.epsu.org/a/11138](http://www.epsu.org/a/11138));
- anti-austerity protests by the Latvian health union ([www.epsu.org/a/11367](http://www.epsu.org/a/11367));
- protests around health and safety at the PAKS nuclear power station in Hungary ([www.epsu.org/a/11425](http://www.epsu.org/a/11425)); and
- opposition to new anti-trade legislation in both Ukraine ([www.epsu.org/a/11649](http://www.epsu.org/a/11649)) and Lithuania ([www.epsu.org/a/11669](http://www.epsu.org/a/11669)).

Representatives from EPSU also took part in a number of events and visits including to:

- Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan ([www.epsu.org/a/11653](http://www.epsu.org/a/11653));
- Azerbaijan ([www.epsu.org/a/11149](http://www.epsu.org/a/11149)); and
- Belarus ([www.epsu.org/a/11312](http://www.epsu.org/a/11312)).



Constituency meetings in Central and Eastern Europe took place in March. The continuing impact of austerity and privatisation were among the main debates at the North East Europe constituency meeting in Vilnius ([www.epsu.org/a/11297](http://www.epsu.org/a/11297)). Organising and recruitment featured on the agenda of the South East Europe constituency meeting in Istanbul which was preceded by a meeting specifically for health unions in the region to discuss privatisation trends as well as organising in the private sector ([www.epsu.org/a/11251](http://www.epsu.org/a/11251)). Organising in the private health sector and the negative impacts of public-private partnerships were two of the key issues discussed at the Russia and Central Asia Constituency in Dushanbe ([www.epsu.org/a/11221](http://www.epsu.org/a/11221)). Opposition to the current batch of trade deals was the focus of the meeting bringing together affiliates from Central European and the Western Balkans in Bled ([www.epsu.org/a/11308](http://www.epsu.org/a/11308)).

## Main documents published in 2015

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### European Neighbourhood Policy

- EPSU response to the EC consultation : "*Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy*, June 2015 (EN/RU) [www.epsu.org/a/11545](http://www.epsu.org/a/11545)

### Health and Social Services

- *Social Services for all* – EPSU brochure (EN/FR/DE/IT/ES/CZ/RU/SR/SV) [www.epsu.org/a/11677](http://www.epsu.org/a/11677)
- *The social and economic benefits of good quality childcare and early years education?* EPSU Briefing, October 2015 (LRD) [www.epsu.org/a/11729](http://www.epsu.org/a/11729)

### Local and Regional Government

- *Joint Social Partner Declaration on the opportunities and challenges of digitalization*, December 2015 (EN) <http://www.epsu.org/a/11865>
- *New forms of service delivery for municipalities, the contribution of social dialogue and good practice for well-being at work* – Theme: *Digitalisation of local authority services in Europe* - <http://www.epsu.org/a/12064>, final report EPSU-CEMR Project, October 2015
- *Joint Statement in advance of Joint High Social Dialogue Summit: Local and Regional Government involvement in European Economic Semester*, March 2015 (EN) <http://www.epsu.org/a/11213>

### Migration, migrant workers, mobility and cross-border recruitment

- EPSU Executive Committee Statement: *EU must assume its responsibility on the migration and asylum crisis in Mediterranean and Aegean Seas*, April 2015 (EN/FR/DE/ES/SV/RU) [www.epsu.org/a/11383](http://www.epsu.org/a/11383)

### National and European Administration

- *Landmark agreement on information and consultation rights* reached by TUNED, the EPSU-led trade union delegation, and EUPAE for central government, December 2015 <http://www.epsu.org/a/11955>
- *Response to the Consultation of European Commission on a consolidation of the EU Directives on information and consultation of workers*, adopted by the SDC CGA on 2 June 2015, [www.epsu.org/a/11485](http://www.epsu.org/a/11485)
- *Policy recommendations for a quality service in central government administration*, adopted on 21 April 2015 by the European Social Dialogue Committee for Central Government Administrations (SDC CGA) [www.epsu.org/a/11477](http://www.epsu.org/a/11477)

### Public Services

- *EPSU Executive Committee Statement on Greece*: The EPSU Executive Committee supports the statement agreed at the ETUC Executive Committee on 10 and 11 March – Greece after the election: an opportunity for Europe, April 2015 (EN only) [www.epsu.org/a/11384](http://www.epsu.org/a/11384)
- Report "*Public services under attack - TTIP, CETA, and the secretive collusion between business lobbyists and trade negotiators*" (EN/FR/DE) <http://www.epsu.org/a/11731>
- *Unhappy meal: €1 Billion in Tax Avoidance on the menu at McDonald's*, joint report EPSU, EFFAT, SEIU and War on Want, 24 February 2015 [www.epsu.org/a/11315](http://www.epsu.org/a/11315)

### Utilities

- EURELECTRIC/IndustriAll Europe/EPSU Joint position on New Energy Market Design, October 2015 (EN) [www.epsu.org/a/12022](http://www.epsu.org/a/12022)
- EURELECTRIC/IndustriAll Europe/EPSU *Climate change - Joint Position on addressing measures to mitigate social impacts*, September 2015 (EN/CZ) [www.epsu.org/a/11679](http://www.epsu.org/a/11679)
- *Our Public Water Future : The global experience with remunicipalisation*, Joint report TNI, PSIRU, Multinational Observatory, MSP and EPSU - April 2015 (EN) [www.epsu.org/a/11310](http://www.epsu.org/a/11310)
- EPSU contribution to EU public consultation Circular Economy: Absurdistan, August 2015 (EN) [www.epsu.org/a/11628](http://www.epsu.org/a/11628)

### Taxation

- Unhappy meal : €1 Billion in Tax Avoidance on the menu at McDonald's, joint report EPSU, EFFAT, SEIU and War on Want, 24 February 2015 (EN/DE) [www.epsu.org/a/11315](http://www.epsu.org/a/11315)

## EPSU Events 2015

<b>Executive Committee</b>		
24/02	EPSU President and Vice-Presidents	Brussels
28-29/04	Executive Committee	Brussels
10/09	EPSU President and Vice-Presidents	Brussels
3-4/11	Executive Committee	Brussels
<b>Utilities</b>		
24/02	SD Electricity Working Group	Brussels
9/03	Workshop on multinationals in infrastructure	Brussels
10/03	European Works Council Coordinators Network	Brussels
11/03	Utilities Standing Committee	Brussels
24/03	European water movement event	Brussels
24/03	SD Electricity Working Group	Brussels
21/09	SD Electricity Plenary	Brussels
6/10	European Works Council Coordinators Network	Brussels
7/10	Utilities Standing Committee	Brussels
29/11-11/12	COP 21 Climate Change Conference	Paris
3/12	Remunicipalisation	Brussels
<b>Local &amp; Regional Government</b>		
23/02	SD LRG Working group	Brussels
24/02	Local and Regional Government Standing Committee	Brussels
22/05	SD LRG Working Group	Brussels
11-12/06	Firefighters Network	Hannover
21/09	SDC Local government project – 1 <sup>st</sup> seminar	Brussels
22/09	Local and Regional Government Standing Committee	Brussels
2/12	SD LRG Plenary	Brussels
<b>Health &amp; Social Services</b>		
26-29/01	Organising and recruiting in Social services in CEE + SEE	Zagreb
25/02	Working group Social Services (1)	Brussels
26/02	Health and Social Services Standing Committee	Brussels
27/02	Steering OSH Internal EPSU delegation	Brussels
6/03	SSDC HS Working Group (1)	Brussels
25/03	SSDC HS project – Conf. on MSD	Paris
6/05	PHS project regional seminar (1)	Rome
21/05	Socially responsible procurement	Brussels
27/05	PHS project regional seminar (2)	Brighton
4/06	SSDC HSS project OSH – Steering (2)	Brussels
15/06	SSDC HS Working Group (2)	Brussels
22/09	PHS project regional seminar (3)	Vienna
23/09	Working group social services (2)	Brussels
24/09	Health and Social Services Standing Committee	Brussels
10/11	SSDC HSS project OSH – Conference 2 on PSRS@W	Helsinki
10/12	SDC Hospitals Plenary	Brussels
<b>National &amp; European administration</b>		
25-27/02	Prison services	London
17/03	National & European Administration Standing Committee	Luxembourg
21/04	SDC Central Government Administrations Working Group	Brussels
8/05	Modernising Public Administration – CB project 2014-2015	Brussels
26-37/05	Tax justice training project workshop	Spain
2/06	SDC Central Government Administrations Plenary	Brussels
12/06	TUNED/EUPAN DGs	Riga
23/06	Tax justice demo	Brussels
24/06	Tax justice training project workshop	Vienna
25/09	SDC Central Government Administrations working group	Brussels



8/10	National & European Administration Standing Committee	Brussels
9/10	Tax justice training project conference	Brussels
20/10	Modernising Public Administration – CB project 2014-2015	Brussels
20/11	SD NEA H&S project Steering group 1	Brussels
3-4/12	TUNED/EUPAN DGs	Luxembourg
21/12	SDC Central Government Administrations Working Group	
<b>Gender Equality</b>		
2/11	Women and Gender Equality Committee	Brussels
<b>Collective Bargaining &amp; social dialogue general</b>		
13-14/01	Collective Bargaining Conference	Brussels
11-12/02	Decent work project kick off	Brussels
21-23/04	Decent work project workshop	Bratislava
16-18/06	Decent work project workshop	Montenegro
7-9/07	Decent work project workshop	Estonia
2-4/09	Decent work project workshop	Bulgaria
7-8/10	Precarious work	Brussels
14-15/12	Decent work project final Conference	Turin
<b>Youth</b>		
4/02	Youth Network	Brussels
16-18/03	EPSU/PSI Youth seminar	Bucharest
14-15/05	European Youth conference	Dubrovnik
3-4/09	Youth seminar org. in health sector	Rostov
6/10	Youth Network steering group	Madrid
<b>Constituencies</b>		
15-16/01	Joint seminar Trade and PS	Vienna
3-4/03	Russia and Central Asia Constituency	Dushanbe
11/03	Seminar health/recruitment/organizing	Istanbul
12-13/03	South east Europe Constituency	Istanbul
25-26/03	North east Europe Constituency	Vilnius
30/03-1/04	Central and Eastern Europe constituency	Bled
1-4/06	Culture conference	Budapest
17-21/08	EPSU delegation visit Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan	Astana and Bishkek
26-27/08	Trade Unions organizing in times of crisis	Kiev
6-8/10	EU Association/Partnership	Romania
<b>Other</b>		
23/02	Cooperation Committee	Brussels
23/06	Global QPS day	
13-16/10	EPSU delegation to Greece	Athens
<b>Staff</b>		
2/04	EPSU/PSI policy staff meeting	Geneva
<b>ETUC</b>		
27-28/01	ETUC Congress CPC	Brussels
10-11/03	ETUC Steering Committee & Executive Committee	Brussels
26/03	ETUC Congress CPC	Brussels
28/05	ETUC Congress CPC	Brussels
17-18/06	ETUC Steering Committee & Executive Committee	Brussels
28/09-1/10	ETUC Congress	Paris
28-29/10	ETUC Steering Committee & Executive Committee	Brussels
16-17/12	ETUC Steering Committee & Executive Committee	Brussels
<b>PSI</b>		
18/02	PSI Global day of action for the right to strike	
27-28/05	PSI Executive Board	Geneva
16/11	PSI Constitution WG (1 <sup>st</sup> mtg)	Geneva
17-18/11	PSI Steering Committee	Geneva
<b>Trade</b>		
15-16/01	Joint seminar Trade and PS	Vienna



18/04	Global day of action on Trade	
21/05	EPSU/ETUC workshop on the implementation of the new Public Procurement Directives	Brussels

## List of photos

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- Page 6 EPSU Executive committee participants blowing whistles and holding up photos of Deltour and signs with slogans of support - action to mark the one-year anniversary of the LuxLeaks revelations, November 2015
- Page 7 Participants at the final conference of the Tax training project: “Raising awareness of tax dodging in Europe & sub-Saharan Africa”, Brussels, October 2015
- Page 8 MEP Lynn Boylan, guest speaker at the EPSU Executive Committee, Brussels, November 2015
- Page 8 Training seminar “Challenging the liberalisation of public services in TTIP and beyond” organised by EPSU, ETUCE, AK and ÖGB, Vienna, Austria, January 2015
- Page 9 Central and Eastern Europe Constituency meeting, Bled, Slovenia, March 2015
- Page 10 Social Dialogue Committee for Central Government Administrations signing agreement on Information and Consultation at the European Commission, Brussels, December 2015 - From left to right: Britta Lejon, President EPSU Standing Committee NEA, Klaus Heeger, CESI General Secretary, Jan Willem Goudriaan, EPSU General Secretary, Marylise Lebranchu, Ministre de la Fonction Publique, France
- Page 11 COP 21, Paris, December 2015
- Page 12 STAL Congress, Lisbon, June 2015
- Page 13 Maltepe Hospital rally, Istanbul, February 2015
- Page 13 Right to strike action, Brussels, February 2015
- Page 14 Ver.di conference “Arbeit 4.0 Decent work in a digital society”, Berlin, June 2015 -  
Panel with O. Roethig, Uni-E, Moderator (of Taz) C. Fritsch from GPA (Austria), C.Kurz, Chaos Computer Club
- Page 16 EPSU Youth Network steering group meeting, Madrid, October 2015
- Page 18 Health sector workers (LVSADA union) protest action, Riga, Latvia, April 2015
- Page 20 EPSU Firefighters Network meeting, Hannover, June 2015
- Page 21 SNLP prison workers’ union organised a protest in front of the national prison service, Romania, August 2015
- Page 21 European Central Bank action at DGB House, Frankfurt, March 2015
- Page 22 FSP-UGT workers, Spain, Public Service Day, June 2015
- Page 25 EPSU Trade Union Journalists network meeting, Madrid, May 2015
- Page 27 Meeting with Kyrgyzstan unions, Astana, August 2015







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 263 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).

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