

EPSU

Recent developments

EPSU prison network
6 December 2019

EUROPEAN PUBLIC SERVICE UNION

EPSU

- ✓ 8 million members, majority (68%) of women in 275 trade unions in 49 countries - health and social services, local, regional and central government, energy, water, waste
- ✓ EU social partner status: right to be informed and consulted by the European Commission on its legislative or non legislative initiatives
- ✓ 5 EU sectoral social dialogue committees
 - ✓ hospitals
 - ✓ electricity
 - ✓ gas
 - ✓ local and regional government
 - ✓ central government administrations including 18 governments
- ✓ Networks, e.g. collective bargaining, prisons, firefighters, workers dealing with migrants and asylum-seekers
- ✓ Member of ETUC & PSI, Public Services International,

EPSU prison network

- EPSU is the largest European trade union for prison staff- Security, health, probation services
- To improve working conditions, staffing levels also with a view to improve detention conditions
- Application of European Prison rules: objective of imprisonment is rehabilitation
- Application of EU minimum social standards by law or social partner agreements
- Investing in prison resources is an investment, not a cost.
- Reintegration reduces crime and associated costs for the public and the State.
- Mainstreaming prison staff concerns in EPSU general policy and campaigns, “normalising” prisons across labour law and trade union rights
- Specific activities – meetings, projects, solidarity actions, implementation of European Prison Rules and EU social directives
- Bringing visibility to both workers and inmates

Recent legislative developments

On the positive

Successful trade union/NGO coalition for a directive on



WHISTLEBLOWER
PROTECTION.EU

- European Labour Authority
- to fight wage or social security dumping related to cross-border work.
- Possibility to bring cases for joint inspections, e.g unpaid wages

Work/life balance directive

- 4 month paid parental leave from which 2 months non transferable
- -10 days paternity leave, new for Italy, Croatia, Slovakia, twice longer in Neth, Portugal, Romania
- -5 days carers leave per year
- -flexible working arrangements
- 21.9% of working age population (20-64) inactive due to caring responsibilities



Court case on working time brought by Spanish union



The ETUC welcomed the ruling of the European Court of Justice on recording working hours which should end the widespread practice of unpaid overtime.

Esther Lynch,
Confederal Secretary

Low-wage earners in the EU

	Share of low-wage earners (%)	Median gross hourly earnings (EUR)
Sweden	2.6	18.50
Belgium	3.8	17.30
Finland	5.3	17.20
Denmark	8.6	25.50
France	8.8	14.90
Italy	9.4	12.50
Luxembourg	11.9	18.40
Portugal	12.0	5.10
Spain	14.6	9.80
Austria	14.8	14.00
Malta	15.1	8.50
Hungary	17.8	3.60
Bulgaria	18.2	1.70
Netherlands	18.5	16.00
Slovenia	18.5	7.30
Czech Republic	18.7	4.60
Slovakia	19.2	4.40
Cyprus	19.3	8.40
United Kingdom	21.3	14.80
Ireland	21.6	20.20
Germany	22.5	15.70
Estonia	22.8	4.90
Poland	23.6	4.30
Lithuania	24.0	3.10
Romania	24.4	2.00
Latvia	25.5	3.40



Low-wage earners

employees earning two thirds or less of the national median gross hourly earnings



European Union

17.2 %



European Union

EUR 13.20

2014 data

Data refers to all employees (excluding apprentices) working in enterprises with 10 employees or more and which operate in all sectors of the economy except agriculture, forestry and fishing and public administration and defence; compulsory social security.

EU aggregate is compiled as the sum of all Member States except Greece and Croatia, for which data was not available.

Further information: <http://europa.eu/!RN96BX>

New directive on transparency and predictability of working conditions

- Improves situation of “most” precarious workers
- Right to have a written contract with info on wages, working (and over) time, probation, social security, place of work, etc..
- But possibility for governments to exempt large groups of public sector workers - *civil servants, armed and police forces, public emergency services* – from provisions on predictability of working time schedules, training during working time, 6 month probation periods and holding a second job
- EPSU, Euromil and EuroCOP to campaign against exemptions— project in 2021-2022

Negative: EPSU Vs Commission court case on information and consultation rights



Developments in EU social dialogue for central governments

- ✓ Covers all central government administrations, services and agencies including prisons
- ✓ Social dialogue between EPSU (TUNED) and EUPAE – employers from 18 governments
- ✓ Link between national and EU levels
- ✓ Funded by European Commission

Focus on Health and safety

- ✓ psycho-social risks and third-party violence
social dialogue project (2016-2017)
- ✓ EPSU objective was to include, mainstream
prisons in the project which was eventually
reluctantly agreed by the employers
- ✓ Examples from Spain, Romania and the UK
- ✓ Joint employer/trade union guide and short
video

Guide contents

- The extent and impact of psychosocial risks
- Psychosocial risks: the context for action
 - Legal protections
 - Support available
 - collective agreements
- The overall approach: Three levels of action
 1. Primary, eliminate or reduce risks at source
 2. Secondary level – modify individual responses to risk (stress-management)
 3. Tertiary level – support individuals damaged by risks (employee assistance programmes)
 - Need for effective social dialogue
- Assessing the risks, all of them, for all employees with a gender breakdown and involving employees and their trade union representatives – setting out key evidence
- Provide practical examples from different parts of central government including violence in prisons (Spain, UK) and present an action plan (acted upon & reviewed)

Approach used for...

- each specific risk
 - Having to deal with difficult users, customers, patients, pupils, etc.
 - Time pressure
 - Poor communication or cooperation within the organisation
 - Employees' lack of influence on their work pace or work processes
 - Job insecurity
 - Long or irregular working hours
 - Discrimination, for example due to gender, age or ethnicity
 - Private matters do matter: keeping some space and an eye for domestic violence, abuse
- plus
 - Making the strategy work – to assess and to follow-up on assessment
 - Supporting individuals damaged by psychosocial hazards (and be seen to be supportive)

Digitalisation

- digitalisation and work/life balance
- impact on jobs, work organisation, restructuring
- Role of social dialogue, collective bargaining
- Right to disconnect, have a say on restructuring
- News forms of negotiated flexibility
- Useful for prisons?

Specific activities in prisons

- EPSU Quality employment project, 2018:
- Focus on Sweden, UK, Italy, Greece
- impact of austerity on the prisons system, e.g. in the UK spending on the prison service plummeted by 21% between 2009/10 and 2015/16, while number of full-time equivalent prison officers fell from 24,830 in 2010 to 21,000 in 2017.
- Deterioration of the situation

Italy

- Gap between reality and standards
- Low wages – leading to secondary jobs
- Irregular working hours and frequent overtime due to overcrowding and understaffing
- Limited career opportunities
- Narrow jobs, high work pressure and limited autonomy
- More hierarchy (role of management decisive), limiting good support
- limited budget
- lower employment quality (and lower quality of service)

Sweden

Clear focus on **rehabilitation**:

- *Highly trained prison staff*
- *With broad, varied tasks and a lot of autonomy*
- *good employment conditions*
- *Established social dialogue*
- *High unionisation*
- *modern infrastructure*
- *Without overcrowding or understaffing*

But shifting towards focus on **surveillance**:

- *More specialization in prison staff functions (staff has to choose)*
- *More safety-procedures and larger prisons*
- *Less autonomy and shortened training for recruits*
- *Less individual counseling*
- **New public management**
 - *More administration / centralisation*
 - *Less direct contact with inmates*

→ More diverse inmates

→ **Austerity and harsher societal climate against crime**

→ contrasting case study compared to UK, Italy or Greece but system is under pressure

UK

Hybrid of goals: surveillance & rehabilitation in a context of austerity and harsh societal climate

- Little education and low level training
- Poor employment conditions & little voice
- But requiring professional services to vulnerable inmates
- **Job content** became more **complex**: “Jack of all trades, master of none”
- *Multiple tasks, no time to do anything in detail*
- *No time to build a relationship with the inmates*
- Limited social contact due to severe understaffing
- Increase in workload due to overcrowding and understaffing

Combined with **very unsafe working environment**

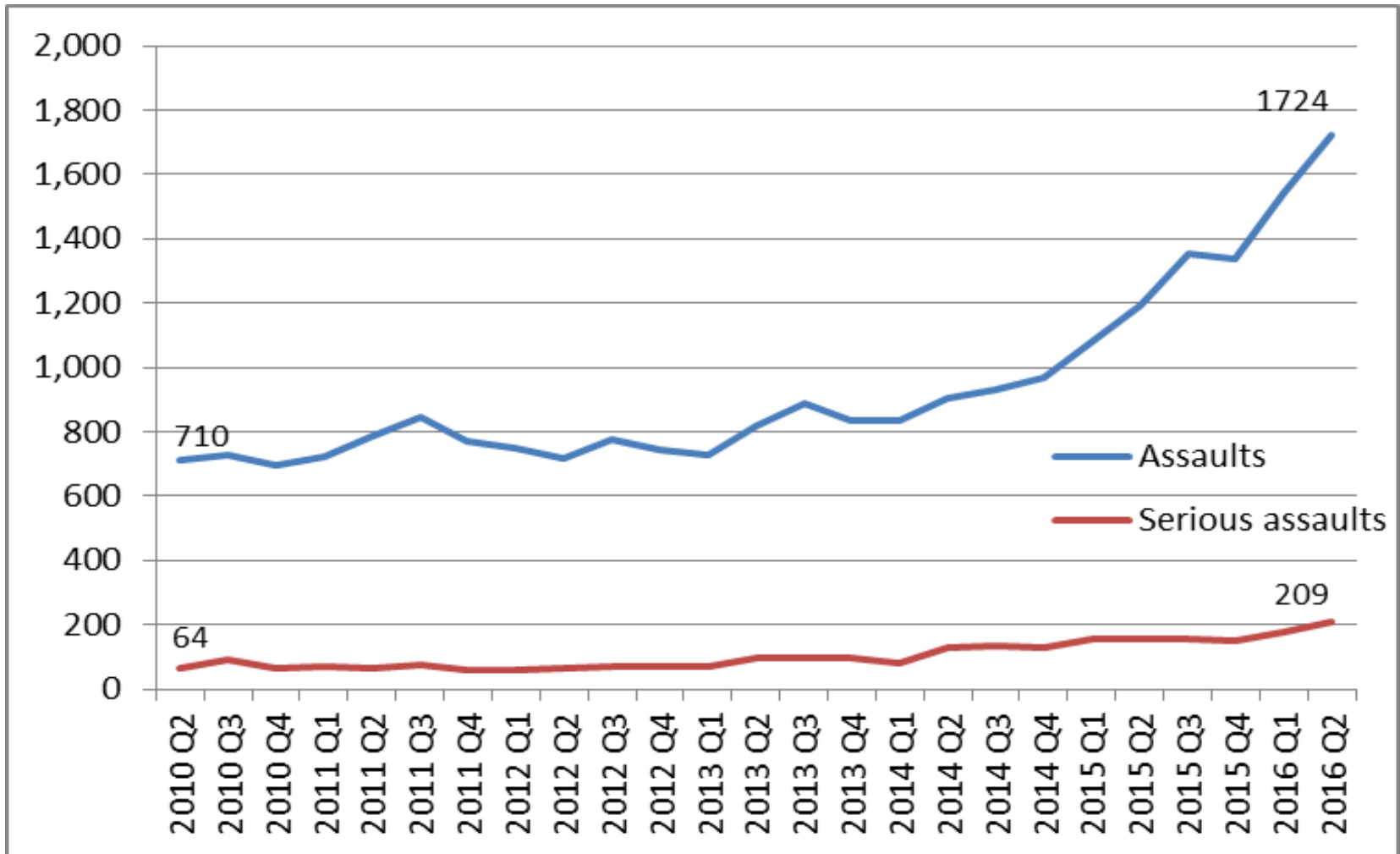
= generates work related stress

No decision-making power:

- Especially in private prisons
- Often highly hierarchical mega-prisons

“We’re at the rock bottom and it’s going to take a lot to get that back”

UK: assaults on prison staff



Employment quality project (2017-2018)

Staff-turnover is high– Sweden, Italy, Greece, UK

Prison staff risk emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization – Italy, Greece, UK

20% staff shortage – Italy

Having a second job is normal – Italy

7000 full time prison staff fired in period 2010-2016, the cost of riots since then was £9,363,964 – UK

In 2017, 67% of prison establishments were overcrowded – UK

3 in 10 officers victim of physical assault – UK

Wage cuts up to 50% of net income – Greece

No structural training programs – Greece

Employment quality project (2017-2018)

Prison staff face growing demands in a context that is intrinsically characterized by unpredictability, prisoners are human beings but seen with distrust and constant alertness

This has become even more the case, but rather than more, prisons receive less resources:

- overcrowding and understaffing are a real problem in European prison services
- A focus on rehabilitation can foster both high quality jobs and high quality services if the necessary resources are available (Sweden).
- This requires investment in staff levels, pay, training, autonomy, support
- And real collective bargaining right and strength – together at work - in Italy the right to pay collective bargaining was reintroduced
- Public sector ethos

Renationalisation of prison in UK

- in England private prison in Birmingham returned to public hands following series of violence reported by the prisons inspectorate.
- G4S, 1 of the 3 multinationals that run 14 prisons.
- POA welcomed the decision :

“The days of private companies putting profits before staff and prisoner safety must stop. This government’s unnecessary privatisation agenda must cease at once. It is clear that G4S are driven by profit which has compromised the safety of our members in Birmingham.”

- PCS, another EPSU affiliate said:

“If ordinary working people didn’t do the job they were hired to do, they’d be sacked. It’s time for G4S to be stripped of their public contracts.”

For more info, EPSU website

The screenshot shows the EPSU website homepage in a browser window. The browser's address bar displays <https://www.epsu.org/>. The website header features the EPSU logo (European Public Service Union) and navigation links for SECTORS, POLICIES, NETWORKS, and NEWS. A search bar is located in the top right corner with the placeholder text "E.g. Gender pay gap in public ser".

Below the header, a dark teal banner displays the text "The voice of 8 million European public service workers". A secondary navigation bar lists "Priorities" with sub-links for Migration, Solidarity, Tax Justice, and Trade.

The main content area is a grid of articles and banners:

- Top Left:** "Fighting for a Future for All - 10th EPSU CONGRESS 4-7 June 2019" with a photo of a crowd.
- Top Middle:** "May 04, 2018" article titled "INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION RIGHTS" featuring an illustration of people and a document with "Information" and "Consultation" checked.
- Top Right:** "Whistleblowers" article with a graphic of a hand holding a water drop and the text "WATER man Right".
- Bottom Left:** "Mar. 18, 2019" article titled "ELECT NO HATE" with a red 'X' graphic and the hashtag #ElectNoHate. Subtext: "FOR AN EU ELECTION CAMPAIGN FREE FROM INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION".
- Bottom Middle:** "Mar. 14, 2019" article titled "People and Planet Before Profit says group in support of #YouthforClimate Action" with a photo of a group holding signs.
- Bottom Right:** "Mar. 14, 2019" article titled "EPSU calls on MEPs to vote against opening of TTIP 2.0 negotiations" with a graphic of a red circle with a slash over "TTIP & CETA".

On the right side, there is a "Follow EPSU" section with social media icons for TWITTER, FACEBOOK, FLICKR, YOUTUBE, and INSTAGRAM. Below this are logos for "end pre carous work" and "PEOPLE OVER PROFIT".

The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the system clock as 16:26 on 19/03/2019.