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Brussels, 25 October 2017

EPSU Letter to the Prime Minister of Serbia and to the Minister of Public Administration and Local Government in view of the planned Law on Workers in the Public Sector and a Public Sector Job Classification System

Mrs. Ana Brnabic
Prime Minister of Republic of Serbia

Mr. Branko Ruzic
Minister of Public Administration and Local Government

Dear Mrs. Brnabic,
Dear Mr. Ruzic,

We have learnt from our Serbian affiliates about the activities of a working group set up to prepare the adoption of the **Law on Workers in the Public Sector** and of a **Public Sector Job Classification System** with the list of coefficients. The new classification and system of coefficients violates the existing coefficients systems and wages ratio. In our view it would **cause important damage to the workers covered, including to key professions for an effective functioning of health services such as nurses, doctors and pharmacists.**

Moreover, the consultations and negotiations so far are organised without the participation of representative trade unions. The European Public Service Union (EPSU) underlines that the **full involvement of trade unions in the process of wage negotiations and wage determination** (and this also includes defining and fixing coefficients to be applied to specific professions) is at the very heart of social dialogue and effective social partnership. EPSU insofar calls upon the Government of the Republic of Serbia and in particular on the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Government to **fully include representative trade unions and their representatives in this ongoing legislative process** for them to explain their position and demands and for you to negotiate with them the changes to the job classification and wage coefficient system. In EPSU's view the *current proposal would* disrupt the existing coefficients systems and wages ratio, would compress it and would insofar **have a negative impact on the pay and working conditions of all workers to which this system will apply as well as to future "new entrants"**, i.e. workers in the health and social care sector in Serbia.

I write on behalf of **8 million public service workers** and their 275 trade unions in about 45 countries represented by the **European Federation of Public Service Unions**. EPSU covers health and social services; local, regional, national and European administration and energy, waste and water. EPSU is a member organisation of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the European region of Public Services International (PSI). We are the **recognised social partner** in the social dialogue committees for hospitals/health care, local and regional government, national and European administration and electricity.

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EPSU is a member
federation of the ETUC
and represents
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On 23 October 2017, EU Employment and Social Policy ministers agreed unanimously on the text of the Proclamation of the **European Pillar of Social Rights** and gave the authorisation to sign it on behalf of the member states at the Gothenburg Summit on 17 November 2017. The European Pillar of Social Rights is a political commitment and provides guidance to the member states and the EU institutions; it aims at strengthening the social *acquis* and delivering more effective rights to citizens. **It reaffirms the importance of effective social dialogue at all levels. Principle 8** highlights that “**The social partners shall be consulted on the design and implementation of economic, employment and social policies** according to national practices.” (for the full text please cf. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en)

In close cooperation with our Serbian affiliates, **EPSU will continue to monitor your legislative process** also on the backdrop of the need to bring in line national legislation in Serbia with the EU legislation (*acquis communautaire*) and in the light of the opening of Chapter 19 “Social policy and employment” of the accession negotiations with Serbia.

EPSU’s Serbian affiliates are ready and willing to engage in the process to elaborate a Law on Workers in the Public Sector and a Public Sector Job Classification System if this is done in a **transparent and participatory manner**, in recognition of their role as social partners and by respecting information, consultation and negotiation rights of the representative trade unions in the different sectors concerned, including in health (and social) care.

Faithfully yours,



Jan Willem Goudriaan
EPSU General Secretary