



Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker
President
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Mr. Christos Stylianides
European Parliament
60, rue Wiertz
1047 Brussels
Belgium

Ref: JWG/CJ/jp

Brussels, 27 April 2015

Involvement of Social Partners to Civil Protection Forum

Dear President, dear Commissioner Stylianides,

The European Commission organizes the Civil Protection Forum on 6 and 7 May 2015 in Brussels. EPSU regrets not having being invited to this important gathering of stakeholder as the European trade union federation organizing workers in the civil protection.

EPSU organizes more than 8 million women and men in the public services in Europe in the health, EU, local and public administration and utilities covering energy, gas, electricity and waste. We represent most first responders as firefighters, emergency technicians, the police and other uniformed services, and frontline workers in hospitals, health clinics, in the schools, in the energy and water utilities, in public transport, in civil administration and in a range of other areas. All of us depend on these people being able to do their jobs, having the right tools and training. In civil protection and disaster risk reduction skilled, dedicated and motivated workers, women and men daily risk their lives to protect our communities. While volunteers are important you cannot expect them to develop the levels of expertise needed to manage the many complex elements of recovery and response.

Without including these many thousand workers into policy-making of response, civil protection, and recovery, your institutional goals and objectives to put forward a sound policy in these areas will remain unrealized. Your policies largely ignore the realities of public sector workers. Public Services International (PSI), the international sister of EPSU has already raised its concerns at the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai in Japan on 16 March 2015 delivering a clear message that by excluding public sector workers and trade unions from the process of policy-making, you ignore the rights of workers and exclude yourself from the expertise workers have in this field.

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As you know local authorities finance the ability and responsibility of civil protection and disaster response in a lot of EU countries and find themselves currently burdened by budgetary cuts and austerity measures, which means cutting on training and material for first responders and risking that they get injured or killed in these dangerous jobs. Governments therefore need to invest more into firefighters, civil protection and first responders services to protect our families and communities. Outsourcing and private funding have been revealed as dangerous policies decreasing the risk reduction.

To fight tax dodging and put an end to tax havens are part of our demands to raise the necessary revenues to train workers, to plan for operations, to maintain the infrastructure and services we all depend on.

With the employers, as Social Partners we also engage to use our knowledge and expertise to improve measures in this field so that trade unions and employers can jointly improve the services in this field.

I expect that you will re-consider to include the workers perspective into response mechanisms, planning of civil protection and disaster risk reduction, and recovery measures in the future. We are ready to discuss this with you.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Goudriaan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jan Willem Goudriaan
EPSU General Secretary