Improving pay for undervalued workers in the social care sector

EPSU Conference “Quality employment and quality public services”

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Dr. Torsten Müller
European Trade Union Institute - ETUI
WHO CARES?
It’s the biggest industry most people never give a thought to, until they find they need it.

(1) Residential nursing care activities
(2) Child-care activities
(3) Social work activities

→ approx. 10 Million people  (Eurostat, end of 2014)
Social care work is female

% of female workers in the social services by country

Problem of low pay in social care


Dr. Torsten Müller – ILO-EPSU Seminar, April 2015
Megatrends affecting social care jobs

- Austerity: cuts in public sector wages and employment
- Liberalisation and privatization of many services
- Work intensification while at the same time demand for higher quality of services

Pressure on wages and working conditions

Dr. Torsten Müller – ILO-EPSU Seminar, April 2015
Specific collective bargaining issues

- Decoupling of wages in public and private institutions
- Opening clauses depending on financial situation of institutions
- Decoupling of classification of workers from formal qualification and experience

Additional pressure on wages
Ver.di Campaign: “Revaluation of social care jobs”

Key objectives:

- New job classification and corresponding wage grid leading to wage increase of 10%
- Public recognition in society of value of work performed

Dr. Torsten Müller – ILO-EPSU Seminar, April 2015
Ver.di Campaign: “Revaluation of social care jobs”

Key elements:

- **Strike** in child care sector: Kindergarten
- Measures to raise **public awareness** and to get support from parents
- New forms and elements of **movement unionism**
Ver.di Campaign: “Revaluation of social care jobs”

Key results:

- Wage increase 3.7% with particular focus on lower wage groups

- Stimulating intensive public debate about value of social care work: stepping stone for future initiatives

- Complete failure in achieving new job classification
Similar initiatives in other countries???

- **Denmark:** FOA campaign to fight unjust wage formation for different professions in the Danish labour market

- **Austria:** Initiative to address the problem of low pay and “low skill” by crediting workers for years of experience in the job in the absence of formal qualifications

- Any other initiatives and ideas to improve pay for undervalued workers ???
Improving pay for undervalued workers in the social care sector

Thank you very much for your attention!!!

Dr. Torsten Müller
Senior Researcher

European Trade Union Institute
Bld. du Roi Albert II, 5
1210 Brussels
Email: tmueller@etui.org