

## Minutes

### EPSU FIREFIGHTERS NETWORK MEETING

27-28 April 2017

#### *EU Civil Protection Mechanism*

1. On 27th of April the EPSU Firefighters Network visited the Emergency Response Coordination of the European Commission Civil Protection building (DG ECHO). The Commission delivered a presentation on the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCP) organized by DG ECHO. There are two complementary tools within the framework- humanitarian aid and civil protection targeted to most vulnerable population(s) in third countries- mainly in developing countries and inside and outside the EU for natural and man-made disasters. The civil protection mechanism is launched at an acute stage only compared to humanitarian aid. The Commission is the facilitator of the fundamentals of civil protection (responsibility, solidarity, call for assistance, voluntary). There are 34 participating countries: 28 MS + Iceland, Norway, Montenegro, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey. The UCP Mechanism's tools is the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), the Common Emergency and Information System (CECIS), the Training and exercise Programme and the Civil protection modules. Member States voluntarily pool response capacities for EU missions, in return for this commitment, Member States benefit from financial support for developing and transporting these capacities. The number for 2016 of the EUCP Mechanism was at 36 (request for assistance, pre-alert and monitoring).
2. Several EPSU affiliates mentioned that they had been involved in civil protection exercises and taking part in training activities. EPSU's Israeli's colleagues mentioned the problems with handling chemical and biological substances. Criticism was raised by colleagues on the actual training standards and the actual efficiency of the coordination instrument.  
EPSU had send a letter to the EU Commissioner on European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid on the necessity to involve workers, trade unions in the discussions in building up the coordination instrument.

### *OSH Framework and Evaluation*

3. C. Jakob informed about the publication of the communication and evaluation of the practical implementation of the EU occupational safety and health directives (OHS) in the EU member states. EPSU was involved in the evaluation of OHS framework with the aim to address on-going and emerging risks. The result of the evaluation is that there is limited data at EU-level to assist in assessing the effects of all the directives and the extent to which they each achieve their objectives, particularly on the subject of occupational diseases. There is a need for more consistent data recording systems at national and EU level with a better reflection of causal factor to be able to follow up on whether the legislation works as intended. The evaluation also shows that there is a large degree of variation in the number and frequency of inspections across Member States. In effect, the directives are not enforced to the same extent in all Member States, which it is a concern that there are equal OSH conditions for workers across Member States. The directives only set minimum requirements. A strong effort is needed in the area of enforcement, and inspections in particular. Three areas are also not covered by the framework sufficiently due to an evolution of the risk assessment at workplaces, where there is a need for either new or stronger legislation in three areas: musculoskeletal disorders, psycho-social risks and the prevention of carcinogens at the workplace.

*EPSU Statement on involvement of EPSU Firefighters Network in the campaign to fight carcinogens and how to address health and safety at the work place*

4. The EPSU Firefighters Network discussed and adopted following statement after discussion and endorsement of colleagues to fight carcinogens

<http://www.epsu.org/article/epsu%E2%80%99s-firefighters-network-mark-international-workers-memorial-day-brussels-meeting>

*Personal Protective Equipment and Standardisation; involvement of EPSU Firefighters Network in EU working groups on standardization*

5. Stefano Boy from the European Trade Union Institute explained ETUI's work on workplace safety and standardization of personal protective equipment. He explained the European CEN framework on PPE. CEN is producing standards to meet the health and safety requirements of the directive for personal protective equipment (89/686/EEC). An important step forward was made with the adoption of Regulation 2016/425 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on PPE. The PPE regulation will become applicable on 21 April 2018 and repeal the former regulation. Ergonomics, safety and comfort are the three main considerations when designing new PPE. There are several technical committees, which activities are related to standardization in PPE at European level and the national level the NSB (National Standardization Bodies) are composed of manufacturers, employers, end users, public authorities, laboratories, universities, research bodies, consultants and business associations. In each NSB there

is a “mirror” committee. This means that in your country you can ask to meet the experts- working in your languages.

Possible steps: If EPSU members from UK, France and Germany wish to follow the activity of the CEN TC 162, they can their respective NSB to be members fo the “mirror” committee and they could even attend the “European” meetings of CEN TC 162, in which case they would be included in the national delegation. EPSU affiliate should reflect if they would like to be included into this national standardization bodies to be able to influence the shaping of the equipment.

### *Working Time Update*

6. Ever since the cross-sector negotiations on working time in 2012 failed to produce an agreement, there has been an expectation that the European Commission would come forward with proposals to amend the Working Time Directive.

In the summer of 2014 DG Employment commissioned two studies on working time – one general and one focusing on the public 24-hour health services. EPSU and a number of national affiliates contributed to the health service study and some from other sectors may have also contributed to the multisector study. Neither study has yet been published although the European Commission indicated in a letter sent to the social partners in February that they would soon be available on the DG Employment website.

At the end of 2014, DG Employment launched a public consultation on working time to which EPSU responded having discussed the approach to the consultation in the ETUC Task Force on Working Time. The feeling of the Task Force was that, in response to the direct question posed in the consultation, it would be better to call for no change to the Directive rather than risk opening it up to amendment. In the political climate at the time there was concern that any revisions would lead to a weaker Directive and would, in particular, include changes in relation to on-call time at work that would not preserve the important case law of Jaeger, SIMAP and Dellas, recognising all on-call time at work as 100% working time.

Although the public consultation closed in March 2015, the European Commission made no announcement on working time until it published its 2017 work programme in October last year. This indicated that it would come up with a non-legislative proposal. At very short notice, DG Employment organised a social partner hearing on the Working Time Directive on 19 January. EPSU attended as part of an ETUC delegation of 11, including representatives of confederations from Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany and Sweden as well as from the European level organisations representing managers. The employers had a delegation of 15, including representatives of the CEEP public service employer’s organisation and the hospital employers’ organisation, HOSPEEM.

The employers expressed their dissatisfaction with the Commission’s decision not to revise the Directive. They focused in particular on the on-call judgements with both representatives from CEEP and HOSPEEM emphasising that these rulings posed major

problems for public services. EPSU and the ETUC underlined the importance of the rulings from a health and safety perspective and highlighted the fact that in some countries the social partners in the public services had come together to address any difficulties arising from the judgements.

The European Commission explained that it would publish an interpretative communication. This would summarise the important case law on working time and provide guidance on parts of the Directive which have been the subject of misinterpretation by some Member States. The Commission also indicated that the Communication would refer to examples of social dialogue and collective bargaining at national level where the social partners have worked together to resolve specific challenges arising from the Directive.

A letter from DG Employment to the European social partners dated 14 February included an outline of the proposed Directive. The letter said that the outline was only for information and confirmed that no draft of the Communication would be available for discussion or amendment by the social partners. The outline did not include any reference to the inclusion of examples of social dialogue at national level nor did it take up some of the other issues raised by the trade unions at the hearing in January which included the right to disconnect and the abuse of standby working to avoid having on-call arrangements that are in line with the case law.

The ETUC wrote to DG Employment in early March taking up some of the issues raised at the January hearing and asking the Commission to ensure that these are addressed in the Communication.

The Communication itself is expected at the end of April when it will be published as part of a package linked to the Commission's proposals on the European pillar of social rights.

EPSU will evaluate the Communication and send an assessment to all affiliates. If the Communication is published at the end of April then EPSU would plan to convene the Working Time Advisory Group in early June to discuss the reaction to the Communication.

#### *Fire Service Involvement in Emergency Medical Response- Questionnaire*

7. A questionnaire has been circulated on fire service involvement in emergency medical response by the FBU. Colleagues are encouraged to fill in the questionnaire and send it back to Paul Hampton: [paul.hampton@fbu.co.uk](mailto:paul.hampton@fbu.co.uk)

## *EPSU Updates*

8. Several updates on current EPSU policies (Digitalisation, Scoail Servcies, Gender Equality, Migration) were presented by C.Jakob, but in particular in relation to the developments on the Pillar of Social Rights, which the European Commission had published the day before.

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### **List of participants**

|                     |                       |             |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| OSMANI Denisa       | TUBWPSA               | Albania     |
| EIMLA Karol         | ROTAL                 | Estonia     |
| VAKKILAINEN Ari     | JHL                   | Finland     |
| DARMEY Alain        | CGT-SP (CGT des SDIS) | France      |
| BOUVIER Sébastien   | INTERCO-CFDT          | France      |
| POYAU Stéphane      | SNSPP-PATS FO         | France      |
| DICK Arno           | Ver.di                | Germany     |
| SCHUBERT Stefanie   | Ver.di                | Germany     |
| COHEN ZEDEK Golan   | UCAPSE                | Israel      |
| SILLAM Amos Norbert | UCAPSE                | Israel      |
| ZULIANI Danilo      | CGIL                  | Italy       |
| KONING Marcel       | FNV                   | Netherlands |
| VAN DER LINDEN Rolf | FNV                   | Netherlands |
| HARVAN Miroslav     | FFSR                  | Slovakia    |
| KRIZANSKY Peter     | FFSR                  | Slovakia    |

|                        |           |        |
|------------------------|-----------|--------|
| ARANDA DIAZ Jose Pedro | FSC-CC.OO | Spain  |
| MONCAYO GARCIA Carlos  | FSC-CC.OO | Spain  |
| HJORTZBERG Mona        | Kommunal  | Sweden |
| MAGNUSSON Stefan       | Kommunal  | Sweden |
| YILDIZ Burhan          | Hizmet Is | Turkey |
| TOPCU Huseyin          | Hizmet Is | Turkey |
| GREEN Dave             | FBU       | UK     |
| HAMPTON Paul           | FBU       | UK     |
| WRACK Matt             | FBU       | UK     |

**EPSU Staff**

|                  |      |
|------------------|------|
| JAKOB Christine  | EPSU |
| PRAIRIAL Jessica | EPSU |

**SPEAKERS**

|             |      |
|-------------|------|
| BOY Stefano | ETUI |
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