



Joint Media Advisory

4th October 2004

Equal Pay Works!

Achieving pay equity for women in Europe's public services

**A joint conference by PSI/EPSU and EI
Geneva 7-8 October 2004**

On 7th-8th October, public service and education trade unions from across Europe will meet at the ILO to discuss strategies to achieve equal pay.

The conference forms part of Public Services International week of global action to promote pay equity, 4-8 October 2004. It is organised by PSI/EPSU and EI that have all developed policies and campaigns on equal pay and pay equity.

The conference brings together more than one hundred equal pay activists to meet and hear from recognised experts in the field of discrimination and equal pay, make links between the EU and ILO equality policies, exchange trade union practice to improve women's status and wages, and advance transnational trade union work.

A survey on equal pay in the public sector across Europe, conducted by Dr. Jane Pillinger, will be presented at the conference. It shows that while the 12% average pay gap in the EU's public sector is not as wide as in the private sector, recent trends to reduce the pay gap are stagnating. In some countries the pay gap goes up to 50%. In public services women continue to be concentrated in a narrow range of occupations, in part-time work, low paid work and in work that under-values women's skills and contribution. It also confirms that cuts in public services, attacks on the right to collective bargaining and privatisation have clearly had a negative impact on gender equality and threaten to undermine equality achievements.

There will be presentations from Catelene Passchier of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) on equal pay and social dialogue in the EU, from Manuela Tomei, on follow up to the ILO Global Report on Discrimination and from Sabrina Tesoka, of the European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions. On the second day, Mia de Vits, a member of the European Parliament and former

Belgian trade union leader, will give a presentation on equal pay in the wider EU agenda. Prof. Marie-Therese Chicha, a member of the Canadian Federal Government Pay Equity Task Force and adviser to EU governments, will give an account of Canadian government work in this area.

The conference will review best practice from the public sector and education sector in relation to equality plans in Sweden, the UK agenda for change in local government and equal pay cases in the Irish education sector. There will be a series of workshops on topics ranging from challenges faced by unions; campaigns on low pay and minimum wages and how to conduct job evaluations free of gender bias. It is anticipated that the conference will adopt a final statement that can be used by unions to lobby governments, employers, EU and the ILO to implement measures to promote equal pay.

For more information and copies of the report “**Closing the Gender Wage Gap**” contact Nora Wintour, PSI Equality and Rights Officer, phone +33 (0)4 5040 1159 or email equality@world-psi.org

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The European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) is the largest federation affiliated to the ETUC and represents 8 million workers providing services to the public in health and social care, local, regional and central government, and utilities in energy, water and waste. For more see www.epsu.org. Contact details: 45, Rue Royale Box 1 1000 Brussels Belgium. Ph +32 2 250 1080. Email epsu@epsu.org

Education International (EI) is the world's largest teacher organization representing over 29 million education personnel from all education sectors, from pre-school to university, through 345 member organizations in 165 countries and territories. For more see www.ei-ie.org. Contact details: Boulevard du Roi Albert II 5 1210 Brussels Belgium. Ph + 32 2 224 0611. Email headoffice@ei-ie.org