



Joint Media Release

8th October 2004

EMBARGOED UNTIL 17.30pm, 8th 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**

“Despite equal pay legislation, equal pay for work of equal value between women and men is yet to become a reality in Europe. Women continue to be concentrated in public services, and, more often than not they are trapped in low paid, undervalued jobs. As public sector leaders from all over Europe, we are calling for investment where it matters, investment in public services and education, and investment in the women that make those services work. What we need is not blind support for privatisation but to reward undervalued public service jobs. There is no reason why elderly care should be less rewarded than IT care!” said Carola Fischbach-Pyttel, General Secretary of EPSU

On 7th-8th October public service and education trade unions from across Europe met at the ILO to discuss strategies to achieve equal pay. The conference forms part of Public Services International's week of global action to promote pay equity, 4-8 October 2004.

The conference found that inequalities in pay between women and men is a problem experienced right across the education and public sectors, despite the existence of legislation on equal pay in most European countries. There is no country in Europe that has yet achieved wage equality between men and women. The average pay gap in the EU's public sector is 12%, compared to 21% in the private sector. But this hides wide national variations as the pay gap can reach up to 50%. In some Central and Eastern European countries, workers, the great majority of whom are women, are often not paid for months on end because the public sector is so under-resourced.

“Cuts in public services and privatisation across the globe have had a negative impact on gender equality. Low pay is also one of the main causes of the increased migration of women workers to seek better employment conditions, particularly in the education and health care sector”,
explained Gloria Mills, Chair of the PSI European Women’s Committee.

“That’s why equal pay and better recognition of women’s work is an integral part of the PSI’s Quality Public Service Campaign, and EPSU’s campaign for an EU legal framework on Services of General Interest. ” she added

"Life-long education and training are amongst the keys that enable women to achieve gender equality at work and in society." Fred van Leeuwen, General Secretary of Education International emphasised.

The conference provided a comprehensive list of recommendations to unions, governments and the EU and the ILO on urgent measures to address equal pay issues, including the full implementation of the EU Directives on equal pay and equal treatment, job evaluation systems free of gender bias, and the need for the ILO to promote tripartite forums and pro-active policies.

For more information and copies of the conference final statement or the report on equal pay contact Nora Wintour, PSI Equality and Rights Officer, phone +33 (0)4 5040 1159 or email equality@world-psi.org, or Nadja Salson nadja.salson@epsu.org

Public Services International (PSI) is a global union federation representing more than 600 public sector trade unions and 20 million public sector workers, who provide services in health, central and local government, social services and utilities. For more see www.world-psi.org. Contact details: 45, Avenue Voltaire BP9 10211 Ferney Voltaire Cedex France. Ph +33 4 5040 1164. Email psi@world-psi.org

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