CONTENTS

Introduction ............................................................................................................................................. 3
Information and consultation – fighting for equal rights for central government workers ............................................................... 4
Tax justice – keeping the pressure on the tax dodgers .......................................................... 5
Migration and asylum – building a workers’ network .................................................. 7
Social agenda: European union finally delivers .......................................................... 7
Solidarity: supporting affiliates in action ............................................................................. 8
Right to water: directive set to deliver some progress .................................................. 9
Right to energy: price regulation is key ............................................................................. 9
Climate change: pushing for a just transition .................................................................. 9
Gender equality: delivering on the roadmap ....................................................................... 10
Young workers: looking at future working life ............................................................. 11
Defending and promoting public ownership ..................................................................... 12
Digitalisation: central role for collective bargaining ..................................................... 12
Economic policy: intervening in the Semester .................................................................. 13
Trade: EU-Japan deal in spotlight ..................................................................................... 13
Recruitment – building trade union strength .................................................................... 14
Collective bargaining: further pay rise action ............................................................... 14
Central and Eastern Europe ............................................................................................... 14
SECTOR: Health and social services .................................................................................. 15
SECTOR: Utilities ..................................................................................................................... 17
SECTOR: Local and regional government .......................................................................... 18
SECTOR: National and European administration ............................................................. 19
Executive committee ............................................................................................................ 20
EPSU Congress ....................................................................................................................... 20
Working with PSI at global level ........................................................................................ 21
Working with the ETUC .......................................................................................................... 21
Communications ..................................................................................................................... 21
Organisational matters .......................................................................................................... 22
INTRODUCTION

The launch of legal action against the European Commission was the major event of 2018. In March the Commission had finally communicated its decision not to refer the agreement on information and consultation in Central Government Administrations to the European Council for implementation as a Directive. After waiting more than two years to get the short letter setting out this negative response, EPSU decided that the Commission's refusal to put forward the agreement had to be challenged both in court and with a political campaign.

The pros and cons of a court case were carefully weighed up at a special meeting of the National and European Administration (NEA) Committee in February and endorsed by the normal NEA committee meeting in March and then agreed by the Executive Committee in May. The resulting legal process remained confidential but with the prospect of a public hearing in 2019.

Migration and tax were again priority issues. Although 2018 saw fewer migrants and asylum-seekers risking their lives to reach Europe, the question was high on the agenda with the shift to the right in some countries, such as Italy and Austria, contributing to more aggressive anti-migrant policies and attitudes. EPSU remained critical of the European Union's approach.

There were several key tax dossiers to handle during the year, with the publishing of a further report on McDonald's tax dodging activities, the setting up of another European Parliament committee on tax and financial crime and developments relating to tax havens.

EPSU expressed solidarity with many of affiliates taking action to defend their rights and improve their members' pay and conditions. Turkey remained the country of most concern with around 150000 public sector workers still denied their rights as a result of summary dismissals following the failed coup in 2016. There was further repression when the government clamped down on a demonstration protesting over the deaths of workers involved in construction work at Istanbul airport and imprisoned health and human rights activists.
The women's conference in February was the biggest ever organised by EPSU with participants endorsing the Gender Road Map and agreeing a Prague Statement on the key priorities of the work needed to tackle inequalities in pay, pensions, employment and service provision.

The EPSU-led coalition that ran the Right to Water campaign and secured the first successful European Citizens' Initiative in 2013, continued its lobbying activities during the year, seeing a partial success in elements of the proposal for changes to the Drinking Water Directive presented by the Commission.

EPSU also worked closely with the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) on several cross-sectoral pieces of legislation including protection for whistle-blowers, work-life balance and the Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions directive.

Looking forward to a busy 2019, preparations got underway for the EPSU Congress that will take place in June along with discussions and debates about the ETUC Congress and European Parliament elections that will take place the month before.

After many years of service first for Public Services International then for EPSU from 2010, Marina Irimie, the sub-regional officer for South East Europe took early retirement.

**INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION – FIGHTING FOR EQUAL RIGHTS FOR CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WORKERS**

On 8 May, the EPSU Executive Committee took the unprecedented decision to take the European Commission to court for refusing to put forward the Central Government Administration agreement on information and consultation to the European Council for implementation as a directive. The agreement was signed by the trade unions, TUNED led by EPSU, and employers, EUPAE, in December 2015 and on 1 February 2016 they asked the Commission to propose the agreement for transposition into EU law (in line with TFEU article 155.2). However, it wasn’t until 5 March 2018 that the European Commission confirmed its refusal to do so.

Having seen how the European Commission had been dragging its feet and particularly its failure to deliver an impact assessment as promised, there was an expectation of a negative decision by the Commission and EPSU convened an extraordinary meeting of its National and European
Administration Standing Committee on 12 February. The Committee discussed the arguments for and against taking legal action, proposals for funding the action and the need for a political campaign. The decision to go to court was also endorsed by the normal meeting of the standing committee on 27 March and then by the Executive Committee on 8 May.

EPSU’s formal complaint was filed on 15 May and the Commission put forward its defence on 8 August but this remains confidential. EPSU responded to this on 19 September to which the Commission reacted. On 15 November, on the anniversary of the signing of the European Pillar of Social Rights in Gothenburg, EPSU published a booklet to provide background on the case. It outlines the agreement and sets out the arguments why the European commission should respect its own rules on social dialogue, information and consultation rights at work and equal treatment between all workers. These were also the main themes highlighted in EPSU’s press work on International Public Services Day in June.

EPSU and the Commission exchanged further arguments and by the end of the year were waiting to see if the Court would decide to hold a public hearing.

**TAX JUSTICE – KEEPING THE PRESSURE ON THE TAX DODGERS**

The coalition consisting of EPSU, EFFAT, the European trade union federation for food workers, the US services union, SEIU and the anti-poverty charity, War on Want, continued their work with a second report on the tax dodging strategy of the McDonalds food multinational.

The first report led to the European Commission opening a state aid investigation into the company and in June 2018 McDonalds was summoned to an unprecedented third appearance in front of the Parliament’s specially convened tax committee.

However, it was very disappointing that the European Commission decided in September that it would take no action against the company over possible breaches of state aid regulations on the basis that its tax arrangements with Luxembourg did not give it any special advantage. The coalition responded with a call to tax authorities across Europe to continue to investigate the company and take action to ensure it pays its fair share of tax. Representatives
of the coalition also met with European Commissioner Margaret Vestager in December to discuss the Commission decision and progress with legislative initiatives that would help the fight against tax avoidance.

In January, EPSU reacted critically to the long-awaited publication of the EU blacklist of tax havens, describing it as lacking coherence and transparency by excluding those based in the EU. More positive was the decision by the European Parliament to set up a new committee to investigate financial crimes and tax fraud. This was welcomed by EPSU which sent all committee members a letter setting out the main issues of concern.

In July, EPSU welcomed the publication of a report exposing the role of the big four international accountancy firms in promoting tax avoidance policies and questions were raised about their lobbying and advisory activities in relations to the European institutions.

EPSU continues to make the case for action on tax dodging through its membership of the European Commission’s platform for tax good governance and in April contributed to a major ETUI/Socialists & Democrats conference arguing for progressive tax policies.

There was further cooperation with PSI at global level. EPSU is helping to fund the newly established Centre for International Corporate Tax Accountability and Research (CICTAR) and took part in the Global Union Corporate Tax Campaigning Seminar in October.

The ETUC ad-hoc tax committee was suspended due to ETUC 2019 Congress preparations.

Work started on an update of the 2014 report on the impact of austerity on tax administrations which was due to be published in the first half of 2019, covering additionally outsourcing and political influences on tax offices. Revelations about the Cum-Ex share tax scandal underlined the need for substantial investment and greater cross-border co-operation in tax administration, demands supported by the European Parliament.

In December, EPSU joined 3500 organisations from across Europe in signing a joint letter calling for continuing attempts to implement a financial transactions tax by the 10 countries which remain nominally committed to the policy.
MIGRATION AND ASYLUM – BUILDING A WORKERS’ NETWORK

Throughout the year, EPSU remained highly critical of the European Union’s asylum and migration policies which continue to focus on tightening borders, pushing back refugees and outsourcing asylum to third countries in Africa and the Middle East. Briefings on the European Council meeting in July and Commission President Juncker’s State of the Union address in September highlighted the failure of the EU to adopt a human rights based approach to the issue.

EPSU supported its Spanish and Italian affiliates in initiatives focusing on the perspective of workers involved in welcoming and delivering services to migrants and asylum-seekers. Two major events in Melilla (the Spanish enclave in Morocco) and Palermo in Sicily brought together hundreds of workers involved in migration services, search and rescue, healthcare, reception centres and asylum-processing.

Following the meetings, EPSU agreed to establish a network of workers involved in the reception of migrants and refugees. The network will aim to strengthen European links, support workers in delivering a public service that respects the dignity of migrants and asylum-seekers and provide a platform to discuss migration policy and legal developments at European and national levels.

In September, EPSU and PSI jointly published a report by the PSIRU research organisation on the privatisation of migration and refugee services. The report exposes the social, economic and dehumanising effects of privatisation both on migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and the workforce that delivers the services, and lists the companies involved.

SOCIAL AGENDA: EUROPEAN UNION FINALLY DELIVERS

It was disappointing that the European Commission failed to come up with an action plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights. However, 2018 saw much more progress on social legislation than for many years with initiatives on whistleblowing, work-life balance, transparency and predictability of employment conditions and steps towards establishing a European Labour Authority. EPSU worked closely with the ETUC on these issues to ensure they delivered real benefits for
workers, challenging any attempts to exclude or restrict coverage of the public sector.

**SOLIDARITY: SUPPORTING AFFILIATES IN ACTION**

Of the main strikes, protests and negotiations that EPSU supported during the year, the dispute in Denmark and the strike for gender equality in Glasgow in the UK were among the most significant with widespread support coming from across Europe and beyond. There was also an effective coordination of solidarity by EPSU for the workers at the Celenus clinic in Germany who were involved in many weeks of strike action to secure a collective agreement. Celenus is a subsidiary of the Orpea social care multinational where EPSU’s work in building a company network certainly paid off when it came to solidarity.

Repression in Turkey continued and EPSU backed protests over attacks on trade unionists and prison sentences for health workers and other human rights activists.

Other major actions during the year involved workers in Spanish prisons and home care, Romanian health workers and French eldercare workers. There were again several anti-austerity protests in Greece, and EPSU also send solidarity messages to Greek power, water and culture workers. EPSU continued to support French public service unions who were again fighting for a pay rise in the face of a government-imposed pay freeze and there was an EPSU delegation at a major demonstration of all affiliates in May.

EPSU published a Congress briefing covering its solidarity work and reports of the many other examples of support for affiliates during the year can be found in the solidarity section of the website.
RIGHT TO WATER: DIRECTIVE SET TO DELIVER SOME PROGRESS

After considerable lobbying by EPSU and the various organisations in the Right to Water campaign, the European Commission published its revision of the Drinking Water Directive in January. It and the subsequent European Parliament position on the Drinking Water Directive in November contained some positive elements while falling short of incorporating a clear recognition of the human right to water. World Water Day on 22 March was a key date for campaigning and EPSU launched a short video to highlight the main messages that it has been promoting since the successful European Citizens’ Initiative in 2013. Earlier in the year EPSU and other campaign groups organised a screening of the film, *Up to the last drop*, highlighting how European Union institutions and large corporations are putting pressure on governments, particularly in southern Europe, to privatise water.

RIGHT TO ENERGY: PRICE REGULATION IS KEY

An active year of campaigning by EPSU and other organisations in the Right to Energy coalition helped ensure some protection for consumers on low incomes in the Electricity Market Design Directive (EMDD). With a clear definition of energy poverty, the legislation allows for price regulation to continue. In November, EPSU published a briefing on the importance of regulated prices in the fight against energy poverty, following an earlier briefing on the main issues of concern in the EMDD.

CLIMATE CHANGE: PUSHING FOR A JUST TRANSITION

The main event of the year was the December conference of the COP 24 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Katowice in Poland. EPSU had a presence as part of the delegation of the International Trade Union Confederation and were able to celebrate success on the first day with the adoption of a statement on just transition.
There were several other important developments with EPSU part of a
delegation of social partners that met European Commission Vice-
President Maroš Šefčovič in December to discuss issues related to long-
term climate change. EPSU also contributed to the European Commission's public consultation on the 2050 long-term, low carbon emission strategy.

EPSU’s work also focused on the European Commission’s Clean Energy Package and early in the year on the importance of securing the key 40% target in the Energy Efficiency Directive. EPSU continued its participation in the Trade Unions for Energy Democracy network during the year. It also, along with the ETUC, underlined the importance of public investment in publicly owned energy companies while advocating a just transition in order to mitigate the negative impacts of decarbonisation policies on workers and local communities.

GENDER EQUALITY: DELIVERING ON THE ROADMAP

On 7-8 February the largest ever women’s conference organised by EPSU took place in Prague with major discussions on the gender pay gap, violence against women, gender mainstreaming, the value of public care services and work-life balance. Meeting at the end of the conference, EPSU’s Gender and Women’s Equality Committee agreed to issue a “Prague Statement”, setting out the key demands addressing government, employers and trade unions.

Many affiliates were involved in events around Europe to mark International Women’s Day. Spain led the way with an estimated six million women taking part in demonstrations and a two-hour work stoppage. EPSU used the day to publish the latest data on the gender pay gap in public services, noting in particular that Eurostat data fails to cover public administration in many countries.

EPSU and several affiliates took part in a seminar on the gender pay gap in Brussels in July organised by the European Institute for Gender Equality and in a conference in December on women and occupational cancer, organised by the ETUI.

During the year EPSU actively supported the ETUC’s push for an ambitious directive on work-life balance and also took part in the ETUC project, “Rebalance”, looking at best practices in work-life balance in collective bargaining.
Gender equality topped the agenda at the Local and Regional Government social dialogue meeting in December. The discussion focused on the CEMR-EPSU Guidelines on drawing up gender equality action plans and how they had been implemented at local and regional level.

**Women’s participation in EPSU committees** The table below shows the percentage of committee participants who were women over the past six years.

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**Young workers: looking at future working life**

The EPSU Youth Network met on 31 August and 1 September in Sofia with 30 participants from 23 European countries taking part. There was a key debate about how to increase the participation of young delegates and observers at the EPSU Congress and in November the Executive Committee agreed that delegations to Congress will be able to bring an additional observer representing young workers as long as they are a member of the network and aged under 30.

The meeting also worked on a draft resolution for Congress and discussed the 2019 European elections which were seen as a great opportunity to do outreach about the network. This was linked to the impact of the network within EPSU and the need to mainstream young workers’ issues throughout the federation.

Members of the network played an active role in the collective bargaining conference on quality employment in June.

Towards the end of the year the network launched a survey for young people with the support of the ETUC Youth Committee and the European Youth Forum. The aim of the survey was to contribute to a
study on how young people see their opportunities in society and what this could mean for working life in the future. The report was due to be published in early 2019.

**DEFENDING AND PROMOTING PUBLIC OWNERSHIP**

The risks of privatisation and public-private partnerships were repeatedly exposed during the year with the collapse of the Carillion contracting company in the UK, scandals involving Spanish hospitals and damning reports from the European Court of Auditors and the Eurodad development campaigning group.

EPSU continued to make the case for public ownership, collaborating with PSI and the Transnational Institute (TNI) to develop the work around reclaiming public services. In July, both TNI and PSI contributed to a seminar on defending public services, organised jointly by EPSU and the European Trade Union Institute.

**DIGITALISATION: CENTRAL ROLE FOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

In June 55 representatives of 35 public service unions from 15 countries and the European level met to discuss the implications of digitalisation for public service workers. The conference, organised jointly by EPSU, German affiliate ver.di and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, had several sessions covering the right to (dis)connect, restructuring and the impact of jobs and the use of social dialogue and collective bargaining to regulate the process of digitalisation. EPSU used the conference to publish new research commissioned from the European Social Observatory (OSE) on the impact of digitalisation on home care workers and employees in public employment services.

In the same month EPSU reacted to the European Commission’s Communication on e-health, underlining the need to develop policies that primarily acknowledge patients’ and workers’ needs and wellbeing rather than the profit potential for major corporations.

In May, the General Data Protection Regulations came into force raising important issues for public service providers and their employees. EPSU
was concerned about the lack of guidelines for workers involved in using personal data and drafted a guide to help affiliates address the main issues.

**ECONOMIC POLICY: INTERVENING IN THE SEMESTER**

EPSU continued to monitor the main stages of the European Semester – the European Union's annual process of economic and social policy coordination, working with the ETUC to ensure that concerns about public finances and public investment were raised, particularly in the consultation of the Annual Growth Survey.

EPSU linked up with the OSE research organisation and the University of Nottingham to successfully secure European Commission funding for a two-year project looking at effective intervention in the Semester. The project was also supported by the ETUCE education federation and the first project conference took place in Brussels in October.

EPSU was part of the ETUC delegation that took part in the Macroeconomic Dialogue technical and political meeting using the opportunities to underline the continuing weakness of public investment and the long-term effects of pay freezes and pay cuts in the public sector.

**TRADE: EU-JAPAN DEAL IN SPOTLIGHT**

The proposed Agreement between the European Union and Japan for an Economic Partnership (EUJEP) became the focus of work on trade. In December EPSU wrote to all MEPs urging them not to ratify the deal because of the risks to public services and the failure to include any measures to advance social progress and ecological responsibility.

In October EPSU joined with PSI and over 300 other civil society groups and trade unions in calling on member governments of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law to overhaul the controversial investor-state dispute settlement system contained within many international trade and investment agreements.
RECRUITMENT – BUILDING TRADE UNION STRENGTH

Several affiliates in Central and Eastern Europe took further steps to develop their recruitment and organising work with EPSU providing support for training. There were two training sessions organised during the year, both in October – one for three affiliates in Moldova and the second for the OSZSP health union in the Czech Republic. EPSU is grateful to Greg Thomson, former head of strategic organising at UNISON (UK) and Adam Rogalewski of OPZZ (Poland) for their contributions to these seminars.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING: FURTHER PAY RISE ACTION

The ETUC’s Pay Rise campaign came to and end in June with a final conference in Sofia where a new initiative to set up an alliance to support collective bargaining was proposed. EPSU was involved in the discussions around the alliance that continued in various ETUC bodies during the second half of the year. A formal proposal was due to be finalised by the ETUC early in 2019 for launch at the ETUC Congress in May.

The final conference of the two-year quality employment project took place in June. Prison services and childcare were again central to the discussions but there were also important debates on low pay in sectors dominated by women and trends in public and private sector pay. EPSU published two research reports on these issues carried out by the ETUI and Labour Research Department respectively.

There were 23 issues of the EPSU collective bargaining newsletter with over 300 articles covering more than 30 countries. The final issue of the year included a round-up of the main developments.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

The four Central and Eastern European Constituencies met in June and September with the EPSU Congress one of the common themes. The North East Europe Constituency met in Tbilisi, Georgia and had wide
ranging discussions on labour code reform, privatisation, corruption, migration and gender equality.

Gender equality was also a leading issue in the Central and Western Balkans Constituency meeting in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Hercegovina along with a debate on the EPSU position on the European Union’s Western Balkan Strategy.

The South East Europe Constituency meeting took place in Bucharest where the continuing repression in Turkey was high on the agenda. The meeting also discussed climate change and progress with current EU legislation related to the right to water, work-life balance and transparent and predictable working conditions.

The Russia and Central Asia Constituency meeting in Moscow discussed the major pension changes in Russia and agreed a statement criticising the reforms and in particular the failure to consult with trade unions. The meeting also discussed trends in low wages and the recruitment of young workers to trade unions in a special session with the participation of youth representatives from several of the unions in the constituency.

The General Secretary visited Russia in April to meet representatives of EPSU affiliates to discuss some of their main concerns. The meetings with the health, municipal services and electricity unions covered union recruitment, health service funding and staff shortages, privatisation and climate change and just transition.

SECTOR: HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

The Health and Social Services Standing Committee met in March and October. The main issues covered included: the European Pillar of Social Rights, preparation for EPSU Congress, the online platform on safe and effective staffing levels, the Directive on a proportionality test before
adoption of new regulation of professions, digitalisation and input into the World Health Organisation’s regional conference in September.

Dr. Margret Steffen (ver.di, Germany) retired and was replaced as Standing Committee president by Maryvonne Nicolle (CFDT-SSS, France) and her vacant position as one of three vice-presidents was filled by Razvan Gae (Sanitas, Romania).

The Committee continued to work on safe effective staffing levels, with the setting-up of an online platform helping to improve the exchange of information on campaigns and research.

On health care assistants and support staff, EPSU supported a number of initiatives including a proposal to establish a platform to facilitate exchange between affiliates and organise a seminar in 2019 that would discuss education, professional qualification and other key issues for this group of workers.

The Directive on a proportionality test before adoption of new regulations or professions was published in July and EPSU produced a briefing summarising its lobbying activities around the legislation and the extent to which the final version of the directive reflected EPSU concerns.

**HOSPITALS SECTOR SOCIAL DIALOGUE** EPSU meets regularly with the HOSPEEM European employers’ organisation. In April the social partners renewed their commitment to ethical recruitment and the code of conduct that they originally agreed in 2008.

The social partners used a meeting in April with Dr. Vytenis Andriukaitis, European Commissioner for Health, to raise a wide range of issues of concern.

In December the social partners organised a workshop to discuss the main outcomes from two joint projects on continuing professional development and life-long learning and on occupational safety and health. This followed a meeting earlier in the year as part of a European
Commission-funded project on tackling occupational health and safety hazards.

**SOCIAL SERVICES** The Social Services Working Group met in March and October with childcare, digitalisation and building company networks in care multinationals among the most prominent issues under discussion. Another major area of debate was the developing relationship with the newly established Federation of Social Employers. This was the outcome of the series of Pessis projects that had taken place over several years, leading to the latest project, Pessis+ and the proposal for a series of three seminars on digitalisation, job creation and procurement.

**SECTOR: UTILITIES**

The Utilities Standing Committee met in March and October with two full agendas covering the campaign around the right to water and the right to energy, climate change and the preparation for the COP 24 conference, the just transition and training discussions with the employers and developments related to the circular economy.

**ELECTRICITY SOCIAL DIALOGUE** EPSU works with the Industriall Europe trade union federation in the Electricity social dialogue where they negotiate with the Eurelectric employers' organisation. During the year they collaborated on a European Commission-funded project on qualifications and good working conditions for young workers and trainees. At the final conference the social partners agreed a roadmap on skills and vocational education and training programmes and signed up to the European Alliance for Apprenticeships pledge.

Photo 20

The committee also discussed just transition and digitalisation and agreed a new work programme for 2019-20.

**TRANSNATIONAL COMPANIES AND EUROPEAN WORKS COUNCILS** EPSU’s European works council coordinators’ network met as usual twice during the year in March and October on the day before each Utilities Committee. The main positive news to report was the further progress made in building company networks and steps taken towards setting up European works councils (EWCs) in the Orpea and Korian social care multinationals. The network discussed ETUC
initiatives on the recast EWC directive, its project on transnational company agreements and its strategy on democracy at work. Other issues on the Network agenda included a new French law seeking to prevent human rights abuses in multinational supply chains, protection for whistleblowers and a joint position of European Trade Union Federations on the implications for Brexit for multinational companies.

There were important developments relating to several key multinationals in EPSU’s sectors with a new global agreement coming into force at the EDF energy group and concerns about restructuring at the RWE and EON energy companies.

**Waste** EPSU published a new report on the waste sector and the circular economy, researched by the Public Service International Research Unit, as a follow up to the seminar on waste at the end of 2017.

**SECTOR: LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT**

The Local and Regional Government (LRG) Standing Committee met in March and October. The main discussions included socially responsible procurement, digitalisation and trends in collective bargaining in the sector. There was an exchange on developments at global level with a presentation on recent activists by Daria Cibrario of PSI, with a particular focus on remunicipalisation.

The Standing Committee discussed non-standard forms of work such as casual employment and zero-hours contracts and the extent of their use in the sector. It agreed a statement that was released on World Cities Day on 31 October.

**Local and Regional Government Social Dialogue** EPSU meets with the CEMR local government employers' organisation in the European social dialogue committee for local and regional government. There were two working groups during the year – in March and September – while the plenary took place in December. The themes covered included public procurement, the European Union's social fairness package and atypical work. The committee also discussed the follow-up to the EPSU-CEMR guidelines on migration and refugees. The plenary meeting focused on gender equality and implementation of the guidelines on equality action plans.
These and the role of the European social dialogue were among the issues discussed by EPSU in its contribution to a major CEMR conference that took place in Bilbao in June.

The committee launched its joint project on the European Semester and the implications for local and regional government.

**EPSU Firefighters’ Network** The network met in December in collaboration with the three main Belgian trade unions and discussed latest developments in relation to health and safety, in particular revisions to Carcinogens-Mutagens Directive. The meeting also considered the recent International Labour Organisation guidelines on decent work in public emergency services.

**SECTOR: NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN ADMINISTRATION**

The work of the National and European Administrations (NEA) Standing Committee was dominated by the legal action and political campaign around the agreement on information and consultation in Central Government Administrations. An extraordinary meeting of the committee took place in February with the normal meetings following in March and September.

The committee covered the main themes on the agenda of the Central Government Administrations social dialogue along with a number of other issues including the directive on protecting whistleblowers, migration and racism, the gender pay gap and initiatives on tax justice (the draft directive on country-by-country reporting).

**Central Government Administrations (CGA) Social Dialogue** EPSU is the lead partner in the TUNED trade union group that meets with the EUPAE central government employers’ organisation. Although the Committee was very preoccupied with developments in relation to the information and consultation agreement, it did manage to make progress on other issues. It discussed the follow-up to the joint psycho-social risk guide published at the end of 2017, a new project on digitalisation and its impact on work-life balance, to be completed by the end of 2019, and the pressure on service to migrants and asylum-seekers.
In December TUNED and EUPAE signed the multi-sectoral guidelines on prevention of third-party violence and harassment at work, joining Local and Regional Government and several other sector social dialogue committees in doing so.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The EPSU Executive met in **May** and **November**. The main business at the May meeting was the decision to take the European Commission to court over its failure to propose the agreement on information and consultation in Central Government Administrations to the European Council for transposition into a directive. The meeting also adopted a position on the European Commission’s strategy on the Western Balkans and endorsed the Prague Statement agreed at the EPSU women’s conference in February. There was a first discussion on the draft Programme of Action (PoA) and initial debates around both the ETUC Congress and European Parliament elections.

In November, there were a number of issues relating to Congress including discussion of amendments to the PoA and to the Constitution as well as nominations of the current General Secretary and of Mette Nord of Fagforbundet in Norway to succeed Isolde Kunkel-Weber as President. The November meeting also adopted four statements: expressing solidarity with Austrian workers against attacks from the government; demanding progress by the Austrian Presidency over a number of social policy files; expressing concern over the developments in Brazil after the election of an extreme right-wing president; and on the network of workers involved in services welcoming migrants and refugees in Europe.

**EPSU CONGRESS**

Preparations for EPSU’s **Congress** continued throughout the year with two meetings of the Congress Resolutions Committee and the Constitution Working Group whose recommendations were discussed at the Executive Committee in May and November. There was regular coordination with Irish affiliates and several staff members visited
Dublin to discuss practical arrangements. Along with the draft Programme of Action, the Secretariat published a number of Congress Briefings covering key areas of EPSU’s work, highlighting important developments in recent years and the main challenges for the next Congress period.

WORKING WITH PSI AT GLOBAL LEVEL

EPSU took up a number of global solidarity issues during the year raising concerns about the unfair imprisonment of former Brazilian president Lula, expressing support for US public service unions in the face of a serious legal challenge to their funding and supporting PSI and the ITUC in their push for an International Labour Organisation convention against violence against women. EPSU contributed to the discussions at the PSI Executive as it developed its priorities based on the Programme of Action agreed at its Congress in 2017. These were discussed at the EPSU Executive Committee in November which also debated key changes to the PSI constitution.

WORKING WITH THE ETUC

As well as its active involvement the European Trade Union Confederation’s Executive Committee and many of its other working groups, this year EPSU also took part in the committee set up to prepare for the ETUC Congress in May 2019.

COMMUNICATIONS

EPSU continued to expand its presence on social media, also reaching out beyond the usual audience, reaching over 4800 twitter and 4500 Facebook followers by the end of year. An Instagram account was opened in the first half of the year and grew to nearly 200 followers.

In May the General Data Protection Regulation kicked in and EPSU was one of the first European trade union organisations to comply with the new legislation before the deadline, using the opportunity to clean our mailing lists. There are now 7615 contacts in the database, including 3098 recipients of the main EPSU Newsletter and 2928 of the Collective Bargaining newsletter. Although this is a slight decrease from last year, these are real contacts who replied to our request to confirm their details.
During the year there were 147,941 visits to our website by 51,428 different users and we published 419 articles, not including the newsletter editorials.

**ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS**

**FINANCES** The Finance Working Group met in June. A finance resolution will be presented to Congress in 2019 for an increase of the affiliation fees for the years 2020 to 2022 of 0,01€ per year.

**MEMBERSHIP** There were four new affiliations during the year. These were the Danish Prison Officers’ Union (FF, 2761 members), the Craft Union of Firefighters of Montenegro (CUFM, 350 members), the Trade Union of Workers of State, Public and Banking Institutions of the Republic of Tajikistan (TUWSPBI, 5000 members) and the Fédération CFE-CGC Energies of France with 8800 members. The only disaffiliation during the year was by the Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists (UK, 8165 members).

**STAFFING** Marina Irimie, regional staff working in Bucharest and responsible for the South East Europe constituency retired at the end of July and EPSU is very appreciative of her work for the federation following the EPSU-PSI Europe merger in 2010 and for PSI for many years before that.

Christine Jakob (policy staff, local and regional government and gender equality) left EPSU in April. Paola Panzeri was appointed as her replacement, starting work in November. Rebeka Balogh had been appointed in May on a temporary contract to help cover these dossiers and her contract was extended until early 2019.

Danae Dimitrakopoulou was appointed communications assistant in January on a four-day-a-week contract that was initially for six months but which was then extended to June 2019. Barbara Helferrich joined EPSU on a part-time, temporary contract in 2017 to work on gender equality issues and her contract was extended to the end of April.

As usual, several stagiaires contributed to EPSU’s work as part of their studies. This year they included Noémie Gilles (Haute Ecole Lucia de Brouckere), Owusu Afriyie Agyeman-Dua and Priyadarshini Gupta Quedou (Global Labour University, Germany), Pol Reuter, (Institut d’Etudes Politiques, Paris) and Patricia Velicu (Central European University, Hungary).
Photos captions

Cover page:
1. Demonstration for better pensions in Zagreb, 20 October 2018
2. Spanish firefighters’ strike, 26 October 2018
3. Building company networks and European works councils in health and social services, final conference EPSU project – participants showing support for Korian and Orpea Celenus, 4 September, Brussels
4. Drinking Water Directive vote, 23 October, Strasbourg
5. EPSU Women and Gender Equality Conference, 7-8 February, Prague
6. Trade union delegation at COP 24, 6-9 December, Katowice
7. Cover EPSU-PSI report, Privatisation and Private Sector Involvement and other Forms of State Disengagement in Migration and Refugee Services, September
9. Cover EPSU booklet, Information and consultation rights - the European Pillar of Broken Promises, time for a Social Europe, November
10. Cover EPSU, EFFAT, and SEIU report, Unhappier Meal on McDonald’s tax practices, May

Photo 1: Solidarity with Turkey’s imprisoned trade unionists, 27 November
Photo 2: Cover of EPSU leaflet, Information and Consultation Rights
Photo 3: Cover of EPSU report, Unhappier Meal
Photo 4: The McDonald’s international trade union coalition meeting with Competition Commissioner Vestager (from left to right: Pablo Sanchez, EPSU Communication officer, Jan Willem Goudriaan, EPSU General Secretary, Commissioner Vestager, Nadja Salson EPSU, responsible for tax justice and member of the Commission’s Good Tax Governance Platform, and Carl Leinonen SEIU international officer
Photo 6: Poster for the municipal workers’ strike in support of equal pay, Glasgow, Scotland
Photo 7: EPSU Regional Officer Josef Krejbych addressing Slovenia public sector demonstration with Lidija Jerkič (President ZSSS) and Jakob Počivavšek (President Pergam), 24 January, Ljubljana
Photo 8: Public services workers in action for better pay, 22 May 2018, Paris
Photo 9: Poster of the documentary “Up to the last drop” screening in Brussels
Photo 10: Guillaume Durivaux, EPSU Utilities officer and Patricia Velicu EPSU stagiaire at the COP 24, 6-9 December, Katowice
Photo 11: Cover of EPSU report, The Gender Pay Gap in Public Services, March
Photo 12: EPSU Youth Network meeting 31 August-1 September, Sofia
Photo 13: EPSU, Ver.di and FES Conference “How trade unions can use collective bargaining to uphold and improve working conditions in the context of the digital transformation of public services?”, 26-27 June, Berlin

Photo 14: Tripartite Social Summit, 21 March, Brussels

Photo 15: EPSU recruitment and organising seminar, 2 October, Moldova

Photo 16: Cover of EPSU Report, She works hard for the money, July

Photo 17: EPSU constituencies meetings: from left to right, top to bottom: North-East Europe, Tbilisi 17-20 June; South-East Europe, Bucharest, 21-22 June; Russia-Central Asia, Moscow, 18 September; Central and Eastern Europe, Sarajevo, 26-27 June

Photo 18: Members of the Standing Committee Health and Social Services support Danish unions, 14 March, Brussels.

Photo 19: HOSPEEM General Secretary T. Alkema and EPSU General Secretary J.W. Goudriaan reiterated their commitment to the 12 key principles of their 2008 Code of Conduct on Ethical Cross-border Recruitment and Retention, 4 April, Brussels

Photo 20: European Social Partners in the Electricity Sector – EPSU, IndustriAll and Eurelectric joint project final conference on the right qualifications and good working conditions for young workers and trainees. The Secretary Generals of the European Social Partners signed the ‘Roadmap on Skills and Qualifications’ and the ‘Joint pledge to join the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA)’, 23 October, Brussels

Photo 21: EPSU General Secretary and EPSU President I. Kunkel-Weber support action by ORPEA workers 28 September, Berlin

Photo 22: EPSU Firefighters network meeting, 12 December, Brussels

Photo 23: Multi-sectoral guidelines on third party violence at work signed at Liaison Forum, 17 December, Brussels

Photo 24: EPSU Executive Committee meeting, 6-7 November, Brussels

Photo 25: EPSU Congress 2019 logo

Photo 26: Cover EPSU 2nd Congress briefing, Solidarity
EPSU is the **European Federation of Public Service Unions**. It is the largest federation of the ETUC and comprises 8 million public service workers from over 260 trade unions across Europe. EPSU organises workers in the energy, water and waste sectors, health and social services and local, regional and central government, in all European countries including the EU’s Eastern Neighbourhood. In our sectors we organise workers in the public, the non-profit, mixed and private sector including in multinational companies. It is the recognised regional organisation of Public Services International (PSI).

For more information please go to: [www.epsu.org](http://www.epsu.org).