



FRAMEWORK OF ACTION FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT 6th December 2012

*The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) - Employers'
The European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) - Trade Unions*

Definition- *A European Framework of Action consists of the identification of certain policy priorities towards which the national social partners undertake to work. These priorities serve as benchmarks and the social partners report annually on the action taken to follow-up these texts.*

IMPLEMENTING A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

In the context of the challenges posed by the current European social, economic and political crisis for local and regional authorities as employers and trade unions, the social partners EPSU and CEMR respectively renew their joint commitment to strengthen the European sectorial social dialogue in local and regional government.

They underline their commitment through the following recommendations that form a framework for action for local and regional government to contribute to a social and sustainable local and regional Europe that supports the public sector as an employer. The overarching objective is to better prepare Local and Regional governments as employers' and their employees for future scenarios of its workplace.

The social partners in the *joint project 2011 ["The future of work in local and regional government"](#)* have identified that action is needed in the areas of continuous and fair funding, migration, skills development, sustainable development, gender equality, and recruitment and retention. The European and National social partners commit thereby to implement the objectives jointly concluded by these recommendations, starting in 2013 with a first evaluation at the end of 2013. It is important to note that these recommendations serve the foundations for the upcoming work programme of this European Social Dialogue Committee for 2014-2016.

The European sectorial social dialogue engaged between EPSU and CEMR throughout all their organisational structures will be the platform for implementation of these action points in exclusive cooperation of national social partners. Additional means for strengthened capacity-building in this sector will have to be allocated for implementation, in the form, for example, of a joint European project under Social Dialogue. The Social partners have underlined the importance of organising capacity building exercises for countries within our Social Dialogue committee, could focus on one or more of the actions listed below.

EPSU and CEMR will implement the framework against the background of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the "New Skills for New Jobs" and relevant EU legislative and policy proposals in the area of employment and social affairs throughout 2013.

ACTION POINTS FOR SOCIAL PARTNERS

1. Improving the performance of local and regional authorities and securing necessary resources

- **Major strengthening of social dialogue to improve quality and efficiency of services**

National governments should be using the route of social dialogue to deliver new methods of working and to cope with the financial crisis, including providing the financial support to enable social dialogue to take place. At the same time European institutions have the same responsibility in strengthening, supporting and encouraging the European social partners to work together to allow it to function effectively. CEMR and EPSU appreciate the support the European Commission provided to the process of the European social dialogue. However, continuous support is also needed to further develop a well functioning social dialogue at national level in all countries. The conclusions adopted in 2008 on "supporting the reform process in local and regional government: Joint evaluation of the experience in different forms of service provision" underline the need to involve workers early in process of change and stress the benefits of involving employers, workers and trade unions in the broader questions of services delivery.

- **Flexible approach to public procurement**

In its reform of the public procurement directives it is essential that the delivery of quality and sustainable services to citizens remain the primary objective and that local and regional authorities remain in the best position to determine how to deliver such services within their capacity. In this context, it is essential the flexible forms of public-public cooperation continue to be permitted. Alongside this, EPSU/CEMR point out in their [joint statement](#) on socially responsible public procurement (June 2011), "the "in-house" (including public-public cooperation) provision of public services remains a valid option."

- **Monitoring the impact of the crisis in local and regional government**

Social Partners shall jointly monitor the impact of the economic crisis on employment (job cuts, cuts in job and spending) and the working environment. In the EPSU/CEMR [joint statement](#) to the EU council (December 2010) we highlighted that the "new system of economic governance does not have a narrow focus on public sector spending cuts but takes a balanced view of public finance in terms of both income and expenditure."

Joint Action proposed in the area of funding:

- *Organising of one working group meeting to discuss trends in local government finance, fiscal pressures and consequences for public service delivery of local and regional government in selected countries, including those hit hardest by austerity measures, and policies to increase available resources.*
- *Collecting, where possible, research on selected countries on the impact of the economic crisis on job cuts, working conditions and employment in local and regional government*
- *Organising a working group meeting on organisation of public services (different forms of public-public cooperation, as an e.g), the partnership between employers' and employee representatives in this context, and questions related to efficiency of local services.*

2. Recruitment & Retention

- **Analysis of demographic change in this context**

How it will affect the workforce in local and regional government and to draw up appropriate recommendations for national level action. This is likely to involve policies which promote healthy workplaces for all workers and adjust the working conditions and health and safety of older workers.

- **Providing jobs for young people**

Pressure should be brought to bear on national and European policy makers to ensure that deficit reduction programmes are not implemented in a way that excludes young people from employment and training opportunities in local and regional government.

Joint Action proposed in the area of recruitment & retention

- *Organize a joint social dialogue meeting with the hospital sector building on their work on recruitment and retention. Results from this could then be transposed across local and regional government services and developed into a capacity building project;*
- *Discuss in depth the current youth unemployment crisis and various measures being implemented in local and regional authorities, with a view to contributing to European Commission actions in this field along with joint input / discussion on the ongoing sectoral negotiations on youth unemployment*
- *Look at different experiences with job rotation which combine periods of work and education*

3. Skills& Life-long Learning

Skills development of workers and managers in the local and regional government is crucial. The 2008 EPSU/CEMR [joint statement](#) on active inclusion "stress that the link between the quality of employment in local and regional government and the quality of the services provided needs to be better taken into account. Improving quality of work and well-being in the sector will contribute to improving efficiency and quality of services."

In the 2007 EPSU/CEMR [response](#) to the EC Green Paper on modernising labour law, we stress that "social dialogue and collective agreements about training, skills development etc. can promote a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce and by this create a better environment for job transition. In addition, social dialogue processes are a key feature for re-organisation and can help create the right environment to enable employees to adapt to change at the workplaces".

- **Training arrangements in local and regional government**

Existing domestic agreements and arrangements on training in local and regional government should be collected and discussed with the aim of agreeing guidelines encouraging and sharing best practice within our Committee Here the Committee would explore the question of what common initial training and skills are needed for its future workplace.

- **Moving towards the 15% target**

Unions and local and regional government employers in European countries should be asked to compare their own figures on participation in ongoing education and training with those produced by Eurostat. This would fall in the framework of discussing existing national agreements, as well as an exchange with the European Commission on latest developments within the New Skills for New Jobs flagship.

Joint Action proposed in the area of skills & life-long learning:

- *Working group meeting to discuss training and skills development in our sector and ongoing agreements at national level; focusing on the exchange of good practice and development of social dialogue agreements in this area;*
- *Drawing up Guidelines/Agreement on training for local and regional government, on the relevant future skills needs, encouraging best-practice including targets that will enable to reach them*

4. Gender Equality

- **Continue promoting gender equality guidelines**

Although all states have legislation on gender equality this may not go as far as the CEMR EPSU [guidelines](#), in particular in terms of setting out practical steps to implement equality between women and men and ensuring that unions, as representatives of employees, have a full role in the process.

- **Monitoring the impact of public spending cuts**

There is a fear that public spending cuts will particularly affect women in local and regional government that progress towards equality will become more difficult and past gains may be lost. It is therefore important that local and regional authorities should consider the potentially disproportionate impact on their female employees of any reduction in spending and closely monitor career developments which will impact on the future of the workplace design in local and regional government.

Joint Action in the area of gender equality

- *Organizing a regional workshop to raise awareness and promote the EPSU-CEMR gender guidelines*
- *Joint coordination with the European Institute for Gender Equality on the impact of cuts on employment of women in LRG*
- *Explore joint action with the CEMR Observatory of the Charter on Equality of Women and Men in Local Life.*

5. Migration

- **Integration of migrant workers**

Promote progress in responding to the needs of migrants in individual member states and promote anti-discrimination, migrant workers. Explore, and work to end unnecessary restrictions on the employment of migrants in local and regional government: the available figures suggest that migrants are less likely to be employed in local and regional government than in the economy as a whole. Naturally, other barriers such as language, should also be taken into account during this discussion.

CEMR/EPSU have expressed in the past their support to promoting active inclusion: 'The social partners in the local and regional government set a high priority to creating and preserving work for the most vulnerable groups on the labour market' (CEMR/ EPSU Joint Statement on Employment, 1997). As part of our activities we organised two working group sessions on diversity policies and integration of migrants in public administration at regional and local level and in 2008 we adopted a [joint statement](#) on "the Active Inclusion of Those Furthest from the Labour Market."

Joint Action proposed in the area of migration:

Assess the contribution of EPSU/CEMR to the implementation of the cross-sectoral framework agreement on inclusive labour markets;

- Explore existing campaigns and other social partner actions, e.g., guidelines on anti-racism and xenophobia in local and regional government, and if sufficient interest, explore possibility of launching a campaign through social dialogue.
- As a result from the above mentioned action, develop a joint CEMR EPSU joint statement on anti-discrimination of migrant workers within the framework of European social dialogue and possibly drawing on the CLIP recommendations; national legislation is less developed in this area so a strengthened European framework would be useful.

6. Providing Sustainable Workplaces

- **Continue to ensure that environmental concerns retain their importance**

With local and regional authorities facing severe financial problems, there is a danger that less priority may be given to environmental issues, and also to health and safety issues. However, this would be a mistake, particularly as a better use of resources could bring its own savings in the longer term. A longer-term perspective on sustainability in all its dimensions - including quality of working conditions - needs to be explored for local and regional governments as employers' and their employee representatives.

- **Ensure that employee representatives can play a full role in sustainable development at the workplace**

Without the active support of the workforce sustainable development policies are unlikely to be implemented effectively. CEMR and EPSU should explore issuing guidance to their members suggesting how employee representatives could be involved and giving examples of good practice which could be further explored and adopted at local level.

Joint Action proposed in the area of sustainable workplaces:

- *A general scoping working group meeting on the long-term perspectives and definition of sustainability in all its dimensions for local and regional governments as a workplace.*
- *Social Dialogue working group meeting discussing green jobs in local and regional government giving examples, where local and regional government has been creating new, quality green jobs e.g. in the area of waste disposal. An interesting point of discussion would be to look at the 'new' green jobs which will require different skills and competences within the workforce as well as adapted risk assessment and health and safety practices, and how employers' and trade unions can better anticipate this.*