



Brussels, 2 October 2012

The Mayors of Brussels and Nantes and the Secretary General of the European Federation of Public Service Unions recall their commitment to a Europe capable of responding to the challenges of the 21st century, meeting the needs of citizens, to a Europe which is strong politically, socially and economically, and to a Europe of solidarity.

Today, they observe the rise of growing inequalities, exclusion, unemployment and insecurity, affecting young people in particular. Our social model, which is unique in the world, is currently under threat. This is compounded by an austerity policy which will lead to recession if it is not flanked by a **new social compact**. This policy includes a drive towards greater pressure on low wages and job insecurity, unfortunately provoking the accompanying reaction of a rise in populism and racism.

Europe's declared objective is economic and social progress. The goals defined by the 'Europe 2020' project confirm this and we support them.

But above all, confronted by the crisis, we call on Europe to concentrate on strong policies and choices which improve our capacities to exit from the current recession, as the achievement of these '2020' goals call for socially stable societies, combating climate change, a source of new growth, financial institutions at the service of the real economy, and accessible, high-quality public services for all citizens.

In this context, we call for the review of certain European policies:

- Water services must be considered as one of the key public services and therefore be excluded from the traditional rules of the Internal Market,
- In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the local authorities and towns and cities must enjoy wide discretion with regard to the organisation and supply of public services. Public procurement must not be an obligation. The local authorities and towns and cities must be able to choose freely how and to what extent they wish to undertake public tasks themselves and/or in cooperation with other public authorities or parties.
- The award of public contracts must not be undertaken solely on the basis of the criterion of cost, which would lead to bidding down in terms of quality of services, goods and working conditions. To achieve this, the European directives must create true social responsibility on the part of businesses. European law must respect and promote international labour standards. The rules applicable to public procurement must advocate the promotion and application of a wide range of conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).
- 'Legislative texts', adopted under the normal procedure, must finally be discussed in order to make the very concept of Public Services more secure and enable them to ensure *'a high level of quality, security and, regarding their affordability, equal treatment and the promotion of universal access and the rights of users'* on a sustainable basis.
- The social dialogue, at every level from local to European, is duty bound to be developed and renewed.



The towns and cities and the local authorities have a decisive role to play. They represent over 75% of the European population. They manage three quarters of the public investments and employ a workforce of more than 64 million people. The European towns and cities play a crucial role in ensuring the quality of life of their inhabitants and their territory through their public services.

It is also the European towns and cities which are in the front line to respond to citizens' needs. Social and territorial cohesion is an objective of the Treaty on European Union and the towns and cities must be provided with adequate financial resources to achieve this.

The Mayors of Brussels and Nantes and the Secretary General of the European Federation of Public Service Unions, directly in line with their joint declaration of June 2011, urge all the local authorities of Europe to support these demands and to ensure that they are reflected in the positions adopted by the European Council and the European Parliament.

It is in this way that the citizens of all countries will be able to develop confidence in their joint future.

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Mayor of Brussels

Carola Fischbach-Pyttel  
Secretary General of the EPSU

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Mayor of Nantes