

Overview on main activities, outcomes and priority issues for EPSU in the field of (personal) social services (2010-2012)

EPSU WORKING GROUP “SOCIAL SERVICES”

EPSU has a **Working Group “Social Services”**

- The Working Group serves a double purpose: first to inform affiliates about main developments and initiatives at EU-level, including the legal, policy and quality framework of social services and to work on common positions to influence the EU-level policy making; second to be a platform for a mutual exchange amongst EPSU affiliates and with the EPSU Secretariat on main national discussions, legislative changes, achievements and concerns by trade unions in the field of personal social services.
- It brings together colleagues from the sectors of health and social services and local and regional government and meets twice a year.

SOCIAL SERVICES AS PART OF PUBLIC SERVICES AND AS KEY ELEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL MODEL

EPSU has always closely linked its policy work on SSGI and research commissioned with activities on public services/SGI, public procurement, service concessions and state aid. We have argued for strong public services and against privatisation. EPSU has warned against marketisation. We defend mechanisms and systems of solidarity-based financing of social services. We also have advocated in favour of public regulation of SSGI, a joint approach to social and health services and integrated service delivery. In the 2011 position paper we have called upon the European Commission.

TOPICS

These are the topics EPSU has worked upon between 2010 and 2012:

- **Social services of general interest (SSGI):** EPSU's position paper (<http://www.epsu.org/a/7452>) calls upon an EU action programme in the field of long-term/elderly care, underpinned with realistic targets in view of improving the quality of services and jobs to support the activities of local and regional authorities. EPSU recalls the importance and value of decent and stable working conditions and professional training when developing and implementing policies to ensure and to improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of SSGI. When implementing and further developing the European Voluntary Quality Framework (EVQF) for SSGI a clearer reference to the respect for worker's rights, a stronger emphasis on the improvement of employment and pay conditions in a sector strongly dominated by women and continued efforts to reduce the gender pay gap are needed
- **Elderly care**, in particular our report “Care Services for Older People in Europe - Challenges for Labour” (<http://www.epsu.org/a/7431>) that makes a number of recommendations and calls upon the EU to seize the challenge of creating good quality and secure employment in the eldercare sector with both hands
- **Child care:** In 2013 EPSU will link on work done in 2010 and plans to focus on the employment conditions, training and qualification and the gender perspective of services for children below or at primary-school age (crèche, childminding, kindergarten, pre-school, after school care/services).

- **Challenges and failures of service privatisation:** EPSU has summarised material produced by British affiliate GMB on the case of the social care market in the UK. This work is being continued and linked to research on privatisation of health and social care services and systems in European and outside Europe.
- Cross-border health care: EPSU assessment of directive 2011/24/EU on the application of patient rights in cross-border health care
- **Eligibility of multi-national enterprises to set up an European Works Council** (<http://www.epsu.org/a/6836>; <http://www.epsu.org/a/8992>): In projects and studies EPSU has covered the role of multinationals in health and social care as well as European Works Councils in these areas (see below in list of reports and studies).
- **Equal pay/gender pay gap** (<http://www.epsu.org/a/6271>): Analyses and policy work to reduce the gender pay gap for workers in health and social services are one of the priority issues in the work of EPSU's Gender Equality Committee and also embedded in EPSU's work on collective bargaining.
- **Personal and household services (PHS)**, EPSU sees as falling, to a large extent, in the remit of health and social services. We have replied to a consultation launched by the European Commission (July 2012, <http://www.epsu.org/a/8908>, see below), in a joint EPSU/ETUC contribution. The topic was presented and discussed in the November 2012 EPSU Executive Meeting and the October 2012 Working Group "Social Services" and is currently being followed up. EPSU will use the work on SSGI and PHS in view of a communication on elderly care that is expected for the first half of 2013.

PROJECT

Throughout 2012 EPSU participated in the project "**Promoting employers' social services organisations in social dialogue**" (PESSIS) (<http://www.epsu.org/a/9070>).

- This mapping exercise of the structures and outcomes of social dialogue in the field of social services in 11 Member States explored possibilities and requirements in view of incorporating the sector of social services/social care/social work into European sectoral social dialogue in a mid-term perspective (in the context of existing structures or structures still to be set up).
- EPSU members are exchanging on structures, practices, and experiences, including good and bad examples with collective bargaining and collective agreements in the field of social services (in particular: elderly care, child care, services for persons with disability, sheltered workshops) in different Member States of the EU.
- If there is broad agreement to continue this work, EPSU will aim at identifying issues that could be addressed at an EU-level social dialogue provided appropriate structures are in place and this will be supported by EPSU affiliates.

REPORTS AND STUDIES

This list gives an overview on the range of topics and aspects covered by EPSU's recent work on social services, the **reports commissioned and studies published**.

- Report "Pay and the gender wage gap in health and social care" (February 2010): <http://www.epsu.org/a/6271>
- Study on child care services (2010; not yet published)
- Report on European healthcare services, multinational companies and a European healthcare market (September 2010): <http://www.epsu.org/a/6836>

- Report "Care Services for Older People in Europe - Challenges for Labour" (February 2011): <http://www.epsu.org/a/7431>
- Report "Europeanization of national health systems - National impact and EU codification of the patient mobility case law" (September 2012): <http://www.epsu.org/a/8993>
- Report "Eligibility for European Works Councils in the social care sector" (September 2012): <http://www.epsu.org/a/8992>
- Study on migrant workers in the field of health and elderly care (October 2012): <http://www.epsu.org/a/8920>

POSITIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONSULTATIONS

EPSU in 2011 and 2012 has elaborated a **position on social services of general interest (SSGI) and a contribution to the consultation on personal and household services (PHS)** launched by the European Commission.

- EPSU position paper on social services of general interest (January/March 2011): <http://www.epsu.org/a/7452>
- EPSU contribution to consultation on personal and household services (July 2012): <http://www.epsu.org/a/8908>