EPSU Childcare network meets to discuss the safe reopening of facilities



(27 May 2020) On Wednesday, May 13th, the EPSU childcare network met to discuss rules and guidelines for the safe and healthy reopening of childcare services for larger parts of the youngest population. The aim was to see what measures and/or agreements have been taken in different countries and how they work in practice for children as well as care and other workers in childcare facilities. In particular we were interested in which pre-conditions would need to be given for a safe reopening, how the process could be designed in an inclusive way and which actions the unions took.

During the meeting we heard presentations from experts as well as colleagues where services are opening or have already opened. The kickoff was made by Megumi Watanabe, who is a specialist in the teacher development section of UNESCO’s Education Sector. She shared UNESCO’s global expertise for the necessary conditions and preparations as well as the successful management for

the safe reopening of childcare facilities.

Following this we heard from two colleagues, Ingri Bjørnevik from Fagforbundet, Norway and Frank Gabriels from ACOD, Belgium. Norway was one of the first countries to relaunch childcare services. Ingri Bjørnevik stressed above all the importance of union involvement for the successful design of measures. For instance, the rules and guidelines were not always clear to workers in the beginning, prompting Fagforbundet to intervene and issue clarifications. Also the internal communication between union officials and shop stewards was crucial in that regard.

Following this, Frank Gabriels explained the Flemish measures centered around the concept of “contactbubbles”. He also shared his experience of union work in the multi-levelled Belgian federal system. He stressed that it was particularly important to get involved at different levels of government at the same time to achieve the best outcomes.

We uploaded the presentations to the meeting page. We continue to upload documents there as we receive them and are happy to see any relevant information from affiliates. You can send them to mboudhan@epsu.org.

See presentations and other documents from colleagues

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