



EPSU Congress 2019: BRIEFING – EPSU: defending public services and public service workers

EPSU: defending and promoting public services and public service workers

Campaigning for the right to water, negotiating on information and consultation rights for central government workers, lobbying for tougher action on tax avoidance and fraud... these are just some of the many activities of EPSU – the European trade union federation for public service workers. We mobilise for action and change

EPSU brings together over [270 trade union organisations](#) from 49 European countries. We influence the policies and decisions of employers, governments and European institutions, campaigning for well-funded public services and better rights at work. Our vision is of a Europe in which men and women and our environment are not exploited and with public services at its core. Good jobs in our sectors mean quality services for citizens.

EPSU represents 8 million workers who are delivering public services, whether they are directly employed by the public sector or work for non-profit or private sector organisations. Our members work in health and social services; local, regional and national government; energy waste and water.

EPSU is recognised as the European regional organisation of the global public services federation [PSI](#) and is also a member of the [European Trade Union Confederation](#). We work with the other European trade union federations that are part of the ETUC.

NEGOTIATING AT EUROPEAN LEVEL EPSU works hard to deliver better working conditions, improved health and safety and enhanced rights for our members. By sitting down with employers at a European level, in social dialogue committees, we negotiate agreements that aim to improve the working lives of public service workers and ensure quality services for citizens.

EPSU is active with employer organisations covering hospitals, local and regional government, central government administrations and electricity. Examples of recent achievements include: an agreement on [information and consultation](#) (central government), an action plan on [well-being at work](#) (local and regional government), an agreement on [quality training](#) (electricity) and a joint declaration and follow-up work on [continuing professional development and life-long learning](#) (hospitals).

CAMPAIGNING WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS Workers and our families are part of the communities in which we live. EPSU collaborates with social movements and civil society organisations to lobby and campaign for improved public services. EPSU was a leading member of the successful campaign that secured over 1.8 million signatures for the [human right to water](#) and is part of networks campaigning for the [right to energy](#) and for tax justice.

GENDER EQUALITY Women represent the majority of EPSU's members and [gender equality](#) is at the heart of everything we do. From our affiliates negotiating with employers on women's rights in the workplace to exposing the scandal of the gender pay gap, EPSU is taking action for real equality.

FIGHTING PRIVATISATION EPSU shares information, research and experiences to assert the quality of direct public service provision in the face of the pressure for [privatisation](#). We strongly

challenge claims that the private sector is more efficient in delivering public services and that [public-private partnerships](#) are a cost effective alternative to direct public investment.

TAX, TRADE and MIGRATION EPSU is fighting for [tax justice](#) and against tax avoidance by multinationals to ensure sustainable public finances. We have been making the case for sustainable [trade](#) and investment deals that protect workers' rights and exclude public services. We are standing up for the rights of [migrants](#), both in the workplace and in the services our members deliver.

DIGITALISATION The provision of public services and the working conditions of public services are being transformed by new processes of [digitalisation](#), automatization and robotisation. EPSU is monitoring trends and helping affiliates share the information and resources needed to keep on top of these developments.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING and TRADE UNION RIGHTS Collective bargaining is a core activity for EPSU affiliates at national, regional and local level and EPSU regularly [reports](#) on key developments, monitoring European policy that impacts on national developments. EPSU supports affiliates with [solidarity](#) whether facing difficult negotiations or challenges to trade union rights. We are from different countries but share the same fights

BUILDING UNION POWER EPSU provides support to its affiliates who are taking initiatives to strengthen their [recruitment and organising](#) work. The more we are, the stronger we are and the bigger our voice at work, in negotiations and in society

COMMUNICATIONS EPSU ensures that its messages reach their target audience whether via the [web](#), [twitter](#) or [facebook](#), along with our [press releases](#) and regular [newsletter](#).

HOW WE WORK

- [Congress](#) is convened every five years with the last in Toulouse in France in May 2014 and the next in Dublin in June 2019.
- The [Executive Committee](#) meets at least twice a year with national representatives from all countries in the EPSU region.
- There are standing committees for [Health and Social Services](#), [Local and Regional Government](#), [National and European Administration](#) and [Utilities](#) which also meet at least twice a year with representatives from all affiliates in the sector.
- There is also a [Social Services Working Group](#), [Gender and Women's Equality Committee](#) and [European Works Councils Coordinators Network](#).
- There are networks for some specific occupations with the [Firefighters](#) and [Prison Officers](#) meeting on an annual basis. The [youth network](#) is open to all affiliates and has representatives from across the region.
- Our unions also represented in nine constituencies bringing together all affiliates in a particular region.