

PSEF JOINT STATEMENT ON THE EU PRIORITIES 2019-2024

The members of the Public Services Employers' Forum (PSEF), representing Public Services and Services of General (Economic) Interest (SG(EI)) employers and providers, are looking forward to the new legislative term and would like to take this opportunity to introduce their role and priorities with a view to future dialogue with European Union (EU) decision-makers.

Public services and SG(EI)s are a cornerstone of the EU Social Model and of democratic societies; they have a central role to play in ensuring the citizens' quality of life, contributing to informed citizenship, supporting the development of European businesses and contributing to the growth and competitiveness of the EU.

The quality and access to essential services such as education, energy, healthcare, public service media, public transport and services provided by local and regional governments is instrumental to the realisation of our common objectives, and we, PSEF members, are committed to doing our part in balancing the economic and social dimensions of the EU.

In the context of the identification of the new political priorities for the EU, we call for Public Services and SG(EI) providers to be placed at the heart of the project for a striving Europe, as their empowerment should be a key issue in every single Member State.

The Public Services Employers' Forum would like to highlight the following priorities:

Developing social dialogue

Strong social partners' organisations are instrumental for the successful implementation of the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR). All European social partners' organisations aim to strengthen social dialogue at all levels, in order to reflect and respond to the needs of more diverse economic and social situations. However, the degree to which social partners have been involved in the design and implementation of relevant reforms and policies, as stated in the principle 8 of the EPSR¹, still varies from one Member State to the other. Identifying strong representative organisations and supporting their capacity building remains a key objective to ensure successful participation of social partners.

We, therefore, call for a continued and stronger support by the European institutions to social partners and particularly seek stronger political support in creating autonomous employers' organisation in the public services sphere at the national level.

¹ European Commission, Secretariat-General. European pillar of social rights. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union; 2017 [cited 05 August 2019]. Available from: <http://dx.publications.europa.eu/10.2792/95934>

Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The 17 SDGs facilitate finding common global solutions by addressing poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice.

Effective public services are key to their successful implementation, requiring the provision of public goods. It will require efficient and successful coordination between the providers of those public services.

We, therefore, call for an integrated approach to the implementation of the SDGs across the EU, based on the explicit recognition and empowerment of our members' role in this process.

Boosting investment

The European Union took important steps to put forward-looking investments a core element of our macroeconomic policies. Our members recognise and value the impact of the European Fund for Strategic Investment and the added-value of the investment-focused Country Specific Recommendations while stressing the importance of maintaining grants for certain types of investments. We also strongly support the initiatives of the European Commission to link the implementation of the EU funds with the priorities identified in the European Semester.

We, therefore, call upon the EU institutions to maintain within its key priorities the objective of investing in productivity and quality of services, research and innovation, as well as in our physical and social infrastructures.

Involving social partners in the European Semester

The EU Semester has become the main instrument of coordination of the reform process across the EU. Our members have great hopes that their efforts will be recognised within the European Semester through the implementation of the principles of the EPSR dedicated to the access to and quality of essential services, whilst enabling genuine multi-level governance of the European Semester.

We, therefore, call for our national members to be better integrated at all levels in the consultation process to adequately represent the views of all social partners across Europe.

Promoting gender equality

Horizontal and vertical segregation of the labour market are major issues for our members and have a big impact on gender equality. Traditional gender norms and stereotypes continue to have a strong influence on the division of labour between women and men, at home, school, work and in society as a whole. Effective and well-funded public services support the achievement of gender equality in the labour market, namely by easing the daily social integration of all societal groups. At the same time, actions must be taken at the national level to address stereotypes that still influence in education and career choices, and prejudices that affect women's integration in the labour market and development in the workplace. Member States should also cater for the necessary investments in social infrastructure and welfare policies that can support a fair sharing of family and work duties within households.

We, therefore, call upon the European Commission to develop a new multiannual European strategy for Gender Equality to keep these issues high on the European agenda.



Ensuring inclusive digitalisation

The emergence of digitalisation, in all its dimensions, is having far-reaching economic, social, and political consequences on all spheres of our lives. Digitalisation is an opportunity that also requires understanding and addressing transition challenges, as well as related training and investment needs. Successfully steering the process of digitalisation is largely dependent on the effective provision of SG(E)Is, such as modern education, training and lifelong learning systems and broadband infrastructure.

Public services and SG(E)Is provide essential services and infrastructure and enjoy the trust of the citizens. As citizens increasingly access services online via global platforms, these platforms have evolved into gatekeepers between service providers and citizens, often taking unilateral decisions on their services' display and ranking. We have a responsibility to ensure that nobody is left behind, that all citizens can find and access SG(E)Is' services in the digital environment.

We also have to ensure that digitalisation supports upward convergence in Europe. However, we suffer from bottlenecks, notably in the area of education and training; 44% of the workforce lacks the sufficient e-skills required by the digital transformation. At the same time, soft skills will be equally important to provide the EU workforce with the adaptability it requires in the digital age.

We, therefore, call on EU policymakers to continue addressing these challenges in cooperation with social partners by developing a reliable knowledge and understanding of skills' needs and mismatches in the most affected economic sectors and by promoting inclusive, tailor-made, lifelong learning opportunities for all. New initiatives should take the form of structured dialogue with the EU and national social partners, to bring about evidence-based practicable solutions also taking into account the interests of service users into account.

CEEP

Valeria Ronzitti
General Secretary



CEMR

Frédéric Vallier
General Secretary



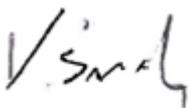
CER

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PSEF THE PUBLIC SERVICES' EMPLOYERS' FORUM

The Public Services Employers' Forum (PSEF) gathers associations representing providers and employers of public services and services of general (economic) interest - SG(E)I.

Public services and SG(E)Is are a cornerstone of the EU Social Model and of democratic societies; they have a central role to play in ensuring the citizens' quality of life, contributing to informed citizenship, supporting the development of European businesses and to boosting the growth and competitiveness of the EU.

The quality and access to essential services such as education, energy, healthcare, public service media, public transport and services provided by local and regional governments is instrumental to the realisation of our common objectives, and we, PSEF members, are committed to doing our part in balancing the economic and social dimensions of the EU.

THE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES' EMPLOYERS' FORUM

CEEP



CEEP, the European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services, is one of the three general cross-sectoral European Social Partners. It gathers public and private providers of services of general interest from across Europe, active in a broad range of sectors. CEEP members contribute to more than 26% of EU GDP and employ 30% of the EU workforce.

Website: www.ceep.eu

Twitter: @ceep_eu

HOSPEEM



The European Hospital and Healthcare Employers' Association (HOSPEEM) represents at the European level national employers' organisations operating in the hospital and healthcare sector. Since July 2006 HOSPEEM has been recognised by the European Commission as the European Social Partner in the Hospital Sector Social Dialogue.

Website: www.hospeem.eu

Twitter: @Hospeem

EBU



EBU is the world's leading alliance of public service media. With 116 member organisations in 56 countries and an 34 Associates round the world, EBU members operate over 2,000 television, radio and online channels and services, offering a wealth of content across other platforms. Together they reach an audience of more than one billion people around the world, broadcasting in more than 160 languages.

Website: www.ebu.ch

Twitter: @EBU_HQ

EFEE



EFEE is a dynamic organisation established to represent the interests of employers in the diverse European education sector. We represent all levels of education, from pre-school to higher education and research. This includes different national organisations, such as education councils and ministries of education, associations of school leaders, VET colleges and universities, and local and regional authority employers' organisations.

Website: www.educationemployers.eu

Twitter: @EFEE_EU

CER



The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together railway undertakings, their national associations as well as infrastructure managers and vehicle leasing companies. The membership includes long-established bodies, new entrants, private and public enterprises, representing 71% of rail network length, 76% of rail freight business and about 92% of rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries.

Website: www.cer.be

Twitter: @CER_railways

CEMR



The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is the broadest organisation of local and regional governments in Europe. Its members are over 60 national associations of municipalities and regions from 41 European countries. Together these associations represent some 100 000 local and regional governments. Since 2004, CEMR represents local and regional governments as employers in the European sectorial social dialogue committee.

Website: www.ccre.org

Twitter: @CCRECEMR

UITP



As a passionate champion of sustainable urban mobility, UITP is internationally recognised for its work to advance the development of this critical policy agenda. UITP has a long history to its name, and is the only worldwide network to bring together all public transport stakeholders and all sustainable transport modes.

Website: www.uitp.org

Twitter: @UITPnews

