



Media release

► Date: 28/07/2019

Another step towards the establishment of social dialogue for social services in Europe

On 27th June, the Social Employers and EPSU held a Thematic Seminar at the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Brussels, discussing “*European Social Dialogue for the Social Services Sector – state of play and ways forward*”. The full-day event with 75 participants was the final conference of the **PESSIS+ project**, that aims to develop European sectoral social dialogue for the social services sector.

PESSIS+ helped to further understand how social dialogue is organised across Europe and to explore needs and challenges of employers and workforce in social services, one of the most vibrant and growing sectors in the EU. This was achieved through extensive research and stakeholder meetings, both at national and EU level.

The final conference revealed the **latest research findings** on the state of play and impact of social dialogue in 25 European countries. During the conference, Sylvain Renouvel, Director of the Social Employers presented also the newly established **Social Employers Observatory**: “*the social services sector employed 10,9 million workers in the EU in 2018, an important and fast-growing workforce. The Social Employers Observatory will help employers and policy makers to better understand the sector, its workforce and common needs and challenges. It will therefore counter-balance the lack of data and will help recognising the importance of our services across Europe.*”

The afternoon focused on the previous **European Thematic meetings** held by the Social Employers and EPSU. In their joint work, both organisations have targeted the topics Digitalisation and Recruitment & Retention in social services. On **Digitalisation**, a **joint position paper** has been agreed between the two organisations, that was presented at the conference. A second joint position paper, focusing on Recruitment & Retention, is currently being developed in close cooperation.

The day was concluded by the signing of a **joint letter between the Social Employers and EPSU**, addressed to **Marianne Thyssen**, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility. The letter reaffirms the willingness of both organisations to **further engage and promote an effective EU-level social dialogue** for the social services sector, asking the European Commission to support a move in the next months into a test phase for such a dialogue.

Closing the conference, Gregor Tomschizek, President of the Social Employers, stated

“This joint letter is a great step into the direction of EU social dialogue for the social services sector and hence towards a strong European voice for social services employers. I am very pleased with the positive and fruitful cooperation with EPSU achieved within the PESSIS+ project and I look forward to our future cooperation, through EU sectoral social dialogue structures!”

Penny Clarke, Deputy Secretary General of EPSU, underpinned the positive closing remarks, saying

“EPSU is committed to ensure dignity for all social services workers in Europe: I am happy that the Social Employers shares with us the aim to improve quality and sustainability for a sector that employs more than 10 million workers in the EU. Today we were able to progress in our common work and move to the next level of our cooperation, in the interest of thousands of workers and cooperatives in Europe”

Supporting Documents

- More about the [PESSIS+ project](#)
- [Social Employers and EPSU Joint Position Paper on Digitalisation](#)
- [Conference Agenda](#)
- Presentations
 - o [European report on social dialogue in the social services sector](#), presented by Jane Lethbridge
 - o [Report on social dialogue in social services in Denmark](#), presented by Anders Randrup
 - o [Report on social dialogue in social services in Latvia](#), presented by Daina Podzina
 - o [Report on social dialogue in social services in Luxembourg](#), presented by Dr. Vassil Kirov
 - o [Report on the characteristics of the social services workforce](#), presented by Frederic Turlan
 - o [Joint EPSU – Social Employers Position Paper on Digitalisation in the Social Services Sector](#), presented by Luca Scarpiello