Dear Colleagues,

As extensively reported, EPSU continues to be involved in the so-called PESSIS 2 project. This project is to further explore the possibilities for establishing a social dialogue in the social services sector, for instance in such areas as elderly, child or disability care. Relevant employers in the not-for-profit sector are for example, the Diaconia, Caritas, the Red Cross and also various organisations created by the workers’ movement, social cooperatives, and organisations to care for persons with physical or mental disabilities. To this add members of CEMR that are organising in social services to represent employers in personal social services in the public/municipal sector.

The objective of the PESSIS 2 is to establish whether a sufficiently representative employers’ platform can be established over the next coming years. Such an employers’ platform would in an ideal scenario comprise employers from the public sector and from the not-for-profit/social economy sector.

The PESSIS 1 project (2012) identified a number of common challenges facing the social services sector across Europe, such as recruitment and retention of staff, cross-border migration of care workers, professional qualifications / skills / competences. It also looked into structures of social dialogue and collective bargaining, the relevant actors as well as into achievements and structural or political problems of sectoral social dialogue in about 10 EU Member States.

1 PESSIS is the acronym for “promoting employers’ social services organisations in social dialogue”. Detailed information on PESSIS 2 can be found at http://www.epsu.org/r/684
2 For more information on PESSIS 1 please look at http://www.epsu.org/r/628.
The meeting of the Working Group “Social Services” EPSU organised on 13 March 2013 (http://www.epsu.org/a/9089) brought together more than 50 colleagues from about 16 countries and coming from the two sectors HSS and LRG to discuss and evaluate the results of the project as well as to jointly consider possible next steps.

The PESSIS 2 project (that started in January 2014) covers 3 types of activities:

- A mapping exercise for 6 EU Member States (BG, CZ, IT, LT, PL, ES) to get an overview of relevant employer organisations in these countries,
- Meetings to support capacity building for employers in 5 EU Member States (A, B, D, F and NL). This will be a crucial activity since it has the purpose to set up a national coordination and cooperation system amongst relevant employers’ organisations,
- Meetings with different EU-level social partners and other stakeholder to consider different possible institutional arrangements with the aim of covering the social services sector by a European sectorial social dialogue.

As this is an important sector of employment, with further job growth to be expected in the next decade, but also a sector undergoing structural changes with risks for the quality of work and with a considerable share of mostly female workers and precarious employment conditions, a well functioning social dialogue would be of essence for a large number of EPSU affiliates. Our intention is to inform those affiliates particularly concerned on a regular basis and to also foresee an informal contact meeting on 22 September 2014 (t.b.c.). Such a preparatory meeting will allow us to consider how to continue our coordination and the next steps to be taken with the employers.

We will get in touch with the unions particularly concerned but indications of interest (to Emmanuelle Charles (echarles@epsu.org)) would be welcome in advance of such a meeting. The results of the meeting and the project as such will be reported to relevant EPSU bodies.

Yours sincerely,

Jan Willem Goudriaan
EPSU Deputy General Secretary