



## Final HOSPEEM-EPSU Conference on sharp injuries

***Barcelona, 20 June 2013: Discussion by the representatives of the hospital sector across Europe on the implementation of the Directive on the prevention from sharp injuries.***

The joint **HOSPEEM-EPSU project “Promotion and support of the implementation of Directive 2010/32/EU on the prevention of sharps injuries in the hospital and health care sector”** has come to an end after a successful final conference in Barcelona.

The final conference saw the participation of around 100 stakeholders from the 27 EU countries and high level speakers, including the European Commission. This was the occasion for HOSPEEM and EPSU to take stock of the outcomes of the regional seminars held in Dublin (31 January), Rome (7 March) and Vienna (16 April) under the project and to discuss the future steps of social partners to make the provisions of the Directive reality at the workplaces in the health care sector and thereby significantly improve the safety and security of health care staff and the patients.

Speaking at the conference, Carola Fischbach-Pyttel, General Secretary of EPSU emphasised that the Sharps Directive clearly shows how the EU Social Dialogue can deliver results which have significant impact not only at European, but also at national level. Social dialogue is an essential instrument of democracy and legitimacy for the EU social partners should not allow the current economic crisis and austerity measures to jeopardise it. Speaking about the HOSPEEM-EPSU Directive, Ms Fischbach-Pyttel highlighted that investment in healthcare is well-spent money. The quality of services and the security and safety of health care workers and patients are paramount not only for the sustainability of the EU healthcare systems but also for the competitiveness of all the European countries and their economies.

Tjitte Alkema, Secretary General of HOSPEEM, highlighted the benefits of working in partnership which lead to negotiate on a very complex subject in a short period, in spite of strong oppositions. This was only possible because of the understanding between the two Social Partners HOSPEEM and EPSU. Mr Alkema stressed that even though the deadline for transposition of the Directive into national legislation has passed, the actual work of social partners for the implementation at the workplace has just begun. A strong commitment from both sides will be essential to achieve the objectives set out in the Directive. In times when the Social Dialogue is challenged both at European and national level, HOSPEEM and EPSU need to show that social partners together can deliver in a time and cost efficient way.

The European Commission represented by François Ziegler and Francisco Jesús Alvarez Hidalgo highlighted that due to the different strains facing the EU Social Dialogue, social partners cannot afford to fail and need to show that they can deliver and implement viable solutions in an effective way. The ownership of the Directive is shared between the sectoral social partners and the European Commission and the EC will do everything possible to support their work and to monitor the effective implementation of the provisions of the directive.

The findings gathered during the conference, together with the results on the implementation progress in the EU Members states, will feed into the final report from the project that will be presented to the European Commission and disseminated soon.

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**HOSPEEM** is the **European hospital and healthcare employers' association**. The association represents at European level national employers' associations operating in the hospital and healthcare sector, in order to coordinate their views and actions with regard to a sector and a market in constant evolution.

HOSPEEM was formed in 2005 in order to represent the interests of European Hospital and Healthcare Employers on workforce and industrial relations issues. HOSPEEM has members across the European Union both in the state or regionally controlled hospital sector and in the private health sector. HOSPEEM members are health employers' organisations with the powers to negotiate on pay and on terms and conditions of service with their respective Trade Union partners.

**EPSU** is the **European Federation of Public Service Unions**. It is the largest federation of the ETUC and comprises 8 million public service workers from over 250 trade unions; EPSU organises workers in the energy, water and waste sectors, health and social services and local and national administration, in all European countries including in the EU's Eastern Neighborhood. EPSU is the recognised regional organisation of Public Services International (PSI). EPSU represents 3.5 million health and social services workers across Europe, and is engaged in a wide range of issues on their behalf. The categories of workers range from social worker to doctor to hospital cleaner to medical secretary to nurse.