

The Commission welcomes the launch of the new hospitals' sectoral social dialogue committee

Brussels 20-09-2006. Workers' and employers' representatives from the hospital sector - the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) and the European Hospital Employers' Association (HOSPEEM) - have launched the 33rd sectoral social dialogue committee with the backing of the European Commission. A growing number of sectors are involved in this partnership approach, contributing to better governance at European level

Over the past five years, EPSU and HOSPEEM have been working - with the support of the European Commission - to formalise this sectoral social dialogue at European level. The new committee will monitor the social, economic and employment consequences of EU policies in the Health sector. It will also examine how demographic, technological and structural changes within hospitals in Europe affect employment. Concretely, it will enable the social partners to have a direct formal input to EU policies affecting the hospital sector, allowing them to contribute to consultations launched by the Commission on social policy. This could lead to European agreements, bringing real benefits to the 3,000,000 workers they represent.

The social partners are committed to promoting quality hospital services based on values of social responsibility and realistic active ageing measures. At the inaugural meeting, they will adopt the rules of procedure of their committee and their first work programme for 2006-2007 which will cover the areas of recruitment and retention of personnel in the hospital sector, the age profile of the hospital workforce and the new skill requirements for the workforce in the sector.