



EPSU-HOSPEEM guidelines and examples of good practice to address the challenges of an ageing workforce in the healthcare sector (4 December 2013)

Brussels, 11 December 2013: Signature of the EPSU-HOSPEEM guidelines and examples of good practice to address the challenges of an ageing workforce in the healthcare sector.

In the context of the Plenary Meeting 2013 of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for the Hospital Sector, the Secretary General of HOSPEEM, Tjitte Alkema, and the Chair of EPSU's Standing Committee "Health and Social Services", Liza di Paolo Sandberg, signed the joint guidelines and examples of good practice to address the challenges of an ageing workforce in the healthcare sector. The document had been agreed upon in October 2013, following nearly two years of negotiations.

In many EU Member States the health and social care workforce already has a high proportion of older workers. With age can come maturity and experience; EPSU and HOSPEEM in this regard, however, also have identified a number of challenges that might be taken into consideration when dealing with the management of an ageing workforce.

The aim of the document is to provide guidance to support social partners as well as decision makers, managers, workers and other stakeholders at national, regional and local level, addressing different aspects related to age management policies such as flexible working arrangements, talent management and training, health and safety at work, workforce planning and retirement planning. It is for the social partners at all levels to work in partnership and to consider how this guidance can complement their own systems, initiatives and measures.

Carola Fischbach-Pyttel, General Secretary of EPSU, underlined that "work on recruitment and retention of an older workforce for EPSU also involves implementing measures across the entire working life-cycle and should have a strong focus on measures to adapt the work organisation to changing capacities of individual health workers and to improve the health, safety and well-being of all personnel at the workplace. Other key elements for us are the re-organisation of work processes and workplaces to the needs of an ageing workforce and access to continued professional development across the whole career to accompany an effective age management. I welcome that EPSU and HOSPEEM share the opinion that a systematic approach is needed across all age groups to show that health professions are attractive, with good working conditions and interesting career paths. These are major pre-conditions to help improving the recruitment of healthcare workers."

Tjitte Alkema, Secretary General of HOSPEEM, stressed that for HOSPEEM "social partners in the healthcare sector have the role and capacity to implement sustainable solutions to the various challenges of an ageing workforce. There is also a clear business case which shows that a workforce with older workers can improve both efficiency and patient care. Retaining older workers in key occupations and assisting them in their retirement planning will help reducing premature turnover and phasing replacement costs. We also need to look at talent management systems such as mentoring or training to guarantee transfer of knowledge. For hospital employers, actively focusing on workers as they age is an investment into the sustainable, healthy, well-trained and experienced health workforce that the European healthcare sector needs, as this will help hospital management to prevent potential important workforce shortfalls and skills gap."

HOSPEEM and EPSU would welcome if the joint guidelines dealing with a major challenge for health workforce policies and management at different levels could be a source of inspiration in the context

of other EU-level initiatives, such as the Action Plan on an EU Health Workforce – in particular in the context of a Study on Effective Recruitment and Retention Practices launched in January 2014 – and the Joint Action on Health Workforce Planning.

HOSPEEM and EPSU will undertake regular reviews of progress made by their members and consider whether the document needs to be updated two years after adoption. In 2017 a report will be issued on the overall implementation of the guidelines.

The document can be accessed @ <http://www.epsu.org/a/9116> (in EN, FR, DE). Thematically related studies, reports, presentations, etc. have been uploaded to page <http://www.epsu.org/a/10035>.

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HOSPEEM (<http://hospeem.org/>) 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 co-ordinate 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. HOSPEEM is also a member of the European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public services (CEEP).

EPSU (<http://www.epsu.org>) is the **European Federation of Public Service Unions**. It is the second largest federation of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and comprises about 8 million public service workers from over 260 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 Neighbourhood. EPSU is involved in five sectoral social dialogue committees, including for the hospital sector (<http://www.epsu.org/r/20>). EPSU is the recognised regional organisation of Public Services International (PSI). EPSU represents 3.5 million health and social services workers across Europe (ranging from social worker to doctor to hospital cleaner to medical secretary to nurse), and is engaged in a wide range of issues on their behalf. EPSU is involved in legislative initiatives at EU-level, monitors and aims at influencing EU policies and runs projects in health and social care.

HOSPEEM and EPSU are the EU-level sectoral social partners in the hospital and healthcare sector, established in 2006 (<http://hospeem.org/category/socialdialogue/>). Their activities and joint projects are set out in Joint Work Programmes, stretching upon periods of two to three years, the current covering the years 2011-2013.