

PESSIS2 Action 3
Outcome of Discussions of 4 Options at European Level

31 March 2014 and 5 May 2014

Action 3 of the PESSIS2 project focuses on organising a European discussion on the way towards European Sectoral Social Dialogue in the social services sector. It does so through the organisation of meetings discussing each of the four options as proposed in the project's workplan; these being:

- Joining the Sectoral Committee for Local and Regional Governments;
- Joining the Sectoral Committee for the Hospital and Healthcare sector;
- Creating an inter-sectoral Committee for the non-for-profit sector, including the social, health, cultural and education sectors;
- Creating a Sectoral Committee for the Social Services Sector.

The meetings were attended by CEMR, HOSPEEM, CEEP, all three EU-level employers' organisations, EPSU (EU-level trade union federation) and members of Social Services Europe.

For the members of Social Services Europe, the outcome of the Action 3 meetings is clear. The fourth option to create a Sectoral Committee for the Social Services Sector stands out as the best option in terms of interest, feasibility, identity of the sector and political willingness. In particular, from the discussions, the twin track approach appears to receive the most support; that is, both joining CEEP to be represented at cross-sectoral level and creating a social services sectoral Committee.

This approach would allow the sector to get access to cross-sectoral social dialogue through a well-established organisation, guaranteeing a certain level of impact on their work. The twin-track approach will also allow us to create a sectoral committee with a specific interest on discussing very sector-specific problems Employers and Employees in social service provision encounter.

It is important to note that this positioning remains a theoretical and preferred option, rather than a conclusive decision. It also does not represent the views of all members of Social Services Europe.

In addition, several issues will need to be solved/addressed in order to move forward towards joining European Social Dialogue. These include:

- Scope: (If need be) Necessity to define specific ~~niches~~ sub-sectors (e.g. elderly care; care for persons with disability; child care; etc.) in social services to avoid problems
- Topics: Important to know what the (national and European) social partners in the sector expects from European social dialogue
- Structure: How should a social services employers' representative platform be structured? [MM: What is meant by "track"?)
- Representativity: Do we have sufficient coverage at national level?
- Role of Social Services Europe: Do we create a new body or a sub-sector of SSE?
- Clash of Image at European level: Civil Dialogue different to Social Dialogue
- How do we make sure our sector's values continue to be represented in this sectoral committee?

Below you may find a summary of the discussions we had at European level, including the pros and cons of each option.

- **Joining the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Local and Regional Governments**
 - o Created in 2004
 - o CEMR and EPSU are the two partners
 - o Tackle topics such as public procurement, restructuring, recruitment and retention

Pros

- o Many topics covered by sector could also be extended to social services sector
- o Open to discussion, but CEMR and EPSU would need to have results of PESSIS2 to discuss with Committee
- o SSDC LRG plays important role of capacity building of social partners, especially in central and eastern Europe.

Cons

- o Agreements lack binding nature
- o Problems regarding common views on subjects such as public procurement
- o Political and financial dependence of not-for-profit social services sector on local and regional authorities, i.e. in a SSDC there would be two employers' organisations where the members of the one are dependent on the decisions of the members of the other.
- o Social Services Europe's "employer's organisation/branch" becoming part of the CEMR structure is difficult to imagine if not impossible for different reasons

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- **Joining the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for the Hospital and Healthcare sector**

- Created in 2006 after 6 years of negotiations
- HOSPEEM and EPSU are the two partners
- Tackles topics such as Occupational Health and Safety, and Recruitment and Retention, Professional Skills and Qualifications, Mobility of Workers, involvement in DG SANCO Health Workforce Initiatives
- 15 Full members in HOSPEEM, 14 active + 1 Observer (CEEP)

Pros

- Many topics covered by hospital/healthcare sector could also be extended to social services sector
- HOSPEEM is a member of and represented by CEEP in cross-sectoral dialogue
- Openness to discussion with our sector, but need to have informed discussion about who the social services represents, what they do, what are the sector's priorities and perspectives.

Cons

- About half of EU28 MS countries are not represented by HOSPEEM
- Some members of Social Services Europe have different interests to the work of hospital sector
- Some members of Social Services Europe wish to get away from medical identity of sector towards a more social one

- **Creating an inter-sectoral Committee for the non-for-profit sector, including the social, health, cultural and education sectors**

Pros

- Bring voice of non-for-profit sector in European cross-sectoral social dialogue, where sector is currently excluded. Strong dominance of for profit and public sectors.

Cons

- Scope being too large
- Too broadly defined workforce. As such, it would be difficult to work towards clear outcomes or agreements at EU-level given the heterogeneity of the workforce and the variety of different collective agreements the workforce covers in different EU MS
- Lack of common points of interest with other sectors
- Health and education sectors already represented in sectoral social dialogue

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- **Creating a Sectoral Committee for the Social Services Sector**

Pros

- Allow to bring social services sector into European Social Dialogue
- Social Services Sector brings together various sub-sectors who all encounter common problems such as attractiveness of sector for youth/young workers, recruitment and retention, health and safety, professional skills and qualifications, mobility of workers
- Increase influence of social services sector over European policy making
- Possibility of also joining CEEP, if deemed necessary

Cons

- Difficulties in defining scope of social services.

Draft by Thomas Bignal, PESSIS2 Project Coordinator and Policy & Communications Officer, EASPD on 13 May 2014. Validated by European Partners (EPSU) and but yet to be approved by Social Services Europe.