



## Joint declaration of the PSEF

### Three elements for reshaping the future

With this joint declaration, partners of the Public Service Employers' Forum would like to present three key messages that are essential for the future of Europe.

#### 1- Prioritise an EU budget for the medium and long-term

Partners of the PSEF have previously highlighted the vital impact that budgets for public services have on Europe's future infrastructure and investment. The direct and indirect contribution of public services to the recovery of the European economy underlines the necessity that the recovery of economic fundamentals are not made to the detriment of essential public investments.

In this respect, important steps were taken in the European Council meeting on 7-8 February with the agreement on a new Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF). This is not only an achievement in itself; it is also a cornerstone for the future.

However, whereas we welcome that an agreement was reached, some reservations should be expressed regarding specific components of the MFF, in particular the decrease in the Cohesion policy budget with a reduction of 8.5%, corresponding to €30bln over the next 7 years. We wish to highlight that each euro of the Structural Funds generates further investments and thus creates a leverage to stimulate growth and development.

Additionally, despite some increases for future programmes such as Horizon 2020, the European Social Fund and the Connecting Europe Facility, we regret that the European Council did not make stronger financial commitments to underpin these medium- and long-term tools for growth.

On the issue of the EU budget, partners demand:

- i. A higher flexibility for the management of the budget. Only 13% of the budget is dedicated to research, innovation, infrastructure and competitiveness. More flexibility should be introduced in the budget to facilitate the transfer between budget headings;
- ii. Adequate funding for the EU 2020 strategy in the next MFF. In this respect, the maintenance of future-oriented policies (such as sustainable growth, infrastructure, competitiveness, research and development spending) is key.





## 2- Secure the provision of public services

Partners of the PSEF consider it essential to continue promoting policies that ensure the effectiveness of public services over the medium and long-term, and therefore demand:

- i. Public service obligations to be respected and duly compensated by authorities all over Europe;
- ii. The swift and correct implementation of the Project Bond Initiative;
- iii. Better support for long-term investment at European level, including the creation of incentives for better risk/return management over long time periods. It is important to continue to invest in public services infrastructure, but also in human capital. This is becoming more pertinent in times of crisis and fiscal consolidation measures being implemented in many Member States.

## 3- Support employment in public services and in particular youth employability

Today's youth unemployment is a major issue for tomorrow's Europe. All efforts should be harnessed to turn the current situation around. Public service employers are and will be important drivers for increasing youth employment.

We believe the upcoming Framework of Actions on youth employment currently being negotiated by cross-industry Social Partners is an important starting point that will be built upon in Member States.

The issue of skills mismatch and of upcoming elder staff shortage are elements of the youth employment problem: Partners of the Public Services Employers' Forum believe that demographic change will pose significant challenges in human resources in the short and medium-term. Indeed, public services are faced with a comparatively older workforce which will require a concerted effort in the years to come, particularly as the share of the workforce going into retirement will reach up to 30% in some sectors.

Therefore, the PSEF demands that:

- i. The issue of youth unemployment should be addressed at all levels with the strong involvement of Social Partners at all levels;
- ii. Closer cooperation between education and training providers and enterprises is needed to





ensure a smooth transition from education to work and reduce skills and competences mismatches.

- iii. The Council recommendations on a 'Youth Guarantee', adopted on 28<sup>th</sup> February, shall be soon implemented by providing concrete support to young people to find a job or an apprenticeship also in the area of public services.

Partners of the forum would like to underline the importance of sound framework conditions to promote the attractiveness of jobs in public services, including through cooperation between social partners and public authorities, at the national, regional and local level, particularly as several specific positions face difficulties in recruitment both of young and experienced workers.

Finally, the PSEF underlines the importance of involving the various actors concerned – in particular the Social Partners and all levels of Government (local, regional, national) – to achieve a successful reshaping of the future of Europe.





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The Public Services Employers' Forum is an informal forum of European employers' organisations cooperating on matters of joint interest. Signatories of this joint statement are: CEEP, CER, CEMR, EFEE, EURELECTRIC, HOSPEEM and UITP.

