

*People and planet  
before profit*



# PUBLIC SERVICES AGENDA





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## **Public Services Agenda**

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# PUBLIC SERVICES AGENDA

**This manifesto is the political programme of Europe's public service unions.**

**Because people need quality public services.**

They are the foundation of our societies, serving every human from the moment we are born to the moment we leave. They ensure equal treatment, prevent discrimination, make it possible to enjoy our human rights and address inequalities in wealth, power and knowledge. **They leave no one behind** – from the vulnerable, the sick, the poor and the dying, to all of us in good times and bad. And its Europe's tens of millions of workers in health, public administrations and agencies, education, care, municipalities and regions, in utilities old and new who deliver them.

The European Pillar of Social Rights sets out the EU's priorities to strengthen social protection and inclusion. In Chapter III it highlights the right to access high-quality, affordable public services and the workers who deliver them. **The European Commission must adopt a concrete action plan to deliver on this.**

The past five years have shown how deeply Europe depends on public services - whether facing pandemics, climate disasters, or cyber threats. These challenges will only grow. Resilience, competitiveness, and sustainability are not possible without strong public services because they are the infrastructure that allow businesses to run, people to access their rights and society to evolve. If preparedness is a European priority, public services must be its foundation.

**Europe needs quality public services. It needs a Public Services Agenda to ensure the EU is close to the needs and wishes of Europe's people.**

**All European plans, strategies and polices must:**

- Recognise the key role of public administrations and regulatory bodies, including in their implementation.
- Ensure that public services are in place to accompany and sustain policy objectives.
- Guarantee adequate public investment and funding, instead of leaving key areas to market forces or private actors.
- Consider the role of public (European) companies in delivering on shared priorities.
- Be accompanied by social, environmental and tax conditionalities.
- Be benchmarked against the Protocol on Services of General Interest.



## **INVESTMENT, NOT AUSTERITY**

Quality public services can only be secured with adequate investment and funding. Europe must:

- Immediately stop austerity policies and deregulation policies. Suspend the Stability and Growth Pact.
- Develop a concrete plan to fund the EU's annual investment gap of €210 billion in social investment, as well as specific funding gaps in sectors such as health and care.
- Increase funding for staff to address current needs and to prepare staff for future crises.
- Ensure EU and national investment instruments (such as the European Investment Bank) prioritise public services and prevent the use of these instruments for defence purposes.



## **NO FURTHER PRIVATISATION OR COMMERCIALISATION**

Public services work best when they are not commercialised, not run for profit, and remain publicly owned and managed. Private delivery of public services undermines service access and quality, and worsens employment, pay and conditions. Europe must:

- Ensure legal exemptions for public services from privatisation and single market/trade laws.
- Bring key public services back - support remunicipalisation and strengthen public control and regulations over the private sector.
- Develop public digital infrastructures, such as public clouds.

## **QUALITY JOBS, QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES**

It's workers who make public services possible, every day and for all people. There can be no competitive, sustainable European economy without public services and the workers who make it possible. Quality jobs and fair working conditions are essential for strong public services. Europe must:

- Ensure fair wages and working conditions.
- Promote collective bargaining and social dialogue.
- Implement the EU Minimum Wage Directive for all workers.
- Develop plans to improve collective bargaining coverage, including for public service workers and a vigilant attitude of the EU institutions to make this happen
- End exemptions to EU legislation for public service workers.
- Ensure safe staffing levels.
- Address psychosocial risks through legislation.
- End outsourcing and subcontracting in public services.
- Ensure trade union rights for all public service workers, including the right to strike in line with ILO conventions and the European Convention on Human Rights.
- Deliver equal pay for work of equal value.



## **PUBLIC SERVICES FOR A GREEN, DIGITAL AND SOCIALLY JUST TRANSITION**

Europe's green and digital transitions must be fair. Public service workers are central to these changes – but they need tools, funding, and protections. Europe must:

- Invest in publicly owned and sustainable energy systems.
- Prioritise publicly owned digital infrastructures as part of digital and AI strategies.
- Protect workers in transitioning industries.
- Ensure EU policies align with Beyond Growth principles, focusing on well-being over profit.
- Prevent AI-driven job cuts in public services, make thorough impact assessments of Commission policies.
- Guarantee algorithmic transparency in AI-driven public services.
- Regulate the use of AI at work in line with the EU Central Government Social Partner agreement on digitalisation.



## **TAX JUSTICE: FUND PUBLIC SERVICES, FIGHT INEQUALITY**

To fund public services, tackle inequality, and deliver the green transition, Europe needs a fairer tax system. The richest individuals and corporations must pay their share. Europe must:

- Implement progressive taxation and anti-poverty strategies to ensure a fair redistribution of wealth.
- Introduce wealth and windfall taxes on corporate profits.
- Implement an EU minimum corporate tax rate and public country by country reporting.
- Implement strong penalties for tax evasion and ensure corporations violating tax laws are banned from public contracts and funding.



## **DEFEND DEMOCRACY, DEFEND PUBLIC SERVICES**

Public services are for all – transparent, accessible public services are a key pillar of democracy. They must be protected from corporate capture, far-right attacks and disinformation. Europe must:

- Resist attacks from the far-right, corporations and other entities who seek to dismantle public services.
- Strengthen public broadcasting as an essential pillar of independent and democratic information.
- Limit corporate lobbies serving to the few at the cost of public interest.
- End corporate capture of EU and governmental decision-making processes.
- Reinforce protections for whistleblowers and trade union members.



## **MAKE PUBLIC SERVICES PUBLIC AGAIN!**

This is a call to action.

There is no preparedness with undermined public services: broken hospitals, understaffed care homes, hollowed-out emergency services, neglected schools or delayed trains. From climate emergencies to the cost of living crisis, people need strong public services they can rely on — services that are properly funded, fully staffed, and protected from market-driven cuts.

This agenda is clear: invest in people, respect workers' rights, and rebuild public services as the backbone of a just, equal and resilient society.

No more excuses. It's time to deliver.

## About EPSU

EPSU represents more than 8 million workers from 270 unions across the EU and the wider Europe region, who are active in:

- Health and social services, including healthcare, childcare, elderly care and home care;
- Local and regional government, including firefighting, libraries, culture;
- National and European administration, including taxation, prisons, agencies such as labour inspectorates, environmental protection, food and patient safety;
- Utilities and environmental services, including water and sanitation, energy (renewables, nuclear, distribution and transmission), waste services (collection/sorting, recycling and repair).
- Public, non-profit/social economy and private sector workplaces, including multinationals;



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