

SUBMISSION FROM EUROPEAN CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (CESI)

We took note of the fact that the Scottish Parliament's economy committee has launched **a probe into the quality of jobs in the labour market since the recession**, with increasing evidence that the decline in public-sector jobs is being replaced by low pay and insecure work.

With this letter **we would like to commend your committee for organising the said inquiry and underline the importance of these approaches taking place at regional level**, and subsequently on state level. Similar in-depth reports ought to be taking place throughout other EU countries and regions - as this is becoming a common struggle in the public sector throughout the EU.

The **European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CESI)** is a European organisation, made up of trade union organisations from European Union Member States as well as accession states. With no political affiliations, CESI represents over 5 million affiliates, promoting better living and working conditions, as well as improving the European social dimension. **Since 2005, CESI has been a recognised European social partner and, in this capacity, is regularly consulted within the framework of and takes part in the social dialogue at European level.**

CESI is proud that many of its members are representative in the public sector. Public services are an integral part of society. Public services are there to protect citizens when they need help. Public services are the foundations for citizen well-being. Now more than ever, during this difficult economic climate, public services have been seen to do the job they were set out to do. Public services work. But we need public services workers to work effectively. **By keeping the public sector filled with high quality staff and by fighting against a public sector blame culture, CESI works for public services, in the public interest.**

Regional and local administrations are at the heart of European citizenship. Local and regional level administration is where most services of general interest are delivered. European Union (EU) action and legislation is brought directly to its citizens. The challenges facing local and regional administrations have become a continual hardship through rising budget cuts and austerity measures. The balance between assigned competences and the necessary funding to fulfill these competences has been lost. This has seen the pressure on the public service employees increase year on year.

On June 25-26, more than 150 participants from CESI's various member organisations gathered in Dublin for the 2015 edition of CESI's Europe Academy, this time themed **'Better anticipate changes and restructuring in public administrations in Europe: the role played by the information and consultation of workers'**. During the two-day symposium, expert speakers of various backgrounds discussed why and how restructuring processes in public administrations need to take better account of the employees' perspectives. The conference took place timely against the backdrop of current work both in the European Commission and CESI at EU social partner level to create an EU-wide right to information & consultation of central administration workers, especially in restructuring processes.

During the conference and throughout its various works, Eurofound (the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions), who supported the event, provided for research evidence on the extent to which public sector restructuring tends to increase the work intensity and the exposure to psychosocial risks among the sector's employees. Amongst those studies we would like to quote the following:

- Effects of restructuring at regional level and approaches to dealing with the consequences (cf. Annex 1)
- Impact of the crisis on working conditions in Europe (Annex 2)
- Impact of the crisis on industrial relations and working conditions in Europe (Annex 3)

According to the studies - and this is what CESI has repeatedly stated -, **especially during the time of crisis, people are in particular need of the services provided by the public sector.** Despite this increase in needs austerity-induced restructurings have hit the public sector even more severely than the private sector. **Staff has been laid off, pensions have been cut and salaries frozen. As a consequence, workloads have increased while working conditions have worsened, leaving many public administration workers with seriously increased stress- and psychosocial health-related problems.**

Adequate working conditions for public administration employees need to be ensured and that staff members must have the possibility to provide input in how their work is being organised. Otherwise, staff members will not be able to identify with their job, feel responsible and deliver quality services. Leaving their input away would also preclude valuable practical suggestions from employees relating to more favourable alternatives to restructuring or ways to limit negative impacts on working conditions. A successful realisation of full Information and Consultation rights for central administration workers needs to lead to a snowball effect to give this right to local and regional administration employees too.

Thus, once again repeating our support in said probe and thanking you very much in advance for the attention you may pay to our requests, I remain

Klaus Heeger – Secretary general

European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CESI)

[Annexe 1](#)

[Annexe 2](#)

[Annexe 3](#)