

Britta Lejon's Congress speech for resolution 9 NEA, 21 May p.m., item 12

I am pleased to move the resolution for national and EU administration "Reinforcing the general interest", replacing the chair Jean-Paul Devos, who sadly couldn't be with us today.

Our main challenge for the next 5 years is to reclaim a positive vision of a social, protective and regulatory state and EU administration for the people by the people that provide sufficient quality jobs and uphold trade union rights. We certainly oppose a big brother monolithic state. Equally we oppose a small government ideology based on low regulation, low tax, high tax dodging, wealth concentration and corruption that only serve the short-term interests of the very few.

Let me present key highlights of the closing Congress period and priorities for the next 5 years as outlined in the resolution.

First our sectoral committee contributed to EPSU's campaign against austerity through policy, statements, and research on the scale of the cuts and consequences for staff and quality of services, as in labour inspections or tax services.

We held our sectoral conference in Kiev last year with a focus on trade union rights. I thank Tetiana, the leader of a vibrant, growing union for hosting us. I hope the 25 May elections in Ukraine will bring peace and democracy for all.

A key achievement was the launch in 2010 of the European Social Dialogue Committee for central government. It is the result of a 10-year long battle by affiliates and good cooperation with CESI.

We will continue making the most of it to make central government a role model employer. Today 13 national administrations take part in the social dialogue. We commit to convincing all EU employers including my own to join in. The good results already achieved will help us reach this ambitious target.

We reached a joint position on wage transparency, an essential tool to expose and close the gender pay gap. Gender equality including equal pay will remain a priority.

We reached a Framework Agreement for quality administration that represents our roadmap. It puts on an equal footing public service principles of equality, impartiality, transparency, with sufficient resources, well-being at work and social dialogue.

We will promote and monitor a good application of the Agreement. A recent French law on civil service refers to the European agreement. This is very encouraging. This year we are looking at how the Agreement translates into public administrations for vulnerable people such as asylum seekers, youth unemployed and low income pensioners. This dovetails well with PCS resolution for a welfare state we discussed earlier today.

Imposed restructuring has become a regular feature of our sector. A key priority will be how to restore or strengthen trade union rights. Our objective is to convince the employers to agree EU minimum standards on information and consultation rights. There is no reason why public sector workers should have fewer or weaker rights than in the private sector, especially when job security is no longer a feature of our sector.

Colleagues, we will further deepen our subsectoral work through the existing EPSU networks of groups of state workers. It is essential to bring a concrete image of what central government is about.

In prison services where we will continue calling for safe and humane working and living conditions in prisons and alternatives to imprisonment. Europe's growing prison population, another offshoot of the crisis, and overcrowding remain a common concern. We will step up our critique against privatization of prisons, you can't make profits on the back of prisoners. I thank Greek, Norwegian and Romanian affiliates for hosting our annual conferences and arranging visits of local prisons that prove a very practical way of working.

Migration policy and migration services have been another key priority in cooperation with PSI, the Euromed region, France and Romania. Irena will come back to it tomorrow.

Thanks to Abvakabo and USF we started exposing labour abuses behind high walled embassy buildings and luxurious diplomats' mansions. Our motto here is that diplomatic immunity must stop at the workplace. A campaign will follow the preparatory legal work of the past years.

A network was also put in place for all public defence workers with priorities on trade union rights, public procurement and outsourcing.

Last but not least, tax justice has been top of our agenda and will continue to be so. As Carola said in her report of activities, progressive tax regimes are vital to finance well-functioning states, uphold citizens' rights, and redistribute wealth and income.

We agreed an EPSU tax justice charter in 2010. It led to 2 campaigns that are not over yet.

First for a Robin hood tax or a financial transactions tax to curb financial speculation and raise much needed income. Thanks to a strong coalition of trade unions, progressive political parties and NGOs, we have now on the table a draft directive supported by 11 EU governments. This was a success. But earlier this month governments bent to the financial industry and agreed a weaker proposal. We will need your support for a broad FTT in Europe now, as an essential precedent for an international FTT.

Second, the campaign "Europe's missing € 1 trillion: we want it back" to denounce the scale of tax fraud and corporate aggressive tax planning. We held a European week of action and a successful rally in Brussels in cooperation with Belgian unions. We gained, as the largest European union for tax employees, a seat on an EC expert group for tax good governance that will meet until 2016. Thanks to alliances with progressive groups and PSI, the OECD and EU have put forward welcome measures.

But tax havens continue flourishing including in Europe. Instead of investing more in tax administrations, most EU governments reduce jobs, about 10% job losses on average over the past 4 years. We will continue highlighting what goes on concretely in tax administrations. If we don't, no one else will. A new report will be released in June.

Colleagues, all the amendments to the draft resolution for central government and EU administrations were accepted by the Executive Committee.

We will turn the resolution into a workplan later this year, in the same spirit, I am sure, of unity, strength and mutual trust.