

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**A STATE ADMINISTRATION  
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## Press release

### Digitalisation

Digitalisation is the present and the future of society, including as regards public services. It is only a question of time before the **digital transition will become complete reality. Public administration processes should benefit from an important ecological gain** by making it possible for people to contact the public administration from home and strongly reduce travel time and costs.

Digitalisation is an inherent part of change in all public service sectors:

- eHealth is meant to provide a solution to an increasing demand for the delivery of high quality, readily available services in spite of decreasing health budgets.
- In Customs, digitalisation primarily focuses on simplifying customs procedures and increasing monitoring (enforcement) opportunities. The EU has established the UCC (Union Customs Code) to achieve a paperless and fully automated customs union. The UCC's key objectives are simplicity, service and speed.
- Services provided by local governments are also transforming with the potential of creating better and more accessible services at lower operating costs for the benefit of citizens.
- The nature of postal services has changed over the last two decades. People communicate online and the letter volume is likely to decrease further on, while parcel delivery volumes keep on growing.
- Implementation of artificial intelligence will play an increasing role in combatting organized crime and terrorism – open communication and transparency on its use in public services will be of crucial importance

**Governments must create the environment for public services to fully adapt themselves to the new reality and resolutely choose the path towards digitalisation.**

The digital transformation of public services can only be a success if appropriate attention is paid to giving public service workers the opportunity to develop the necessary skills and to assuring their well-being at work. **Developing the necessary skills is essential for achieving a successful digital transformation. Employing the right people with the right skills and training is essential for helping public services enter the digital age.**

Digitalisation leads to new forms of work based on more flexibility and less job security in public services. By means of consultation between the social partners, the negative effects of those new forms of work must be discussed and resolved.

The introduction of new technologies such as artificial intelligence in public services has a favourable impact on the functioning of public services. Questions need to be raised however about giving full power to the machine and relying only on technology. **Trade unions must consider it their task to ensure that the human aspect will never be forgotten with the introduction of new technologies in public services. A motivated workforce is a guarantee for the quality of public service** and the workforce will be motivated when governments create the appropriate environment for civil servants to perform their mission.

At their XVIth Congress, EUROFEDOP trade unions concluded that **digitalisation and innovation must contribute to better living conditions and more equal societies**. It should not be about how to manage disruption but how to create progress for all.

## ***Press release***

### **Violence at the workplace**

At their XVlth Congress, EUROFEDOP members raised the issue of **third-party violence against civil servants. The number of such violent incidents is unfortunately on the rise in recent years and needs to be fiercely combated.** The staff of health services, security services, judiciary and local and regional authorities are the most affected by verbal or physical aggression committed against them by patients, customers or citizens. This is an alarming development and places civil servants and their families at a risk.

In order to contribute to the prevention of third-party violence at work, risk assessment should for example include staffing plans, work practices, training and guidelines. **Regulations existing at EU level such as the European framework directive on health and safety at work need to be more strictly respected by the member states.** Third-party violence in public services needs to be more specifically addressed by member states at legislative level.

Apart from training civil servants on how to manage relations with difficult customers, trade unions highlighted that effective measures of prevention are required, as well as **citizen awareness campaigns and the legal prosecution of offences.** While many measures to tackle third-party violence at work are of preventive nature, it is also essential to develop measures on how to support the victims of violence and their families.

**Violence against civil servants can never be tolerated.** Any incidence of violence committed against civil servants must be reported. Engaging all parties, citizens, authorities and civil servants in **bringing about a necessary change of attitude** is the aim shared by all trade unions of Eurofedop. Tackling third-party violence at work is a multi-faceted issue and there is no single solution that can fit all cases.

## **Press release**

### **Ageing of their workforce**

At the XVIth EUROFEDOP Congress, trade unions discussed fundamental societal developments

such as aging and demographic change. These put the public service sectors in a particularly challenging situation. Employees are faced with a paradigm shift in national employment policies, away from early retirement towards promoting increased labour force participation of older workers. **But the policy solution to demographic change and ageing cannot be to simply raise the retirement age.** One of the main problems for example is that insufficient account is taken of the capacity of people to continue working until the legal retirement age. If necessary, specific measures must include changing the tasks of older workers in line with their changed capacities.

EUROFEDOP members concluded that occupational health, training measures and labour reorganization is essential in order to keep the older work force and attract young workers. Intergenerational learning is a very useful tool in this regard that is strongly supported by trade unions. **Both governments and employers must ensure more sophisticated and gradual measures that answer to the needs of workers.**

At their Congress, EUROFEDOP organisations called for governments to work out policies that make it possible for civil servants to **continue working in good health until their legal retirement age.** Profound measures are necessary to promote health, well-being and learning opportunities for older people at work.

Demographic change strongly increases the demand for health services and thus health workers, while it diminished the workforce available to fulfil the tasks demanded by society. **We must be prepared for the upcoming retirement wave of civil servants during the next 10-20 years. Government policies must focus on how to keep jobs in public services attractive to young people.**

## Press release

### The multi-faceted effects of the COVID pandemic on public services and working life

**At their XVIth Congress, EUROFEDOP members called for measures to strengthen the public service and for governments to listen to the suggestions of trade unions in an all-encompassing effort to reduce the socio-economic effects of the pandemic.**

EUROFEDOP members observed that the intensity and quality social dialogue and cooperation between employees and governments or employers during the Corona-crisis varied strongly across Europe. The crisis has aggravated and disclosed several serious shortcomings in the health systems of our countries. This is also true for many other areas of public life and public services, and the effects of the crisis made us reevaluate and question current and previous policies regarding public spending. Austerity policies following the previous financial crisis have particularly struck public services.

**EUROFEDOP members hence came to the joint conclusion that the role and value of public services must be discussed in a different light than before the crisis. In their Resolution, they state that the crisis should nevertheless not be regarded as a fatality but as an opportunity for re-evaluation and restoration.**

The Resolution adopted at the Congress also draws attention to telework, which will remain an important way of working after the crisis. Laying down clear rules and close coordination with trade unions are vital in this area.

The main **challenges and suggested solutions** following the Corona-crisis were summarised as following:

Challenges	Solutions
<b>Lack of a real public service strategy</b>	Development of a new strategy considering the reevaluated value of public services
<b>Scarce resources and lack of staff (particularly in the healthcare sector)</b>	Reevaluation of public spending policies
<b>Low crisis preparedness</b>	Development of crisis management policies in close cooperation between social partners and governments
<b>Unregulated overtime, childcare arrangements and health and safety hazards while teleworking</b>	Setting down clear rules in the framework of social dialogue