



PUBLIC SERVICES: FIGHTING FOR A SOCIAL EUROPE

Page 1 of 2

There is no doubt that the fight for a social Europe, a Europe of public services, social rights, equity, gender equality and all embracing welfare, has been and will continue to be, a key part of our identity.

It was assumed that a certain development in public service policy was already a virtually irreversible reality (even given the significant differences between states). But the harsh and structural crisis has highlighted the degree of precariousness and fragility of current welfare states due to the policies of the neoliberal elites. Social development achieved after many centuries of popular and working class struggle is now in decline. We are seeing a violent attack that intends to parasitize, privatize, commodify and ultimately erase the public and social systems, as well as basic services – or, in E.U. jargon: “services general interest”.

This is especially significant and dangerous for three of the pillars of public services: the management of common goods such as health, education and social services. And that means public health, education, and social services systems. We have also in mind public services as the management of common goods like water, energy, transport, communications, postal services, etc. They deserve specific consideration at the same time as they share many elements in common (economics, finance, working conditions, etc.) and/or specific elements such as sustainability, technologies, model of growth, national history.

Therefore, without giving up our proposals and in line with the objectives already expressed in the electoral platform of the ELP:

End of privatization and public services. – Education, child care, adolescent care, illness and old age, health, water supply, sewage disposal, energy supply, public transport, postal services, culture and sport are not commercial goods but public services and therefore a state responsibility. They must not be subject to competition for the lowest cost and highest profit. We want no more privatization of public services and goods but their conversion into public property. We are for strong public services, publicly controlled companies and more investment in education, nursing and health care, public transport, sport and culture.



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Page 2 of 2

The ELP will form a working group to discuss the subject of social and community services and the main public services from our perspective, and make an assessment and proposals in the field of health and health care, education, university, and social services.

Our analyses and proposals must comprise two parts:

- 1) An analysis of the current situation of national systems and/or public health, education and social services; the attacks that they face from corporate sectors with the complicity and/or tolerance from the Governments and institutions. In fact, it is the E.U., directly or via their agencies, that is leading the process. The tsunami of privatization involves the same protagonists in all countries and in all areas.
- 2) To study the specific questions of each sector in each State and in every specific situation. For instance, the working conditions of the different professions and employees, the quality of services if they are universal, its accessibility, its extent, and, if they are public, fair and based on solidarity. Finally, the laws and European regulations affecting the model and its future, like the “Bologna Plan”, the cross-border health issue, or the pharmaceutical regulatory register.

With this method we confederate the work of our respective groups and, in the meantime, we unify our call for public services of the highest quality and equity, understood as essential RIGHTS –not a simple commodity or market good- in a Europe that must be social.