

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY REPORT

2006 – 2010

INTRODUCTION

The international political scenario in which the 9th Congress of CGIL Public Service Union Federation takes place shows considerable changes compared to the Congress of 2006.

In the past four-year period, two major events occurred in 2008. Owing to this reason, 2008 is the year that reshapes global balances as well as the new world framework, demanding the Union an extraordinary capacity to change.

On 4th November 2008, the election of Barack Obama as US President marks the end of the catastrophic Bush era, and represents the promise of a deep change in the US policy that, one year after his installation – although with several domestic and international difficulties – continues to represent an unavoidable point of reference for a different world order.

The election of an African-American as US President not only marked the end of the racial taboo in the American society, but it also offered the entire world the winning example according to which change is favoured by a non-discriminatory society.

The objectives of the US Presidency in the field of economic, social and welfare policies mark a sharp break with the history of the American liberalism and, more importantly, with the market culture that invaded western countries. The massive investment of public financing in strategic sectors of the industry and of the economy, the recently approved reform of the healthcare system (although far from the initial proposal), the reform of education, the reform against discriminatory dismissals and the reform looming on the horizon of a new regulation of the US banking and financial system, represent the paradigm of a radical change of perspective that, in the country of capitalism, tries to give the public a driving role for the development of the economy and of the society.

This strategy bucks the trend also compared to the policies that continue to prevail in the European Union, both at the community level and within the single Member States, where market liberalist policies still seem to

impose the rules in relation to the consolidation of the so-called "European social model", presently challenged more than ever.

Furthermore, the international objectives of the Obama Administration relating to climate change and environmental policies, reduction of nuclear armaments, achievement of a multilateral foreign policy, the repeated attempts of dialogue with the Islamic world and the renewed approach to the Israel-Palestine conflict, the consolidation of an "enlarged" government of global policies – going beyond the G8 and aiming at strengthening the G20 – and the idea of a different participation of the US in international institutions, mainly the UN and NATO, can represent the basis for a new system of international relations for a more stable, safer and fairer world, for whose implementation a strong political role of the European Union would be needed; the EU, however, appears increasingly weaker.

The second extraordinary event of 2008 was the outbreak of the financial downturn that forced great world economies on their knees, and whose persisting effects are presently substantiated by the data on the increase of unemployment, the impoverishment of millions of workers and pensioners, the growth in the number of first-time jobseekers, the job insecurity of wider and wider areas of the world of youth, and the increase of migration phenomena: all factors that make inequalities even more unbearable.

Over one year after the beginning of the crisis, and exactly one year after the London G20 meeting – which had to set the remedies against the risks of speculative finance – everything seems to be back as it was in the past.

The US proposal to redefine the role of international financial institutions – IMF and WB, to agree upon more binding rules for financial markets, to identify state policies able to reconcile the support to the banks and enterprises teetering on the edge of bankruptcy with social measures aimed at supporting the standard of living and the wellbeing of citizens, ended in a stalemate. Once again, a great deal of responsibility can be put on European Countries, which did not succeed in coping with the situation, being even unable to identify agreed and shared solutions in the EU internal market that, also for this reason, increasingly appears as the stage of the anti-social policies of Europe.

The European Union has missed the chance of the economic crisis to relaunch its political role, giving up the opportunity of reviewing the parameters of the Stability Pact, of implementing policies supporting employment and development, and of endowing itself with EU financial organisations able to support the economies at risk of bankruptcy.

The lack of decisions towards this direction witnesses the further weakening of the European political perspective – which is also

worsened by the increase of anti-European right-wing parties at the elections to the European Parliament of June 2009.

Furthermore, at a world level the increase in the political and economic role of countries as India, Brazil, and most of all China, does not seem to strengthen the will to keep a fundamental role of Europe within the international scenario.

The crisis of Greece clearly shows the inadequacy of the European Union, which put the future of Greece in the hands of banks and of the IMF, without however reducing the risk of its exposure to financial speculations, and represents a danger for the stability of the Euro, whose overestimation remains an anomaly that cannot be too long sustained by currency markets.

In fact, if the situation of Spain, Portugal, Italy and Ireland became exacerbated, the repercussions on the monetary and economic stability of the European Union would be irreparable, and the social damage would be severe, as already shown by the measures adopted or that are being adopted in all those Countries that target to a cut of public spending through the reduction of welfare, starting from pensions, employment and salaries in public sectors, as well as the downsizing of trade-unions' bargaining and representation role.

For this reason, the years ahead risk to further deteriorate the European project. Against this background, the commitment of Unions - of European trade-unions in particular - shall pursue a deep change as well as a momentum strengthening its negotiation role and its capacity to influence the social choices of Europe, starting from an effective coordination of economic and tax policies at least within the Euro-zone, with the necessary authoritativeness - until now not expressed - to mediate and overcome also the rigidity of national unions.

In this framework, the Public Service Union managed the international activity of this sector by giving continuity to its presence in the EPSU¹, also strengthening the participation in sector committees and thematic working groups that allowed the direct involvement of our comrades in international activities, promoting an active role of the Mediterranean Group, working to define a more advanced framework of initiatives also within the PSI², and developing bilateral relations with the major European trade-unions as UNISON and VER.DI on the protection of services and of public work.

An important part of our activity was carried out in the amendment activities, together with members of the European Parliament, on subjects that more directly deal with Public Service policies, such as the

¹ European Federation of Public Service Union

² Public Service International

Draft Directive on working hours and the directive on the trans-border mobility of patients.

The activity within the international union also covered the relations with the movements, and the commitment of Public Service in Social Forums.

THE ACTIVITIES

EUROPE AND THE CRISIS: DEFENDING PUBLIC SERVICES IN EUROPE. THE UNISON – VER.DI – FP CGIL PACT (28 MARCH 2009)

On the occasion of the event organised in London by the coalition **Put The People First** on Saturday 28 March 2009, Dave Prentis, Secretary General of Unison (United Kingdom), Frank Bsirske, President of Ver.di (Germany), and Carlo Podda drafted an **action plan and a common agenda to defend public services in Europe**.

This initiative was preceded by a meeting with Carola Fischbach-Pyttel, Secretary General of EPSU, Peter Waldorf, Secretary General of PSI and with the representatives of Public Service unions of The Netherlands from Abvakabo, Spain from Comisiones Obreras, France from CGT, Ireland from Impact and Sweden from Kommunal, as well as by an appeal of the three Secretaries-General to the G20 on 2 April 2009, published on Friday 27 March 2009 in the British daily "The Guardian" and in the Italian daily L'Unità. (<http://www.fpcgil.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/10035>)

EPSU AND ITS 9TH CONGRESS

The European Federation of Public Service Unions held its 9th Congress in 2009. CGIL Public Service Union and Italy took on once again a high management role. The Congress, in fact, elected **Rosa Pavanelli as Vice-President of the European Federation**, whereas Italy doubled its seats in the Executive Committee, after exceeding the threshold of 400 members.

The Congress, held in Brussels after the European Parliament elections, confirmed the guidelines of EPSU, which remains the largest ETUC sector federation in Europe:

- protection of public services through general and sector initiatives, also through horizontal legal provisions in favour of public services;
- support to the action programme of the EU for quality public services, based on the memorandum of public services that was jointly adopted by the 27 EU governments in 2008;
- commitment so that the directive on working hours, as stated in the Cercas report of 2005, is adopted during this Parliament;

- lobbying so that the European Parliament actively supports the European system of social dialogue and collective bargaining;
- promotion of healthcare services, energy services, local administration, central functions and water services, to defend not only the rights of workers in the sector of public services, but also to guarantee the universality of fundamental rights as health, education, social welfare, and access to public water for all European citizens.

The Public Service, together with the Mediterranean Group, was the promoter of the resolution on migration unanimously approved by the Congress, working so that the subject of protection of migrant workers and the inclusion policies for migrants was fully included in the agenda of EPSU.

Finally, an important role was carried out by the Public Service union during the three years of activity that led to the merger of EPSU with PSI-Europe, a merger ratified by the EPSU Congress of 2009, and which shall become fully implemented in the next two years.

THE CAMPAIGN ON PUBLIC SERVICES AND THE REQUEST FOR A HORIZONTAL DIRECTIVE

Between 2006 and 2010, our Federation was actively committed in the ETUC campaign entailing the request for a European framework directive aimed at defending public services. In this framework, besides our direct involvement in several initiatives of EPSU, ETUC and of the European Parliament, a joint initiative of CGIL CISL UIL was held in Italy, in Rome, on 26th March 2007, with the participation of the European union and of the Italian Members of the European Parliament. During the same year, a debate at the Feast of Public Service of Alessandria was held in July, and on 26th October the Secretaries-General of EPSU and PSI participated in Rome in the joint national event for the strike of public employment.

THE BOLKESTEIN DIRECTIVE

Our Congress of Viterbo coincided with the ETUC event in Strasbourg on the occasion of the vote of the European Parliament on the Bolkestein directive. On 16 February 2006 the European Parliament voted the new text of the directive that excluded the principle of the country of origin that had led to the largest mobilization of European trade-unions and to the origin of the first real European movement of union, social and people's protest, which ended up with the Brussels events of 25th November 2004 and 19th March 2005. The directive, approved in November 2006, is now in the implementation phase by the Italian government through rules included in the EU law. The implementation phase for local authorities is still rather uncertain.

THE WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE

After a proposal of the Commission and of the Council aimed at heavily worsening the limits of weekly working time (shifting from 48 hours to the 65 hours proposed), the exclusion from the calculation of the working hours of the waiting time in case of work on call, and the introduction of the opting-out clause (that is to say the possibility for the employer of setting the limits of maximum working time through an individual agreement with single workers), the Parliament expressed a first clear vote against in 2005.

The reaction of the Commission was immediate: in the same day it issued a notice that stated the total aversion to the vote of the Parliament, and its intention to repropose a new text of agreement with the Council of Ministers.

Up to that moment, the union opposition had been expressed through institutional channels and through the press.

However, when the debate was opened again on the new proposal of the Council (approved also in consideration of the total reversal of the Italian position supported by the Berlusconi government) the union mobilization became more widespread at a national level and evident in the European event of Strasbourg of 16th December 2008, the day in which the Parliament, during a plenary session, voted the proposal and defeated its most disruptive contents from the viewpoint of working conditions, workers' rights and role of collective bargaining.

In the end, for the first time after ten years, the negotiation between the European Parliament, Commission and Council to find an agreement on the working time directive (the so-called conciliation procedure) failed, leaving two opposed and distant positions unchanged. On the one side, there were the MEPs opposing the possibility of a working week up to 65 hours, and on the other side there were Countries that, conversely, insisted on the possibility of implementing derogations to the 48 hours. Therefore, the directive 2003/88 remains in force, and the rights of similar cases can be applied to all the decisions of the Court of Justice that recognise as working hours the time in which doctors are on call, and also the availability of other emergency services as fire-fighters, with positive consequences on the use of compensation rest-days and holidays. Therefore, it was decided not to adopt a text on controversial items that would by far worsen the existing regulations.

However, the Working Time Directive is one of those subjects on which being committed in the next few months, since the Commission recently launched the consultation phase for a new proposed amendment of the regulations in force.

LABOUR LAW

Also the lack of consensus on the claim of the Commission to introduce a European legislation on labour law is a result to be ascribed to the European union. The evolution of the European social model does not

only depend on the legislative activity. Today the union is dealing with an orientation of the European Court of Justice that is much stricter compared to the past, which tends to limit the legitimacy of its autonomy of action, through several rulings that state that the principle of free competition of enterprises in the domestic market cannot find obstacles in the respect of national collective agreements (**Laval and Rueffert cases**) and that the freedom to strike of the union must be proportional compared to companies' freedom of establishment - this one unconditional - in other Member Countries (**Viking case**).

The problem is not negligible since it directly concerns on the one side the role of the union in its fundamental task, the efficacy of its bargaining activity and of its collective protection of workers, and on the other side the full recognition of the right to perform union actions, including the right to strike, as stated in the Nice Charter of Fundamental Rights.

These rulings, as well as many other ones, introduce a severe unbalance in the recognition of the fundamental principles of the European Union to the detriment of its social dimension and of its shared social values.

THE PATIENT MOBILITY DIRECTIVE

Another open issue, particularly dangerous for EPSU and PF, is the one concerning the analysis of the draft "directive for the recognition of patients' rights in trans-border healthcare".

After the Parliament vote on the services directive, which excluded healthcare from its scope, the Commission announced a draft directive regulating the access of patients to trans-border healthcare, also in order to give a legal certainty to the principles stated by the Court of Justice in many rulings.

As a matter of fact, the text submitted to the Parliament analysis goes well-beyond the recognition of patients' right to receive treatments and care abroad, but it also introduces the right to the free choice by European citizens of the country and the healthcare facility in which receiving a treatment - without any prior authorisation by the healthcare authority of the country of origin-, and the free movement of healthcare professionals and healthcare service suppliers.

Achieving these objectives would represent an extraordinary boost towards the liberalisation of healthcare services in the market, an attack to the principles of universality and solidarity of the right to health for all the people living in the European Union, as well as a dangerous threat to the financial balance of the public healthcare systems of Member States, a danger that – if implemented – would represent a further acceleration towards the privatisation of the system.

On this topic as well it is important to underline that the activity carried out until now by EPSU also through several amendments – many of

which were drafted by PF CGIL and sent for presentation to the delegations of the Italian Members of Parliament – was positively accepted in the Parliament Committees in charge of the dossier (Environment and Public Health, Employment and Domestic Market), with a significant agreement among different political parties and positions.

The Swedish Presidency of the EU developed a draft agreement on trans-border healthcare and on the mobility of patients.

Due to several pressures, the political agreement on the draft directive was not reached. Eleven countries (Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Lithuania, Poland, Ireland, Greece and Bulgaria) did not support the Swedish draft agreement. One of the issues that remain open is the right of countries to decide the internal organisation of their healthcare system and of social security, and more precisely the right not to reimburse the medical performances provided by suppliers with which no contracts or agreements were signed.

The Spanish Presidency of the European Union might propose a more advanced ground, recognising that the legal basis of the directive must reside in the recognition of the universal right to healthcare treatments - and not only of the internal market - and in the subsidiarity principle stated by the Lisbon Treaty that recognises the right of each Member State to organise one's healthcare services through preventive authorisation.

THE SECTOR COMMITTEES OF EPSU AND THE SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN EUROPE

In the sector of **local autonomies** the activity of social dialogue continues, as formally recognised by the European Union. The European employers' association is CEMR, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions. This sector also sees the involvement of fire-fighters (with a European network) and of the workers operating in the sector of environmental hygiene; in the sector of **national administrations (State)** activities are being carried out to come to the **formalisation of the social dialogue** and overcome the "informal" phase of meetings with the delegation of Directors-General. The Spanish Presidency is favourable to the voluntary formalisation of dialogue, and is committed in launching the operational phase in the first semester of 2010. The official position of the Italian government is not known yet. In this sector, particular importance is ascribed to the working group on **penitentiary police and workers in prisons**; the 28th February 2008 was the **day of European action against the overcrowding of prisons**, with events in all the European capitals and in Brussels, to protest against the overcrowding of prisons and the disastrous effects on the working and living conditions of workers.

In the sector of **healthcare and social services** the formal social dialogue with the organisation of hospital employers is now stabilised (HOSPEEM, within CEEP, the Committee of European Public Enterprises, which ARAN is member of) that produced a **Code of conduct and a follow-up of trans-border employment on the basis of ethical principles (2009)** and, on 26 October 2009, a **draft directive** (COM 2009 577) implementing the **framework agreement**, signed by HOSPEEM and EPSU, on the **prevention of stab wounds in the hospital or healthcare service**.

For the first time we participated in the works of the **energy** sector, having considered that this committee also tackles subjects as **water** and **environmental hygiene**.

MEDITERRANEAN GROUP

The group of Mediterranean unions joining PSI and EPSU was established on 14 December 1989 and is presently made up of the Public Service and energy unions of **Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Malta, Portugal, Spain and Italy**. In over 20 years, 31 meetings were held. In the periods between our Congresses we had meetings in Nicosia, La Valletta, Madrid, Athens, Palermo and Tel Aviv.

In these years, the Mediterranean Group was the promoter of the resolution on migration approved by the Congress of EPSU, and launched in Bari the project **"Public services meet migrants"** that will be closed on October 2010 in Malaga. ([see annex 1](#))

THE PUBLIC SERVICE INTERNATIONAL

Compared to the 2002-2006 report, a radical change has occurred vis-à-vis the relationship between FP CGIL and PSI. The marginal role played in the past has changed into a new role of protagonist of our union in the international and global activities. The reasons can be summed up mainly in the change of the Secretary General, occurred in 2007 with the Congress held in Vienna, in which Peter Waldorff, from Denmark, was elected to replace the former Secretary General who held his office for over thirty years. Furthermore, after several years, we are back in World Executive Committee, representing the Mediterranean.

In this capacity, as from 2008 the Public Service union has been called to participate in the Annual Sessions of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

The change of leadership also produced a new approach of PSI that on the one side freed itself of a useless European duplication, merging with the EPSU, and on the other side a direct will of being present also in national and sub-national policies. We already mentioned the presence of the PSI secretary in the national strike in Rome, but it is also necessary to recall the role as protagonist in the achievement of the Mediterranean Group in Israel and Palestine in 2009, as well as in the

launch and the implementation of the Public Services Meeting Migrants project, launched on 16th March in Bari.

PALESTINE-ISRAEL

In the framework of the Mediterranean and of the international policies of our sector, as from 2008 we worked to organise a meeting of the Mediterranean Group in Israel and Palestine. Prepared through two visits of Rosa Pavanelli to Israel and Palestine, after 10 years we succeeded in organising the **31st meeting of the Mediterranean Group in Tel Aviv on 15 July 2009, also with the participation of the Palestinian Union, and in Nablus on 16 July.**

The meetings with the Palestinian union provided an exchange of views on the possibility of launching a bilateral cooperation relation with the public service unions of PGFTU, which the Public Service intends to define in the next few months.

THE EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

The 2006-2010 activity was characterised by a new involvement in the field of international projects financed by both the European Union and by national and international unions. We participated in the seminar **“Global action of the public sector union against AIDS and discrimination; sharing of experiences and good practices between developing countries and European countries”** in the framework of the project “Decent Work for Decent Life – Education to development projects, implemented by *Progetto sviluppo*, (16-17 October 2008); we were the promoters of a European project for the health and safety of fire-fighters **“Strategy for the health and safety of fire-fighters in the European Mediterranean area”, 2009-2010** (see annex 2) and of the already-mentioned project “Public services meet migrants” (see annex 1).

MOVEMENTS AND SOCIAL FORUM

Although it is necessary to acknowledge that the momentum of movements in Italy and in Europe has been gradually reduced, in these years the Public Service continued to keep contacts with this reality, closely linking national and international activities.

Together with CGIL and with the *“Lavoro in movimento”* network, the Public Service participated in the **Nairobi World Social Forum** that launched the network “Labour and Globalization” gathering several union organisations, associations, movements acting against job insecurity and labour exploitation.

The main activity, however, was developed in relation to the struggles for the protection of public water, connecting our initiative with the

"Italian Water Forum" with EPSU and PSI and with many other European unions.

The participation of the Public Service in the **Malmö European Social Forum** (September 2008), where EPSU participated for the first time with its own activities, in the **Belem World Forum** (January 2009) and in the **World Water Forum in Istanbul** (march 2009), in fact, was focused on the objective of strengthening an international network of water movements and at the same time of widening the number of unions that deal with movements in the protection of common goods, achieving an encouraging result.

It is necessary not to lose sight of this objective, having considered that the EPSU Congress entrusted the new Executive with a commitment for a proposal made upon the initiative of European citizens in favour of the public property and management of water, which will see affiliated unions collecting 1,000,000 signatures to be presented to the European Commission. This campaign will be launched as soon as the Commission issues the rules that make this democratic right available to European citizens, according to the Lisbon Treaty in force as from 1st December 2009.

Annex 1

THE PROJECT: PUBLIC SERVICES MEET MIGRANTS

All the European Countries are considered as net migration countries. With over one million migrants in one year and 299,000 asylum applications in 2006 alone, Europe is a primary destination for the migrants of all over the world. The coastal countries of the Mediterranean are the most affected ones. Therefore, on 16 March 2010 the opening Conference of the project Migrants and public services in the Euro-Mediterranean area was held in Bari (<http://www.fpcgil.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/13460>)

The project stemmed from a strong need expressed by public service unions of the European Mediterranean countries that firmly maintained how the subject of migration is at the top of national and European agenda of public sector unions.

The project operates thanks to the support of the Apulia Region as well as of the Diputacion Provincial of Malaga, and is organised by the EPSU (European Federation of Public Service Unions), the PSE (Public Services International) and by the Mediterranean Group of public service unions. After a research activity that will take place in Algeria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia, the final Conference will be held in Malaga on 21 and 22 October 2010.

The public sector workers in Mediterranean Countries are in the front line in receiving the migrants that come to Europe, and are very much concerned about the impact of illegal migration on human and union rights. Migration is a union issue and therefore must be treated from the perspective of rights, which start from the fundamental respect of human rights by migrants, the protection against job insecurity and exploitation conditions, the fight against racism and discriminations, the policies envisaging the integration and defence of union rights for all migrant workers, women in particular. Unions are increasingly playing an active role in making these rights available and respected. While exercising the full sovereignty in the management of migration flows, Countries also have the obligation of respecting international human rights and the humanitarian legislation. An effective implementation demands the construction and the strengthening of the skills of public workers, and local administrations have the main responsibility in performing these tasks.

For this reason, one of the main objectives of the project is the identification of the specific sectors in which the employees of public services have a higher operational level, and other sectors where, conversely, there is a shortage of skills (trying to understand why). The project will draft a map of the European legislation on migration (i.e. legalization of migrants, management of migration flows, asylum applications, citizenship, labour market, rights...) and of the national legislations of the countries participating in the project. A third objective is the evaluation of the level of professional skills of public employees in migration-related issues. A fourth objective is the identification of a

suitable training for the public sectors involved, linked to the topics of migration and of asylum seekers.

Unfortunately, there is still a lack of information between the staff of the first line services in the management of mixed migration flows (for instance the flows of migrants and asylum seekers) at the borders and the levels of reception. Fragmented rules and regulations on the management of frontiers and admissions led to oppressing behaviours and classification procedures. Similarly, inconsistencies and absence of rules can bring corruption and abuse of power by the personnel at the borders and by those that work in the field of migration, as well as by private operators (for instance traders in human beings and smugglers).

Annex 2

EUROPEAN PROJECT – STRATEGY FOR THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF FIRE-FIGHTERS IN THE EUROPEAN MEDITERRANEAN AREA

1) Taking stock of the project

On 30th November, also the administrative part of the project “Strategy for the health and safety of fire-fighters in the European Mediterranean area” was closed, having considered that the operational part of the project ended 31st August.

The project envisaged the involvement of fire-fighters from seven countries: Croatia, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain, besides the partnership of the European Federation of Public Service Union (EPSU).

The project – launched on the 1st of September 2008 – was financed by the European Commission (DG Employment) for the maximum amount of 116,034 Euros and co-financed by national PF CGIL through the activity of all the persons involved in the planning, management and implementation of the project itself.

The final balance was in line with the forecast made in the project proposal – as approved by the Commission - and, with an amount of 110,879 Euros, it allowed the participation of a number of people higher than expected. The project, in fact, allowed the participation of over 50 fire-fighters and European executives (whereas 32 at maximum had been foreseen) and involved nearly fifteen fire-fighters and executives of PF CGIL (a maximum of 9 had been considered).

The project was carried out through:

- 1) a preliminary meeting organised in Rome on 21 October 2008;
- 2) a first workshop held in Rome on 19 and 20 March 2009 at the *Istituto Superiore Antincendio*, which saw the participation of the representative of the UK Fire Brigade Union (FBU);
- 3) a second workshop held in Madrid on 13-14 May 2009 at the *Instituto Nacional de Administración Pública* (INAP), which saw the participation of the Secretary General of the Service Sector International, Peter Waldorff;
- 4) a final meeting held in Ljubljana (Slovenia) on 7th July 2009.

The project guaranteed a strong language plurality, the European Charter of fire-fighters was for instance translated into all the languages of the project, and an interpretation service in 6 languages was guaranteed for all the main events.

Furthermore, the project materially produced:

a) the research “ Strategy for the health and safety of fire-fighters in the European Mediterranean area” developed by Dr. Stefano Supino, teacher in Economics of Innovation at the Urbino University (the text is available in English)

b) a guide, available in Italian, Spanish and English;

c) a multi-language web site <http://www.hssfmed.eu/>.

The Spanish colleagues of FSC CCOO expressed their willingness to produce a funding application to the European Commission for the implementation of the second part of the project relating to the safety of fire-fighters.

Nadia Pagano – Enzo Bernardo (FP CGIL International Office)

2) A political balance for fire-fighters

A political balance of the project “Health and Safety Strategy for Fire-fighters in the European Mediterranean Area”, besides the results achieved and highlighted above, shall necessary consider the ideas expressed by union delegates through the exchange of experiences in the framework of the service, as well as the calling of fire-fighters’ rights.

In this sense, we believe that a general awareness is growing among the delegates on the fact of carrying out a difficult, dangerous and wearing job, irrespective of the organisational differences determined by the different institutional models of the countries of origin, associated to the conviction of performing a public job, in which the protection of workers’ health and safety is a guarantee of the efficiency of citizens’ rescue and protection.

From the rejection of the mythological role of heroes, to confusions with military and police organisations, the European fire-fighters of the Mediterranean area have called a strong role of their category in the programme of the European and World public service, exalted by climate change exposing the planet to continuous emergencies determined by natural disasters, by the disastrous consequences for the life of people, and by the environmental balance.

The confirmation of the inadequacy of programs and financial resources allocated by national and local governments for the protection of the health and the safety of operators, and for the suitable guarantee of the public service, increased the delegates’ persuasion on the fundamental role of the union, that shall be carried out in both the perspectives involved: one addressed to change the negative attitudes in the relevant countries, and the other in agreement with the EPSU Fire-fighters network, so that the EU takes on interventions targeted to overcome the resistance of Member Countries, at least for the standardisation of the protection of health and safety of operators.

The enormous attention devoted by EPSU and by important European partners as FBU in all the phases of the project, the interest expressed by Public Service International (PSI), the inclusion of the results obtained in the agenda of the EPSU Fire-fighters meeting of Brussels on 23 September, but most of all the decision of the partners of the Mediterranean area to continue to struggle together to obtain common objectives, fill us with satisfaction.

For this reason, national PF-CGIL, as a promoting and organising union of the project, traces a positive balance of the project and considers the political results acquired as considerable, hence representing a fundamental stimulation for the future continuation of a further project, in order to continue in the fruitful work of implementation and development of the European Social Dialogue for the fire-fighters.

Franco Moretti (Project Steering Committee).