

**9th EPSU Congress
20 to 23 May 2014, Toulouse, France**

**Affiliates' Draft Resolutions
Defending social protection and the welfare state
*Submitted by PCS, U.K***

| | | Proposed amendments | |
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| 1. | The austerity measures imposed by governments across Europe involve harsh attacks on welfare spending and social protection, which provide basic social security guarantees to prevent or alleviate poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. | | |
| 2. | These attacks are based on widely accepted myths promoted by politicians and the media that the welfare state has been responsible for out-of-control public spending, which must be cut back in the name of fiscal sustainability. Universal entitlements to state benefits and pensions are now deemed unaffordable, with recipients demonised as worthless burdens on the state. The protection of a decent standard of living for all, whether in work or out of work, is increasingly viewed as wasteful expenditure which can no longer be guaranteed. | | |
| 3. | The result has been increased poverty for the most vulnerable in society - disabled people, low income families, lone parents, refugees and the elderly. In the UK, state benefits and pensions are among the lowest in the developed world, and many are losing their homes and their jobs. | | |
| 4. | These myths must be challenged. | | |
| 5. | Those suffering the most from welfare cuts were not responsible for the public debt caused by deregulated trading, risky speculations and bailouts of the banks. According to the OECD, welfare spending in its 34 member countries has risen | | |

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| | steadily since 1980, but this increase in costs was almost completely offset by GDP growth up until the financial crisis. In other words, there has not been 'out-of-control' public spending. It is corporate tax abuse which is out-of-control, with multinational companies and wealthy individuals routinely using tax havens to avoid paying tax. | | |
| 6. | There is a vast sum of unpaid tax in most economies waiting to be collected if there was the political will to do so. The income generated by the introduction of transparent, progressive and properly staffed taxation systems, an international financial transaction tax, the closure of tax havens and effective enforcement to counter tax evasion would render many of these programmes of welfare cuts unnecessary. | | |
| 7. | EPSU action points: | | |
| 8. | 1. Actively challenge and discredit welfare myths from politicians and the media. | | |
| 9. | 2. Encourage affiliate unions to work with appropriate local community, anti-poverty and tax justice groups, and to facilitate the establishment of such groups where they do not exist. | | |
| 10. | 3. Actively campaign for: | | |
| 11. | (i) A minimum income floor as a basic human right; | | |
| 12. | (ii) The defence of universal benefits and social protection standards in European countries; | | |
| 13. | (iii) Full compliance by European states of the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation 2012 (no 202); | | |

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| 14. | (iv) Decent liveable benefit levels; | | |
| 15. | (v) Publicly funded welfare systems; | | |
| 16. | (vi) An effective general anti-avoidance tax rule introduced into the domestic legislation of each European state; | | |
| 17. | (vii) An international financial transaction tax and an end to tax havens; | | |
| 18. | (viii) Work commissioned to identify and quantify the full extent of the “European tax gap” and to publicise that figure, as part of the campaign to promote tax justice as a real alternative to austerity; | | |
| 19. | (ix) The introduction of country-by- country reporting for multinational corporations so that they pay what they owe in each country; | | |
| 20. | (x) Investment in more public administration staff in tax collection and enforcement as one of the most effective ways of dealing with the tax gap. | | |