

### Events for April /May

**17-18 April** PSI European Regional Executive Committee EUREC Geneva

**23-27 April** PSI Asia-Pacific Regional Women's Committee (23/4); Regional Workshop (24/4); Regional Executive Committee APREC (25-26/4); staff meeting (27/4)  
Singapore

**7-8 May** PSI World Women Committee (WOC) Geneva

**21-23 May** PSI Health Services Task Force Geneva

### PSI Congress deadlines:

**24 April Congress 2nd mailing:** All resolutions to be circulated to affiliates for amendment

**1 May** Deadline for nominations for President and General Secretary

**9-10 May** Extra-ordinary Executive Board meeting EB-134 (replacing Steering Committee) to determine any other business for the Congress  
Agenda, Geneva

**24 May** Deadline for receipt of amendments to resolutions from affiliates

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### **SIGN THE PETITION FOR HIGH-QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES, ACCESSIBLE TO ALL**

Together, we demand public services that genuinely meet people's needs, and we call upon the European Commission to bring forward European legislation.

[www.petitionpublicservice.eu](http://www.petitionpublicservice.eu)

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## New staff at PSI

**Svend Robinson** (pictured right), a Canadian national, has been appointed as the Public Services Advocacy Officer and will start at the PSI in July 2007 in order to benefit from a handover period with Mike Waghorne, who will retire in October 2007. Svend has been working as a legal adviser with the British Columbia Government Employees Union, a component of the PSI affiliate, the National Union of Public Employees Union (NUPGE). He was previously a long-standing member of the Federal Parliament for the New Democratic Party.



**Rajendre Khargi** (left), a Dutch national, has been appointed as Communications Adviser for a 9-month period until December 2007. Rajendre has broad experience in media relations and has worked previously as editor-in-chief of the Dutch News Agency. He is currently Chair of the Board of OneWorld International and a consultant in media training and development.

## PSI meetings on utilities and public services



**PSI's Utilities Advisory Group** met on 28 March in Geneva. The group confirmed the PSI programme and priorities and provided guidance for improvements. The Water Operators Partnership of the UN was discussed in detail, with many unions wanting more detailed information to help implement in their countries. The Workers' Initiative proposal also received support and interest. Both are part of the QPS strategy in utilities. For more information, see [www.world-psi/water](http://www.world-psi/water) or contact [David.Boys@world-psi.org](mailto:David.Boys@world-psi.org).

## Public Sector Steering Group looks to the future

The **Public Sector Steering Group** met in Geneva 28-30 March. The 40 participants worked in groups and discussed scenarios for the future of public services. They decided to hold a workshop during Congress in order to share their experiences from the meeting. The workshop will discuss the trends in public service delivery using scenario planning. This will answer the question of what unions can expect and what they want for the future. It was decided to hold the next meeting of the group early in 2008, with the themes of pensions and social benefits.

## PSI African Regional Meeting



The **PSI African Regional Committee meeting (AFREC)** took place in Tunis, 4-6 April, preceded by the Regional Women's Committee meeting. The major item was the preparations for the World Congress in September, but participants also discussed the Regional Conference that will be held in Hammanmet, Tunisia, in 2008, and the situation in the region and sub-regions. Hans Engelberts, PSI General Secretary, Têko Kpodar, Regional Secretary, and other

participants visited the Tunisian trade union centre UGTT, where they met the General Secretary and discussed mutual cooperation. A special tribute was paid to Messoud Neji, ex-member of the PSI Executive Board, who has left the UGTT after many years of ensuring the role of intermediary between PSI and the UGTT (see photo). The women's committees from the Tunisian affiliates organised activities around the PSI campaign on Water, Women and Workers. During its meeting, the Regional Women's Committee drew up a list of five main recommendations on PSI policy; women's activities; young workers; international solidarity and migration of women health workers.

## Inter-American Regional meeting



The Inter-American Regional Executive Committee met in Quebec, Canada, on 23-24 March. The meeting was opened by John Gordon (pictured left), from the Public Service Alliance of Canada. The meeting welcomed new affiliates from Quebec and commended the formation of an alliance of Quebec public sector unions. Juneia Batista, from FETAM Brazil, chaired the meeting.

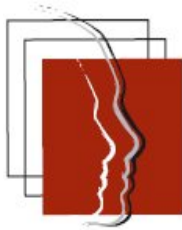
The Committee agreed on five key priorities for the region: the quality public services campaign, pay equity, young workers, sectoral work and building capacity on issues related to racism and migrant workers. It was also agreed to hold an investigative mission to Haiti during 2008. Solidarity actions were planned concerning serious violations of trade union rights, in particular in Colombia and Guatemala. The meeting was preceded by the Inter-American Regional Women's Committee, which reviewed the ongoing campaigns. On 22 March, International Water Day, a panel event was held with representatives from *Eau Secours!*, a Quebec coalition to promote the right to water, and representatives from Canadian affiliates. Roxanne Deras from El Salvador gave a detailed account of her country's struggle to oppose water privatisation and Nora Wintour, PSI Deputy General Secretary, presented an overview of the PSI Water, Women and Workers

campaign, 8-22 March. *(Photo by Chantal Locat, CSQ, Canada)*

## European regional meeting

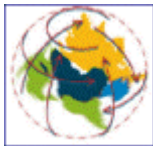
The European Regional Executive Committee met in Geneva on April 16-17. The meeting welcomed the progress made in the merger discussions with the [European Federation of Public Service Unions \(EPSU\)](#), discussing the impact on affiliates in member and non-member states of the European Union. EUREC members finalised recommendations concerning Constitutional changes, finances, membership and affiliation to submit to the Executive Board in May. The meeting also endorsed documents concerning the outline of activities and the Constitutional principles of the new European Federation that will cover the whole of Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union and is expected to be recognised as the regional organisation of PSI. Participants endorsed the suggested transitional measures between the PSI Congress and the next Congress of the EPSU. They highlighted the need to include the subject of migration in the future programme of work. The meeting reaffirmed the PSI policy of gender parity in all sponsorship arrangements and requested the Secretariat to ensure that these principles were fully respected, including for non-sponsored delegations.

## GURN international conference



The Global Unions Research Network (GURN) is now well into its fourth year. Its international conference, based around a number of themes looking at trade policy impacts on employment, development and 'growth' was hosted at Witwatersrand University in South Africa at the beginning of April. The papers will be made available on the GURN website - <http://www.gurn.info/index.html> - but are already available on a CD available from [Mike.Waghorne@world-psi.org](mailto:Mike.Waghorne@world-psi.org) in

English only. Many participants commented on the much more sophisticated understanding and discussion of trade policy issues compared to recent years.



## GLU Annual Council Meeting

The Global Labour University, previously described in PSI World News and FOCUS, held its second Annual Council Meeting at the same venue on April 4. The meeting focused on the development of the courses being now offered at: the University of Kassel and the Berlin School of Economics in Germany; at Wits in South Africa; at the University of Campinas in Brazil (where the course will start in 2008); and at the Tata Institute for Social sciences in Mumbai, India, with whom the GLU is holding discussions on a course for the GLU programme in 2008. Students have the possibility to attend courses at more than one of these campuses, so that their masters in Globalisation and labour will be truly a globalised degree. Information on the GLU is available on the GURN website, including application forms for prospective students, or on

<http://www.global-labour-university.org/>.

## Young trade unionists get connected



PSI European Youth Forum (EYF) met at the PSI Head Office, 15-16 April, in place of the usual two meetings held separately for East and West Europe. The EYF consists of titular and substitute members from the nine European constituencies, and observers can also attend. The Youth Forum worked on the preparations for the PSI Congress in September, as well as planned activities and projects for 2007. The participants expressed their satisfaction that many affiliates and constituencies have projects with a special focus on young people and their special needs, including within their structures and budget. For more information about the EYF, please contact the Forum chair, [linn.hemmingsen@fagforbundet.no](mailto:linn.hemmingsen@fagforbundet.no) and [violaine.roggeri@world-psi.org](mailto:violaine.roggeri@world-psi.org) from the PSI Head Office.

## Another cowardly murder!



On 6 April, the community leader Rosalío Lorenzo was shot to death in Jalapa, Guatemala. Brother Rosalío was an outstanding defender of citizen and community rights in the country. PSI is very shocked by this new episode of blood and horror against union and community leaders in Guatemala. The committee of PSI affiliates in Guatemala demands that the national authorities investigate this murder and requests support from the international community.

Rosalío's wife, Rosa Salvatierra, was also seriously injured during the attack and is recovering in hospital from gunshot wounds.

## PSI raises concerns on private equity in public services



In a media release on 16 March, PSI expresses its concerns about the behaviour of private equity investors and joins the TUAC in calling for greater regulation for these financial actors. Private equity investors are buying already privatised public utilities and are encouraging further privatisations. These funds are attracted by the monopoly nature of some of these public services, which guarantee a reliable cash flow from citizens and stable profit margins, often determined by regulators. These natural monopolies often give their new owners access to public goods without requiring due compensation. PSI is concerned that these private equity owners have priorities that are not conducive to the needs of citizens. Public services must be accessible to all, regardless of ability to pay (or in many instances, in spite of ability to pay). Public services are often capital intensive – such as water, energy and transport utilities. And most public services depend on dedicated, welltrained staff. Read the whole item on [www.world-psi.org/utilities](http://www.world-psi.org/utilities). Contact [David.Boys@world-psi.org](mailto:David.Boys@world-psi.org).

## Russian unions take action for pension rights



The Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR) called for a day of action on pension rights on 10 April. Under the slogan "*Respect working people's life - for a decent life, for a decent pension*", there was a massive turnout to support the campaign. The unions picketed local authorities in 54 Provinces and in all the major cities. In Moscow, a rally was held outside the Government House and Mikhail Shmakov, President of the FNPR, addressed the crowd. He explained how pension reform had failed to deliver improvements in the lives of pensioners and that pensions did not meet the ILO minimum standards. The unions also organised a letter campaign to the President calling for action. The unions are calling for a minimum subsistence level pension rate to be established by 1 December 2008, a Federal budget allocation to ensure that the funds are available and the ratification of ILO Convention 102 on social security minimum standards.

All PSI affiliates in Russia participated in the days of action and there will be follow-up rallies on 1 May. For more information in Russian see [www.fnpr.ru](http://www.fnpr.ru).



## World Health Day 7 April

On the occasion of World Health Day, 7 April, PSI called on governments and the international community to renew their commitments to achieve health for all. "Human resources



are the essential component to bring adequate health care to all,” said PSI General Secretary Hans Engelberts. “The problem is not a lack of medical technology. In order to attract, train and retain the health workers the world needs, health systems must be adequately funded. Health workers must receive fair wages, benefits and have the tools and working conditions that will allow them to provide quality health care to patients”. See [www.world-psi.org/health](http://www.world-psi.org/health).

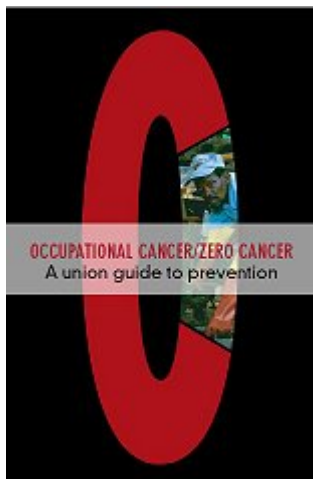
### Shortage of skilled labour in Ukraine



Ukraine is under a threat of a shortage of highly-skilled labour, according to the Minister of Labour and Social Policy Mikhail Papiyev. The Minister said the Government should encourage employment of migrant workers to fulfil the country's needs. He also declared that the problem of labour shortage will be solved only if the wage level is raised and work conditions and safety are improved. The Director of State Employment Agency of Ukraine, Vladimir Galitskiy,

added that all sectors of the economy suffer from shortage of labour. The State Employment Agency and the Ministry of Education are jointly implementing a pilot project to provide three technical colleges in order to train the workers in the skills that are most needed.

### Hidden cancer epidemic kills hundreds of thousands each year



Occupational cancer claims at least one life every 52 seconds, but this tragedy is being ignored by both official regulators and employers. A new booklet published by the International Metalworkers' Federation, reveals that over 600,000 deaths a year are caused by occupational cancer, making up almost one-third of all work-related deaths. The guide was produced as part of the first ever international zero occupational cancer campaign, involving 11 global trade union organisations, including PSI.

#### **Occupational Cancer/Zero Cancer: a union guide to prevention**

provides information about workplace cancer risks and advice on practical steps workers and unions can take to make workplaces safer and is being distributed with action guidelines to unions worldwide. PSI will make copies available to union representatives during the PSI Health Services Task Force, to be held in May. The booklet is also available on the IMF website: [www.imfmetal.org/cancer](http://www.imfmetal.org/cancer). It exists in English, French, Spanish and Russian.

## PSI affiliates in El Salvador propose to reform the Labour Code



With the support of several union organisations, the “Federación de Trabajadores de los Servicios Públicos de El Salvador” (FESTRASPE - Federation of Public Service Employees) has made a proposal for reform of the Labour Code. Their objective is that ILO Conventions 87 and 98 be applied. The conventions were ratified last year by the national Congress of El

Salvador following strong pressures from the European Union. The proposed reform pushes for employers to grant paid leave to union leaders for their union activities. The number of members required to constitute a union would be reduced, and the process for creating a union would also be reformed. Jaime Rivera from FESTRASPE explained that the Ministry of Labour is investigating companies to see if any workers have been dismissed by their employers as a result of joining a union.

## Impact campaign to defend public services



The Irish trade union IMPACT has launched a campaign to defend public servants, who it says are unfairly criticised in an imbalanced debate about service quality and staff performance. The union has produced a campaign pack to help its members, often dismissed as “bureaucrats, pen-pushers, bean counters and file-pullers”. The campaign denounces “six myths” about the numbers, performance and pay of public servants. It provides

information on how Irish public sector staff work hard to deliver more and better services to the people and communities they serve. For more information on the campaign see

[www.qualitypublicservices.ie](http://www.qualitypublicservices.ie).

## PSI participates in ADB annual meeting

PSI's Asia-Pacific Regional Organisation will participate in the 40th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Kyoto, Japan, 4-7 May. PSI will promote PSI advocacy and campaigns on quality public services, core labour standards, and public-public partnerships (PUPs). They will expose the impact of water privatisation on the quality of water services, and discuss how to incorporate PSI strategies into ADB policies and operations. For further details of the meeting, contact [Katsuhiko.Sato@world-psi.org](mailto:Katsuhiko.Sato@world-psi.org).

## World Day for Safety and Health at Work





Celebrated on 28 April, the **World Day for Safety and Health at Work** is an international campaign to promote safe, healthy, and decent work. It is also a day the world's trade union movement has long associated with commemorating victims of occupational accidents and disease. The theme for 2007 will be: Safe and Healthy Workplaces - Making Decent Work a Reality. See more on [www.ilo.org/safework/safeday](http://www.ilo.org/safework/safeday).



### **Global Unions : IMF and World Bank must do more to cease inequality**

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund must do far more to support labour rights, according to a new statement issued by the Global Unions in the lead-up to key meetings of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) in Washington on 14 and 15 April. Progress has been made concerning the achievement on the Millennium Development Goals through the implementation of debt cancellation for the poorest countries. The requirement by the IFC (the World Bank's private sector lending arm) that borrowers observe the core labour standards of the International Labour Organisation, and the declared intention of the World Bank itself to include similar criteria in its infrastructure investments, show a commitment to achieving equitable and sustainable development.

However, the World Bank continues to promote policies that encourage countries to abandon protection for workers and the poor and it applies its discredited "Doing Business" methodology to its "Country Policy and Institutional Assessment," which is used to determine poor countries' aid eligibility based on their scores on areas including business regulation and labour market flexibility.

The statement concludes with a series of recommendations to encourage the IFIs to make a positive contribution towards a fair globalisation, including a call on the World Bank to follow through on its commitment to work closely with trade unions during the implementation of its governance and anticorruption strategy. [Read the statement here](#).

### **Signing away the future**



This new report by Oxfam denounces the action of rich countries that are using regional and bilateral trade deals to attain concessions they cannot get at the World Trade Organisation (WTO), with serious implications for poor countries' development. Twenty-five developing countries have now signed free trade

Twenty-five developing countries have now signed free trade deals with developing countries, with more under negotiation. In total, there are more than 250 regional or bilateral trade agreements in force, governing 30% of world trade.

These agreements are bad for development, requiring concessions from developing countries and almost nothing in return from rich countries. They can be harmful in many respects. The report highlights the fact that investment rules in free trade agreements and bilateral investment treaties deny governments the right to protect workers, the environment and the economy, and can expose them to compensation claims that reach billions. Read the report on

[http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/briefingpapers/bp101\\_regional\\_trade\\_agreements\\_0703](http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/briefingpapers/bp101_regional_trade_agreements_0703)

### Water prices rising worldwide



The price of water is increasing—sometimes dramatically—throughout the world. Over the past five years, municipal water rates have increased by an average of 27 percent in the United States, 32 percent in the United Kingdom, 45 percent in Australia, 50 percent in South Africa, and 58 percent in Canada. In Tunisia, the price of irrigation water increased fourfold over a decade.

According to an article from Earth Policy Institute a recent survey of 14 countries indicates that average municipal water prices range from 66¢ per cubic meter in the United States up to \$2.25 in Denmark and Germany.

Subsidies often benefit only higher-income families. Frequently, urban slum residents in developing countries have no access to municipal water supplies and instead purchase water from private purveyors who bring it in by truck. In part because unscrupulous vendors often control this distribution, the prices are very high. Read the article here: <http://www.earth-policy.org/Updates/2007/Update64.htm>

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