UNI EUROPA PLEDGE FOR EUROPEAN ELECTION CANDIDATES

There are good reasons why services contribute in excess of 70% to both employment and output in the EU. Services fulfill essential functions in modern societies and complex economies. Thus, to make sure that Europe remains a great place to live and an economic powerhouse, we need good quality services.

A lot needs to be done at the level of the EU to ensure that the European services industry can live up to its responsibility. We – the European services workers union UNI Europa – strive to be a catalyst in defining a new approach to the governance of the European services industry that meets the challenge. With our Services Manifesto, we set signposts for the way to get there. We ask EU decision-makers to join us in this endeavour and to make their commitment to this project visible by signing the UNI Europa Services Manifesto Pledge.

Together, we want to make sure that Europeans get the quality services that they deserve and rely on. Our joint work is based on one simple and straightforward principle: Understanding that quality, innovation, and productivity in services are functions of good working conditions in our highly labour-intensive industry, we strive to create quality jobs for quality services. Harnessing this virtuous circle – the better the employment conditions in services, the better the provided services – is our project for the 2014-19 period and beyond.

SEE THE SERVICES MANIFESTO IN FULL - CLICK TO DOWNLOAD (PDF, 2.1MB)

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Services contribute in excess of 70% to both output and employment in the EU. Despite this, the European Union currently lacks a clear strategy for the European services industry.

To boost competitiveness and quality of life, Europe needs a services industry that is consistently governed based on the principle of 'quality jobs for quality services'.

Europe needs a large-scale investment programme of at least 2% of GDP annually to end the current crisis. Such an investment plan must support a services industry that proves fit to tackle pressing societal and economic challenges.

High social and economic returns can be realised if investment is focussed on:

- skills for social innovation processes that improve living and working conditions.
- infrastructure needs of growing service sectors such as e-services.

The funds needed for such a strategy (€250 bn) equal 1/4 of the tax income lost every year because of tax evasion and fraud.
REALISING THIS, WE DEMAND:
EUROPEAN LEGISLATION THAT
PROMOTES HEALTH AND SAFETY
AT WORK IN SERVICES BECAUSE
A SOCIAL EUROPE DOES NOT
TREAT WORKER SAFETY AS
RED TAPE.

For more than 40 years, European legislation
has served to keep workplaces safe and healthy.
On 2 October 2013, the European Commission announced its refusal to transpose a social partner agreement on occupational health and safety in hairdressing into law. The Commission's cynical explanation: provisions that protect worker safety might impose 'bureaucratic burden' on hairdressing companies.

REALISING THIS, WE DEMAND:
SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN SERVICES
BECAUSE SOCIAL PARTNERS
KNOW BEST HOW TO DEAL WITH
THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE
IN THEIR SECTORS.

REALISING THIS, WE DEMAND:
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING,
WORKER RIGHTS, AND EFFECTIVE
EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION
LEGISLATION AS SAFEGUARDS
AGAINST PRECARIOUS WORKING
CONDITIONS IN SERVICES.

REALISING THIS, WE DEMAND:
STRENGTH EUROPEAN
COOPERATION FOR SKILLS AND
LIFELONG LEARNING IN SERVICES
BECAUSE WELL-TRAINED
WORKERS ARE THE STRONGEST
ASSET OF AN INNOVATIVE
SERVICES INDUSTRY.

Quality services and successful innovation in services are a result of knowledgeable work in services. Addressing skills and qualifications needs is crucial for a strong services industry. Ensuring excellent lifelong learning in services is of particular importance; it is usually employment in services that (re-) integrates vulnerable groups such as women, migrants, and long-term unemployed into the labour market.

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Customers have a right to get good services. Yet, this right is meaningless unless employees work under conditions that allow them to provide quality services. Sales targets for employees, for instance, entail the risk of bullying workers into maximising companies’ profits instead of giving customers a good deal.

The EU must support social partners in eradicating trade-offs between customer and worker interests or take own legislative action.

REALISING THIS, WE DEMAND: INTERNATIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS THAT ARE NEGOTIATED TRANSPARENTLY AND IMPROVE WORKING CONDITIONS WORLDWIDE BECAUSE INTERNATIONAL TRADE MUST NOT COMPROMISE SOCIAL PROGRESS.

A services industry meeting high standards in terms of quality and innovativeness must be embedded in a single market that encourages fair competition and produces upward convergence. However, European single market integration – and the well-known services directive in particular – has enabled unfair practices such as wage and social dumping.

This deteriorates working conditions in services and, as a corollary, the quality of the provided services.

REALISING THIS, WE DEMAND: A CONSISTENTLY REGULATED EUROPEAN SINGLE MARKET FOR QUALITY SERVICES THAT IMPEDES SOCIAL DUMPING AND PROTECTS SERVICES OF GENERAL INTEREST.

The volume of international trade in services is growing – not least as a consequence of international trade agreements negotiated and signed by the EU.

Such agreements may have strong effects on working conditions and employment in services. Ample public scrutiny and respect for social rights must therefore be guaranteed in trade negotiations.

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A successful EU services policy for a quality and innovation-centred services industry must be based on scientific evidence. This requires policy-oriented research programmes bringing together the various strands of excellent but underfunded services research. Particular emphasis must be given to the involvement of stakeholders, such as policy-makers and social partners, in research processes.

REALISING THIS, WE DEMAND: SERVICES RESEARCH THAT IS SUFFICIENTLY FUNDED AND GEARED TOWARDS THE NEEDS OF PRACTITIONERS BECAUSE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE IS CRUCIAL TO IMPROVE THE GOVERNANCE OF SERVICES IN EUROPE.