

European Social Partners' project on Circular Economy

Cluster seminar

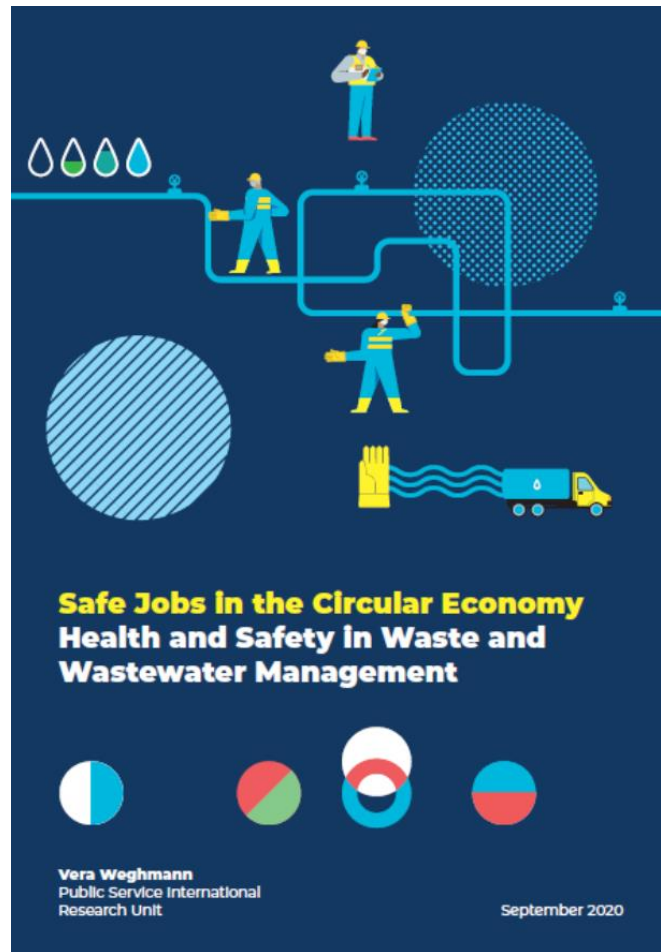
Belgium - Czechia - Germany - Denmark
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EUROPEAN PUBLIC SERVICE UNION

EPSU in a nutshell

- **8** million public service workers in **269** trade unions: EU, Russia, central Asia, Turkey
- EPSU is one of the **European Trade Union Federations** (Industrial Europe, ETF, EFBBW, UNI-Europa, EFFAT, etc.)
- **ETUC** largest federation and European region of **Public Services International**
- **4 sectors**: Health & social services, Local & regional governments, National & European administrations, Utilities (energy, waste, water) + company policy
- EPSU represents environmental services workers
- Secretariat: based in **Brussels** (20 staff)

New EPSU report



New EPSU report

Safe Jobs in the Circular Economy. Health and Safety in Waste and Wastewater management.

The report

- provides an overview of the circular economy policies and legislations in Europe and their (lack of) engagement with workers' health and safety;
- identifies the main health and safety risks for workers operating circular waste and wastewater management systems;
- sets out policy recommendations to facilitate good and safe jobs in the circular economy.

Last report

- Follows a report from 2018: Waste Management in Europe. Good Jobs in the Circular Economy
- looked at employment and employment trends in the circular economy with a particular focus on waste management



Essential workers running the circular economy

“One day, our society will come to respect the sanitation worker if it is to survive, for the person who picks up our garbage, in the final analysis, is as significant as the physician, for if he doesn’t do his job, diseases are rampant. All labour has dignity.”

Martin Luther King, addressing the sanitation workers on strike on 18 March 1968 in Memphis

Conclusion & policy recommendations

- Make labour in the circular economy visible
- There is a severe lack of research on the health and safety of circular economy workers
- The EU's circular economy policies currently ignore the health and safety of workers

Health & Safety

- Europe's circular-economy success has been achieved by exporting waste to other countries—mostly with lower labour costs and weaker environmental regulations.
- Long shipment periods, climate change, etc. increase the risk of contamination, dangerous for workers and decreasing its recyclability.
- A lot of recycling and re-use activities take place in the informal sector.

Conclusion & policy recommendations

- The EU needs to expand its recycling capacity.
- From a circular economy to a fair and sustainable economy (producer and consumer perspective): fair-label & fair-design
- Green New Deal must aim for good quality jobs rather than just focusing on the quantity of jobs created.
- Moving from a circular economy driven by profit rather than sustainability can only be achieved by public ownership and control (good example Ljubljana, Slovenia).

Thanks for your attention

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