

Press Release 11/2013  
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## **CEEP at the European Council: “Public services give Europe a competitive advantage”**

For the first time ever the European cross-industry social partners have been invited to address the European Council. On this occasion, Valeria Ronzitti, General Secretary of CEEP, stated that “We strongly welcome this initiative and see it as progress from when the previous attempt to organise an Employment Summit failed”.

“CEEP supports the message that public finances must be restored and banking regulated. However, it is clear from several Member States that an ambitious social model can indeed be compatible with sound public finances and global competitiveness.” Mrs. Ronzitti continued stating that the current problems Europe is facing cannot be solved with austerity measures alone. “Actions to tackle unemployment and financial shortcomings must be connected with investments in enabling sectors like infrastructures or digital services.”

Making a direct reference to this week’s Public Services Summit, Mrs. Ronzitti underlined that the Summit demonstrated that public services providers can be innovative and think ‘outside the box’ when adapting and responding to current challenges. “But it is also time that Member States start thinking outside the box and recognise that public services give Europe a competitive advantage. Those who have done so and kept supporting public services instead of cutting them back have weathered the crisis better.”

Valeria Ronzitti also highlighted that the current unemployment levels, in particular for young people, are not sustainable and there is an urgency to reverse this situation. She emphasised that public services employers are ready to make their contribution to reverse the trend and positively respond to the call of President Barroso to “work together for Europe’s young people”. However, Ms. Ronzitti urged Member States to live up to their role of having the main responsibility for implementation, especially when it comes to putting in place measures to combat the skills mismatch – a key concern for public services.

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CEEP gathers enterprises and organisations from across Europe, both public and private, at national, regional and local level, which are public employers or providers of services of general interest. CEEP members contribute to more than 26% of EU GDP and employ 30% of the EU workforce: CEEP is one of the three general cross-industry European Social Partners.