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## **STRATEGIES FOR A LASTING SUPPLY OF PUBLIC SERVICE ASSIGNMENTS**

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## **1.**

The aims of ver.di, the united trade union for the service sector, include establishing quality of life through social justice, prosperity, peaceful labour relations, opportunities for participation, equal opportunities for everyone with regard to health, internal security, a well developed infrastructure and public services in line with citizens' needs.

The economic principle of competition must be set in a social context through government intervention and regulation. We call for economic, financial, social and environmental policy which is founded on solidarity and responds to the people's needs, and which offers equal prospects and opportunities for women and men of all generations.

To this end, we need a democratic, efficient, effective and controllable state which establishes the necessary infrastructures, which guarantees the people security and opportunities to play an active role in shaping society and their lives, and which imposes limits on competition: We need a state which ensures that competition serves the people, and not vice-versa.

## **2.**

Services of general interest and the public-sector economy provide the foundation for a modern community organised along sustainable lines.

- They aim to involve everyone in society by offering opportunities for education and training, enabling communication and mobility and affording access to health services, information and culture.
- They help to protect the environment through standards in the areas of waste disposal and drinking water supply, through renewable energies and energy efficiency, through the conservation of resources in the transport sector.
- They cover the development and maintenance of infrastructures which help to sustain an efficient economy, in the areas of energy, postal services, telecommunications or waste water.

## **3.**

The larger German municipal authorities in particular are currently subject to financial constraints. The political drive to privatise and deregulate public services appears propitious for the cash-strapped municipal authorities. In the short term, the sale of lucrative public companies - energy or water utilities, for example, as well as hospitals or transport undertakings - provides the authorities with a cash injection.

In the long term, however, selling off these assets compounds the financial problems. In the absence of the autonomous public undertakings, there is a risk of a concentrated

supply monopoly among private suppliers, with correspondingly deleterious economic, ecological and social consequences.

Local government bodies must retain the freedom to decide how they wish to provide public services. It must not become compulsory to put these services out to tender.

**4.**

Services of general interest are intrinsic to the European social model. Article 16 of the EC Treaty focuses on the workability of services of general economic interest. This must now be defined in specific terms covering concrete quality criteria: Security of supply, equal access, defined service quality, reasonable pricing, equal treatment of customers, fair distribution, due consideration of social and ecological requirements and democratic controllability.

**5.**

The area of public services must be exempted from the GATS regime. Priority must be accorded to the powers to implement arrangements and control measures being retained at national level. Every society must be able to decide independently and democratically on the appropriate nature and scope of public services which are in line with its preferences, traditions and values and capable of achieving general approval within the society concerned.