

## AGORA N° 79: Precarious work in the public sector



Can be read on [the USB website](#): the articles are in FR or EN. At the end of most of them, you will find a QR-code or a link to the translation in the alternative language. In case you prefer to receive a paper version, ask for your copy at [EPSU-CJ@curia.europa.eu](mailto:EPSU-CJ@curia.europa.eu).

In this first revamped issue we report on growing **job insecurity**. Two popular targets for **austerity measures in Europe** in recent decades have consistently been:

- the public sector, under constant challenge from the trend towards privatisation;
- the security of full-time, permanent employment.

A civil service that was once considered **indispensable to ensure the impartiality, independence, competence and continuity of public policy** is replaced by **precarious, fixed-term jobs with a lower level of protection, or simply by private-law employment contracts**, whether in local authorities, hospitals, schools, railways, or at the European Commission. Read a quick overview of the developments in the last 30-40 years showing increasing job insecurity in the European civil service which is far from being an isolated phenomenon. In all civil services, the New Public Management imported from English-speaking countries has led to an excessive flexibilisation in the form of fixed-term contracts, part-time work, lower pay, less social welfare, agencification and, as a result, higher levels of job insecurity (see: "Insecurity in the civil service: an increasingly common paradox", p. 25 ff.).

One of its instruments, the **Public - private Partnerships**, also applied on basic needs such as water, proved to be a "costly and inefficient financing mechanism for infrastructure and services". ("*Partenariats Public-Privé (PPP)*", p. 28 ff. in FR only, [complete report](#)).

You might have heard your colleagues of the **temporary or contract staff** complain. You will find an explanation on what is to be understood by "**precarious work**" and you can read a number of articles about experiences in different European institutions. Due to the reduction of salaries over time, the lower grades of officials (AST 1 or AST/SC) also suffer situations of precariousness.

However, we also tell you what **Union Syndicale Fédérale** can do:

- A report on our **successful battle with the European Central Bank** to halt further deterioration in job stability (p. 10-13).
- An article on the **practical assistance** that **Union Syndicale Fédérale** can provide to employees in a difficult situation (p. 16 ff.).

To strengthen individuals facing hardship in their personal or professional life, **Coaching** can be a tool for self-empowerment through a guided journey. Coming from theatre and passing by sports training, it was then adapted to the corporate world (team coaching, executive coaching and personal development) and to individuals in a non-professional context Coaching (see: "**The power to change lives**", p 26 ff).