



European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)

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Unions agree action for Social pillar in Energy Community

The South East European Energy trade unions concluded a ground breaking cooperation agreement to confront the lack of a social pillar in the South East European Energy Community, 17 November 2005. An annual work programme was agreed to deal with the implementation of the internal market for electricity and gas. The EPSU led group commits to prevent governments taking ill-advised measures that could hurt workers and citizens especially the poor. The unions note the negative consequences for jobs, working conditions and training in the EU and the problems the internal market is experiencing.

“With 300.000 jobs lost in the EU and reductions of 30-40 or even 50% to be expected, and that in countries with already high unemployment, and an increase in the price of electricity for domestic users, the lack of a social pillar in the Treaty is irresponsible” argues Jan Willem Goudriaan, EPSU Deputy General Secretary.

The unions welcome the positive statement on the Memorandum on the social dimension of the SEE Energy Community by European Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs at the EPSU Energy Conference (4 November). Work needs to be speeded up though. The Memorandum needs to be finished and discussed urgently. “We see no discussion on the social dimension in our countries. We want the Energy Ministers of the EU and the Energy ministers of the SEE Energy Community to support the social pillar” argued one of the participants. EPSU Deputy General Secretary stated: “An unbalanced way forward, solely focused on competition and economic interests, undermines the positive signal of European cooperation. We need a Social Europe, not a Europe governed by corporate interests”.

The unions agreed a number of urgent actions. This includes participation in the energy demonstration 1 December 2005, Brussels. This day the Council of Ministers for Energy meets. The evaluation of the internal market for electricity and gas and the South East European Energy Community are on its agenda.

Background

The Treaty to establish a South East European Energy Treaty was signed 25 October. Participating countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Roumania, Serbia-Montenegro, UNMIK (Kosovo) Moldova is an observer and Ukraine has argued that it would sign the Treaty as well. Negotiations with Turkey are ongoing.

The two day seminar was organised by EPSU and PSI, EPSU's international sister federation), 16-17 November 2005, Velenje, Slovenia. The local organisation was provided by the Slovenian Energy union, SDE. The seminar was supported by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

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For more information on the EPSU evaluation of the internal market:
www.epsu.org/a/1465 (scroll down for the full research report, employment figures, EPSU position)

www.epsu.org/a/1526 for the different presentations of the EPSU Conference including the speech of EU Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs

www.epsu.org/r/239 for more information on the trade union campaign for a social pillar and the Trade Union Platform for a Social Pillar

www.epsu.org/a/1460 for the Trade Union Platform for a Social Pillar.

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EPSU is the European Federation of Public Service Unions. It is the largest federation of the ETUC. 8 million public service workers and their 213 trade unions are members. They organise workers in health and social services, local and national administration, energy, water, waste.

In the energy sector EPSU organises in electricity and gas, in production, transmission, distribution, retail and auxiliary services. Our members work in power plants using all fuels such as nuclear, hydro, coal, renewables, gas and wind. Our employers are small and large public (state and municipal) and private companies.

For more information on EPSU and our work: www.epsu.org

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