

Workshop on Social Dialogue in Western Balkan Countries - Energy

(23 April 2012) The Energy Community is bringing many changes for the energy sector in the Western Balkans. This will also be the case for Moldova and Ukraine which have become members of the Energy Community. The governments of these two countries have also committed to implement the Memorandum of Understanding on the Social Dimension of the Energy Community. For the first time participants of EPSU affiliates from these countries were present at an event organized in the frame of the Energy Community.

Social Dialogue has been an important issue for the energy trade unions on the Western Balkans. The Memorandum commits to promote the social dialogue. Unions complain that governments and employers do not actively participate. This is confirmed by a study done for the European Commission on the social dialogue and industrial relations on the Western Balkans. This study was the subject of a seminar that brought together employers, trade unions and government representatives. [The study](#) indicates that governments do not facilitate the sectoral social dialogue enough and the departments dealing with the bipartite dialogue are understaffed and under-resourced. The employers are often not organized and including at the EU level. The study is also critical of the trade unions pointing out the fragmentation and lack of resources for the national union level.

Colleagues of ETUC commented as did a representative of [CEEP](#), the employers organization for the public sector. Another interesting presentation was made by Youcef Cheilab of the ILO who also pointed out that very few of the countries with the exception of Albania have ratified [ILO convention 151](#) on labour relations in the public sector. Different countries presented their experience and colleagues from Moldova and Ukraine pointed out their problems. Representatives of both employers and trade unions from Croatia stressed the importance of the integration committees that prepare for accession to the European Union. The European social partners for the electricity sector stressed their willingness to integrate the social partners from the countries concerned in the social dialogue committee electricity.

The workshop took place on 20 April 2012, Vienna. The EPSU Deputy General

Secretary participated. It was organized by DG Employment, Social Affairs and social inclusions and the Energy Community Secretariat. The [presentations of the meeting are available here](#). The 5th Social Forum will be organized in Podgorica, Montenegro.

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