



European electricity social partners underline importance of high levels of safety and security in nuclear industry

Following the nuclear accident in Fukushima earlier this year, the European social partners for the electricity industry have considered the implications for security and safety of workers in the nuclear industry. EURELECTRIC for the employers and EPSU/EMCEF for the trade union side agreed on a joint position at the plenary meeting of the electricity social dialogue committee on 6 December 2011. The joint position covers: security and safety, transparency and accountability, health and safety, decommissioning, and skills. With this position the social partners wish to contribute to the ongoing process of the nuclear stress tests, whose interim results were discussed at last week's European Council on 8-9 December.

The social partners for the electricity sector strongly believe that the nuclear industry needs to meet the highest levels of safety possible. A European approach in this area is needed. The stress tests are thus a step in the right direction and open the process for discussions on European health, safety and security standards for the nuclear sector. Following the potential recommendations of the stress tests, appropriate measures need to be taken to ensure that power stations meet the safety levels required.

Jan Ruden, President (EPSU) of the electricity social dialogue committee, said: "Health and safety needs to have the highest priority in the nuclear industry, including for sub-contracted workers. We urge the Commission to take this into account when developing legislation to improve safety and security."

Emanuela Preiti, Vice-President (EURELECTRIC) of the electricity social dialogue committee, added: "With this joint statement the sectoral social partners strongly contribute to the debate on transparency and safety within the nuclear generation industry, while also addressing training and skills dimensions. The choice of energy mix, including all low-carbon options, is a legal prerogative of the member states. However, a European approach to managing the potential impacts of those choices is crucial."

Bernd Frieg, Vice-President (EMCEF) of the electricity social dialogue committee, stressed: "The joint position underlines the valuable contributions the social dialogue can make even on quite sensitive issues. The social partners demand to be listened to and to be involved in the consultations on the follow-up to the stress tests."

The European social partners invite the European Commission to:

- present the first results of the nuclear stress tests to the electricity sectoral social dialogue committee and to indicate if and how it will take the opinion of the social partners into account.
- prepare, together with European social partners, an overview of the impact that future developments in the nuclear industry may have on employment and future skill needs.
- present to the European social partners an overview of the impact of decommissioning on employment, skills and qualifications, and health and safety.

- address the security and safety of workers and evaluate the relations between operators and subcontractors in the upcoming nuclear safety directive to ensure the highest levels of health and safety and appropriate training.

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