Electricity social partners adopt texts on training, youth unemployment and Energy Community social strategy



(15 March 2013) Employers and trade unions in the electricity sector adopted three positions in the electricity social dialogue committee which took place on 15 March 2013, Brussels. Jan Ruden, the EPSU chair of the Standing Committee Utilities and EPSU vice-chair of the social dialogue committee signed the three statements on behalf of EPSU.

A joint framework of actions on competencies and training – addressing youth unemployment and climate change

The European electricity sector is at an unprecedented cross-roads facing key challenges to meet Europe’s energy and climate objectives for 2020 and beyond.

This transition towards a low-carbon economy will imply a complete transformation of the sector, strongly impacting upon today and tomorrow's skills and jobs needs, and requiring massive investments in generation capacity and infrastructures. The European Electricity Social Partners "*strongly believe that social dialogue at company, national and European level has a key role to play to anticipate those changes and allow for a smooth transition of the sector.*" The framework of actions addresses a broad range of issues including youth unemployment, equality and climate change. One youth unemployment we say: "*The Social Partners are committed to ensure young workers also find jobs in the electricity sector. There is a commitment to increase the number of apprenticeships in the companies with a view to employing those young workers on a full-time basis in our sector.*" The social partners also support the idea of the youth guarantee.

The framework also commits to a time table for the follow up, reporting and review.

Joint position on a quality framework for traineeships

EPSU and the other social partners agreed a joint statement on the Commission consultation on a quality framework for traineeships. The social partners are committed to ensure young workers also find jobs in the electricity sector. The industry will need many new workers to replace workers that will retire and to deal with new challenges and new technologies. They are concerned about persistent and high youth unemployment. This will be damaging to society. They therefore support the attention of the European Commission to address youth unemployment in the recent Communication Towards a Job rich recovery. It is welcome that the consultation pays attention to issues of "low pay, low protection and poor terms and conditions as well as the lack of high quality learning content, the use of trainees to carry out mundane work, and the substitution of trainees for regular employees". The quality framework should include the elements the Commission suggests such as: conclusion of a trainee-ship agreement, defining the professional and learning objectives and tutoring/guidance, recognition of the trainee-ship, reasonable duration, adequate social protection and remuneration of the trainee and the transparency of rights and obligations. The statement further says that our members have experience addressing these issues in collective agreements, company level agreements and other policies in accordance with national practices. When the inter-sectoral partners agree to address these issues through negotiations the electricity social partners commit to contribute through our respective organisations. If the European Commission will proceed with preparing legislation,

they want to be further consulted.

Joint response to Social Strategy of the Energy Community

The Ministerial Council of the Energy Community agreed to conduct a consultation on the future of the social strategy of the Energy community following proposals of EPSU. The European social partners agreed a joint contribution. The main points:
- The Memorandum of Understanding on the Social issues is to remain the backbone, and including the national social working groups, social plans and Social Forum, of the Social energy strategy.
- The binding character should be strengthened and the Energy Community Secretariat provided with more resources to monitor its implementation. The Ministerial Council should work with deadlines similar as with regard to the energy acquis.
- A social dialogue for the region on the basis of the European social dialogue should be promoted by the European Commission and the Energy Community Secretariat. This social dialogue would allow the employers and trade unions, and where required with the governments, to agree basic positions that would guide the development of the social dimension of the energy strategy in the region.

- The full contribution of the social partners

- Background on the social strategy of the energy community

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