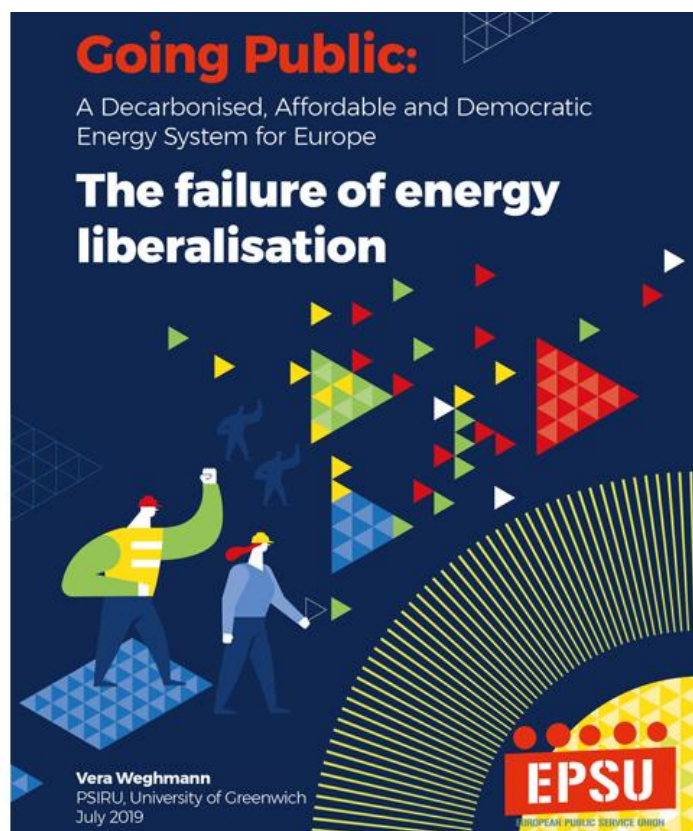


EPSU challenges Brussels consensus on market-based solutions to fight climate breakdown



(16 December 2019) In the past months, the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) has sought to influence the debate around decarbonisation of the European economy and the need for a just transition. To this end, EPSU published a report, “[Going Public: A Decarbonised, Affordable and Democratic Energy System for Europe](#)”, written by Dr Vera Weghmann from the Public Services International Research Unit (PSIRU) at the University of Greenwich. The report gives an overview of the past 20 years of liberalisation in Europe’s energy sector and calls for a radical rethinking of the economic orthodoxy of Brussels and the European decision-makers. It posits that public ownership will be essential for delivering decarbonisation in a socially just and inclusive manner and provides the opportunity to enhance energy democracy for Europe’s citizens.

On 09 December, the [Right to Energy Coalition](#) spearheaded the organisation of an event, “A Green New Deal for All Europeans?”, in the European Parliament. The

event tackled issues of energy poverty and energy democracy in the context of the European Green Deal. Dr Weghmann was in attendance to present EPSU's report and open a dialogue on the experiences of liberalisation and public ownership, particularly remunicipalisation, in the energy sector. Joining members of the Right to Energy coalition on the panel were MEPs from the Greens/EFA and GUE/NGL groups in the European Parliament.

The next day, EPSU hosted lunch debate on the Future of Europe's Energy System where Dr Weghmann spoke alongside EPSU General Secretary, Jan Willem Goudriaan, and Director of Friends of the Earth Europe, Jagoda Munić. At the event, Dr Weghmann stressed that public ownership is not a fix-all and a goal in itself, but rather a starting place from which we can build innovative and democratic solutions to deal with the climate emergency while ensuring a just transition.

On Wednesday, 11 December, immediately after the European Commission published its communication on the European Green Deal, the GUE/NGL group held an event, "European Industrial Policy – A Tool for a Green New Deal". At the event, trade unionists, think-tankers, and left MEPs spoke of the left's vision for the Green Deal and about the need for the Commission to take a holistic approach with a focus on social inclusion and public investment in industry. Dr Weghmann once again presented her report and pushed forward the dialogue about public ownership and investment as an alternative in fighting the climate emergency to market-based solutions favoured by the majority of policymakers in Brussels.

In the coming months, as the European institutions roll out proposals as part of the European Green Deal, EPSU will continue to push the debate on public ownership and advocate for properly funded public services across Europe. Universal and affordable access to public services as well as high levels of public investment will be essential to realising the goals of the European Green Deal while ensuring no one or no region is left behind during the transition to a decarbonised continent.

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