

Climate change: Voicing the concerns of workers in energy, water and waste

(17 February 2011) The trade unions discussed the implications of climate change on public services and in particular on energy, water and waste. The [recommendations of a study-><http://www.epsu.org/IMG/pdf/PP-dupressoir-confsept-final.pdf>] were debated and approved. Trade unions are concerned that the Commission fails to include Just Transition principles in its policies even though these can have significant impacts on workers – the shift from carbon based fuels to renewables affects entire regions for example. And while the fuel mix is a national issue with each country determining if it supports investments in nuclear, carbon capture and storage, renewable etc. the internal market, interconnections, the growth in renewables and the prevention of state aid make investment policies for companies very uncertain. Colleagues noted this effect most fuels including gas which used to be called a clean resource. The discussion on the 2050 energy road map remains a priority and should lead to a clear framework to guide long term investments. Other issues on the agenda of the standing committee: - Water – Members discussed the programme of the [water conference of 22 March->art6958] with issues such as [water as a human right->art7110] , the water campaign to support public water, concessions but also the corporate developments. - Waste – The European Action Day in November 2011, public procurement, health and safety and support for the bio-safety network that focuses on the prevention of accidents with medical sharps including for waste workers, companies that qualify for a European Works Council and making progress with a dialogue with the European employers organizations were issues considered following up from the [EPSU waste workshop->art7242]. - Energy- Important discussions took place on the results of the European Council 4 February, energy poverty, networks and nuclear safety. The European Parliament is debating amendments to a proposal of a Directive on how to deal with [nuclear waste-><http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/FindByProcnum.do?lang=2&procnum=NLE/...>]. EPSU is concerned that health and safety of workers is properly considered and the protection for subcontracted workers is taken into account. The discussions were a follow up from the [EPSU energy workshop->art6957]. A conference on nuclear safety will be organized 22-23 June by several EPSU affiliates with support of EPSU.

The lobby to change the directive on the operational protection of outside workers exposed to [the risk of ionizing radiation during their activities in controlled areas-><http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31990L0641:...>] was raised. As regards energy poverty unions have been working with low income campaigners to raise the dangers of people being cut of. A recent example is [Out in the Cold-><http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/18971.pdf>] from the UK - Work programme of the Standing Committee. An overview was presented of the issues that have been addressed based on the [Congress resolution->art 5539] The Committee considered a set of new areas such as the energy road maps, networks, just transition and investment policies of the [European Investment Bank-><http://www.eib.org/about/cr/index.htm>] and [European Bank for Reconstruction and Development-><http://www.ebrd.com/pages/about.shtml>] as well as priorities in the water and waste sector. - The work of the EPSU delegation in the electricity and gas social dialogues was approved. Issues in the [electricity social dialogue->rub99] are the follow up to the recommendations of the [just transition project->art7118] considering further actions and work on skills and qualifications, and the energy policy and related issues such as the Energy Roadmap 2050. For the [gas sector social dialogue->rub98] Corporate social responsibility, skills and qualifications and the future of gas will be the main issues. - Collective Bargaining – Several contributions were made and the links with the ongoing discussions on European economic governance underlined. The forthcoming European Action Day and Euro-demonstration organized by the ETUC was supported. It will take place 9 April 2011, Budapest. Unions reject the government and European Commission interference in wages and reject the one sided economic policies. Another issue was the WISUTIL project EPSU supports and unions were encouraged to work with members and workers to increase the response rate further. Information about recent pay developments was provided. See also-[<http://www.epsu.org/cob/94->http://www.epsu.org/cob/94>]. The Standing Committee Utilities met 15 February 2011 in Luxembourg. Jan Ruden, vice-president (SEKO) chaired the meeting. He welcomed in particular the attendance of the colleagues from Central and Eastern Europe and the Russian delegations. Documents are [available here->rub564]. The EPSU EWC Coordinators met 14 February. The report will be available soon.

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