

KEEP THE LIGHTS ON ! NE COUPEZ PAS LE JUS ! **HOUD DE LICHTEN AAN ! LICHTER AN !**

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1500 energy workers descended on Brussels 1 December 2005. They gave a vocal signal to the European energy ministers who are meeting today: Keep the lights on. Stop the deregulation madness. In the light of mounting evidence illustrating problems the ministers are considering progress with the internal market for electricity and gas. A Commission evaluation report is on top of the agenda.

A delegation from the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) will meet with the European Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs, and UK Energy Minister Malcom Wicks to deliver the message that EU energy policies are not working.

Liberalisation has:

- not brought about more employment.
- not lower prices for citizens.
- not delivered a more secure and reliable energy system.
- Meant that workers in the energy sector have lost out: 300.000 job losses over 10 years.
- Led to lack of investment in infrastructure, in generation capacity, in training and qualifications and in Research and Development combine to threaten Europe's long-term secure, safe and affordable energy systems.

Most players in the sector share the analysis that the market is not functioning including the UK Presidency and large industrial users of electricity and gas.

“The UK Presidency and Commission prescribe more of the same medicine, competition. It has been tested before and did not work. It is not a smart drug and works indiscriminately, damaging well-functioning electricity and gas services. The risks threaten the energy system and ultimately Europe's prospects for growth and competitiveness, hurting vulnerable users and large businesses alike, ” argues Jan

Willem Goudriaan, EPSU Deputy General Secretary.

The trade unions say:

- Allow Member States to keep markets closed and regulated for domestic users. No forced opening in 2007.
- Set targets for investment, including in training, research and development, and maintenance and repair.
- No forced ownership unbundling
- Future measures should lead to marked improvements in employment and security of supply. New measures should improve public service obligations and give users more rights, strengthen reliability and contribute to sustainable development.

“The Commission and governments should take account of the position of workers. Workers have a hands-on view of what is happening to investment, maintenance and repair, and what are the daily pressures exerted on them to save costs to maximise profits”, adds the EPSU Deputy General Secretary

Another problem to which EPSU wants to draw attention, is the lack of a social pillar in the South East European Energy Treaty. This extends the internal market to the countries of South East Europe, but without the social laws and regulations that apply in the EU. “That is unacceptable. The Commission is addressing this, but it should be speeded up and should receive full backing of the Council. That has been lacking up till now”, says EPSU.

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EPSU is the European Federation of Public Service Unions. It is the largest federation of the ETUC. 8 million public service workers and their 213 trade unions are members. They organise workers in health and social services, local and national administration, energy, water, waste.

In the energy sector EPSU organises in electricity and gas, in production, transmission, distribution, retail and auxiliary services. Our members work in power plants using all fuels such as nuclear, hydro, coal, renewables, gas and wind. Our employers are small and large public (state and municipal) and private companies.

For more information on EPSU and our work: www.epsu.org









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