

Austrian EVN agrees European Works Council with Macedonian representation

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The Austrian company EVN active in water, energy and related services agreed to establish a European Works Council, 12 September 2007. The company employs around 10.000 workers predominantly in Austria, Bulgaria and Macedonia. The Special negotiating body reached agreement with management and the EWC will include representation from the Macedonian work force in the distribution company. It is believed to be one of the first EWC agreements with a representative of the Macedonian trade unions.

Welcoming the agreement, EPSU Deputy General Secretary **Jan Willem Goudriaan** comments:

It is important that workers and their unions are guaranteed the right to be informed and consulted on corporate policy of the EU energy companies, also when these companies gobble up the privatized assets in non-EU countries. EVN is a positive example".

Important issues in the agreement include:

- Reference to consultation with a view to reach agreement;
- Possibilities for training of EWC members;
- Allowing for extra-ordinary meetings;
- The right of the Steering committee (called presidium) to visit workplaces in the

different

countries to discuss with local trade union representatives the situation in the company.

- An extended list of issues which the EWC can cover including health and safety, data protection, environmental policy, training and qualifications policy and “other questions that are of economic, social, health or cultural interest of the workers in at least two companies in EVN”.

- Role for expert of EPSU.

The trade union side was supported in the negotiations by Wolfgang Greif of Austrian union

GPA and the EPSU's Jan Willem Goudriaan who co-signed the agreement.

Other energy companies with a EWC include: Eon, RWE, Vattenfall, Fortum, EdF, GdF, Suez,

while a EWC is being negotiated in ENEL.

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