

## **Safety and Security in the Nuclear Industry - Joint position agreed**

(7 December 2011) The nuclear accident which followed the earthquake and tsunami that hit Fukushima led to a renewed focus on nuclear safety in Europe with some countries even phasing out their nuclear power stations such as Germany. The Members of the European Union and several non-EU countries such as Switzerland and Ukraine agreed to undertake so called nuclear stress tests, the interim results of which have been evaluated by the European Commission. The social partners for the electricity industry agreed to work together to reflect on safety and security for the nuclear industry. The representatives of the European electricity employers and trade unions agreed a joint position on Security and Safety in the Nuclear Industry at their plenary meeting of the sectoral social dialogue committee, 6 December.

The main points:

The social partners for the electricity sector strongly believe that the nuclear industry needs to meet the highest levels of safety possible and consider that a European approach in this area is needed. The stress tests are thus a step in the right direction and open the process for discussions on European health, safety and security standards for the nuclear sector. Following the potential recommendations of the stress tests, appropriate measures need to be taken that ensure that power stations meet the safety levels required.

The statement has sections on:

*Safety and security* in which a reference is made to the importance of ensuring subcontracted workers are also benefiting from a high level of health and safety and training;

*Transparency and Accountability* which underline the role of the social partners, the importance of consultation and the need for the regulatory bodies to also take account of the views of the trade unions.

## *Health and Safety*

*Decommissioning* Once decisions are taken to decommission a nuclear power station highest standards should remain ensured.

*Skills* With many workers retiring ensuring qualified workers is an issue

The statement concludes with asking the Commission:

- To present the results of the nuclear stress tests to the sectoral social dialogue committee, and if and how it has taken the position into account;
- To prepare with the social partners the impact of future developments in the nuclear industry on employment and skills;
- To give an overview of the impact of decommissioning on employment, skills and qualifications, and health and safety;
- To address health and safety of workers and to evaluate the relations between operators and subcontractors in the upcoming nuclear safety directive. The social partners seek the highest levels of health and safety and training and including for subcontracted workforce

The statement will be sent to the relevant European organisations.

For a [report of the rest of the issues considered at the sectoral social dialogue committee see here](#).

The meeting took place 6 December 2011, Brussels. EPSU was represented by colleagues from Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, UK and the EPSU Deputy General Secretary.

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