

Public service, democracy and employment key to European Energy Policy

Europe's energy policy was the main topic of the 25th meeting of the EPSU Standing Committee on Public Utilities. Members adopted the EPSU response to the European Green Paper on European Energy Policy. Key elements of the EPSU response:

- The internal market for electricity and gas can not be the starting point of a coherent European energy policy. EPSU questions the assumption of the Commission that the internal market will contribute to security of supply and sustainable development. The essential nature of electricity and gas as a public service needs to be recognised. Investment is a key challenge and the internal market does not deliver this.

- Read the [**EPSU position on 'EU Green Paper: A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy**](#) -

COM (2006) 105 final 8 March 2006', **as adopted by the EPSU Standing Committee on Public Utilities, 27 September 2006**

- European's energy policy needs a social engagement that focuses on employment, and which takes trade union rights, social dialogue, training, fuel poverty into account. The energy dialogues with other countries and regions should be open and have a stakeholder process that involves trade unions, environmental and other groups;

- EPSU is committed to sustainable development. Promoting the efficient use of fuels and promoting renewable energy sources should be priorities of a European energy policy to address climate change. Massive public investment is needed in new technologies such as wave and tidal energy. The fuel mix remains a national issue.

- While many energy issues can be discussed at European level, EPSU is concerned about democratic control of decisions. Large corporations have more resources to influence regulators, Parliament and Commission than do anti-poverty organisations for example. EPSU is therefore currently not in favour of a European regulator.

Other issues considered:

- The Standing Committee approved the work of the EPSU delegation in the social dialogue committee electricity. The social dialogue committee considers equality and diversity, corporate social responsibility, energy policy, health and safety amongst others.

- Members adopted a declaration, on a proposal of the EPSU EWC Coordinators, which explains the role of EPSU in case of conflicts regarding the establishment of the European Company. This will be part of the guidelines on the trade union role in the European Company.

- Members agreed to argue for a plan B in response to the internal market for electricity and gas.

- A presentation on the work of the Council of European Energy Regulators (CEER) was given by Mrs Ritva Hirvanen, working in the Finnish regulator and representing CEER. She gave an overview of the work of CEER. Members discussed the desirability of changing the objectives of the work of CEER whose main focus is to ensure effective and competitive markets. Colleagues and Mrs Hirvanen also debated the need for a European regulator and the conditions for it. A working group on regulation was established.

- The Standing Committee reflected further on World Water Day 22 March 2007 and noted developments in the gas sector towards the establishment of a social dialogue committee. It welcomed the meeting of the waste group (15 February 2007). With regard to developments in the waste sector the most serious issue is that competition drives pay and working conditions down. Other issues for reflection are public procurement and the handling of hazardous waste.

Members said goodbye to Johann Wagner. He was the longest serving member on the Committee and participated in the committee from the beginning. He will retire. EPSU Deputy General Secretary thanked Johann for his contribution to the work of

the Committee. Johann noted that much progress has been made and wished Members success in continuation of the battle for protection of workers. The meeting was chaired by Sven Bergelin, President of the Standing Committee.

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