

A Genuine European energy policy must mean genuine consultation

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**A Genuine European energy policy must mean genuine consultation
“New EU energy policy initiative must reflect concerns of ALL stakeholders
and not just big energy companies”**

Subject : EPSU reaction to Green Paper on European Energy Policy

(Brussels, 7 March, 2006) Tomorrow sees the publication by the European Commission of the Green Paper on European Energy Policy. The European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) has seen a draft of the text and is extremely concerned that the promised consultation will be little more than a cosmetic exercise.

This claim is based on the lack of recognition on the part of the European Commission of the clear structural faults in the Internal Market for Energy.

“Europe's citizens would expect the Green paper to address the problem of the biggest fish eating the small in the energy sector. It fails to do so and Europe's energy policy risks being privatised and left in the hands of a limited number of very powerful energy companies”, says EPSU Deputy General Secretary Jan Willem Goudriaan. “The Commission had an opportunity to redress the balance in favour of democratic control and social objectives and flunked it.”

EPSU acknowledges that the Green Paper is an important input for the debate on European Energy Policy and contains suggestions to address major concerns such as energy dependence and the environmental impact of fuel use in the European Union.

However it is essential that there is genuine consultation of all stakeholders. Mr Goudriaan stated that; “it is not only energy workers who have legitimate concerns -

poverty groups, the environmental lobby and consumer groups have to be convinced that their voices will not be frozen out of this process in favour of big energy companies. It is one thing for the Commission to claim they will consult; It is quite another for them to prove it. Legislative action requires democratic participation.

He adds: **“The European Commission exports EU problems such as lack of investment, higher prices for domestic and industrial users and job loss by pushing the failed concept of the internal market onto neighbouring countries. While the focus on the EU's external energy relations is worthwhile, we can have little confidence in EU energy policy that does not strengthen public service obligations nor foresees a direct role for workers and citizens. A real European energy policy must mean that a Presidency Minister or Commissioner can be sacked if the lights go out. Without accountability, there are limits to a European policy. Citizens do not want control over essential services escaping them being left at the mercy of profiteering corporate interests”.**

Full title of Commission's work: Green Paper on Secure, Competitive and Sustainable Energy for Europe, COM (2006) 105 final.

For more information, please contact Jan Willem Goudriaan or EPSU press officer Brian Synnott, + 32 2 2501080 or + 32 474 96 98 75 or write to us at epsu@epsu.org.

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.

Background information:

- EPSU has evaluated the consequences of the internal market for electricity and

gas together with PSIRU of the University of Greenwich. Our research and position paper can be found at: www.epsu.org/a/1465

- EPSU published background material together with the European trade union institute (ETUI) on the liberalisation of network industries: www.epsu.org/a/1485

- An active campaign is ongoing to obtain a Social Pillar in the South East European Energy Treaty. The Commission has failed to include this so far.
www.epsu.org/r/239

- Our general work on energy policy and recent developments can be found at: www.epsu.org/r/34

- EPSU's evaluation of the impact of EU neighbourhood policies on public services is available on-line at: www.epsu.org/a/1764

- Our 2003 report on how liberalisation increases the risks for blackouts and commissioned from PSIRU can be found at:
www.psiru.org/reports/2003-12-E-blackouts.doc

- A series of reports on energy, consumers, companies, outsourcing etc. is available through www.psiru.org/publicationsindex.asp

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