

## **EWC considers strategy, company finance, transport merger, health and safety and CSR**

(20 June 2011) The CEO of Veolia Antoine Frerot explained to members the changes in strategy of the company to ensure its longer- term growth and profitability. A concentration on those markets where the company has real prospects of growing, on niche markets where it brings an advantage or is even a sole player, on large industrial and public contracts were main priorities. He went through the perspectives for each of the different sectors in which the company operates such as waste, energy, water and transport. Delegates asked a range of questions what the strategy would imply for the activities in their country or region. The commitment to ensure that the national social forums, an innovation of the Veolia agreement that brings together a national shopsteward from each activity with management representatives was renewed. A similar discussion took place with the finance director Pierre François Riolacci.

The EWC delegates used the report prepared by their accountancy expert to pose a number of questions on the finances of the company over the last years and the prospects for 2011 and 2012.

One of the major preoccupations of the EWC has been the merger of Veolia Transport with Transdev. There will be a new company operating under Veolia. This will also result in changes to the workers' representatives in both Veolia and Transdev. How exactly this is going to be done will be determined by a special negotiating body. The HR director for Human Resources Anne Lise Voisin explained the state of affairs and promised further consultation with the unions. Olivier Guiraudie presented the work on social reporting that is being done in Veolia, A range of detailed figures was presented. The EWC side argued that clear objectives are needed to measure progress on the social dimension of the company. This led to a discussion on health and safety with Bertrand Madelin and Frederic Goetz (water). There are still fatal accidents happening in the company and the ambition of the company is to improve this. Figures demonstrated that progress has been made, but uneven across the different activities and regions. How to improve health and safety will rest on the agenda and a clearer involvement of the EWC was called

for.

The EWC devoted a full day to a discussion on Corporate Social Responsibility. It discussed with Genevieve Ferone of management the work that is being done and is planned for the future. Several indicators were considered. Regarding further developments and the involvement of trade unions from non-EU countries, a commitment was made to bring this forward. A first step could be the creation of national dialogue space (as in Europe and the agreement) The EWC members finally discussed with Olivier Chabrol of Syndex (the consultancy that works for the trade unions) the possible traps of CSR as well as the advantages and opportunities. A number of delegates was very critical of the concept of CSR and how it is often used. There is little involvement and that confirms [the research on CSR and EWC that was conducted for EPSU by SOMO \(2010\)](#) . The EWC will follow up this theme and several concrete suggestions were made.

The meeting took place 7-9 June 2011, Veolia Campus, Paris, EPSU's Jan Willem Goudriaan attended the CSR session.

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