

Electricity social partners consider Memorandum of Understanding Energy Treaty

The European Commission DG Employment was invited to present the state of affairs regarding the ***Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Development of a Social Dimension in the South East European Energy Community***. The social partners have underlined their willingness to include representatives of the employers and trade unions of the countries concerned to be part of the sectoral social dialogue committee.

Francois Ziegler of the Commission gave an overview of the text and state of affairs. The Ministers have agreed to sign the MoU at their next meeting in May or June 2007. The text also commits to establish a Social Forum with representatives of unions, employers and governments. It asks the governments to commit to the European social acquis, to the social dialogue and to develop national social action plans with the trade unions.

The MoU meets many of the demands of EPSU and its affiliated unions which have campaigned hard to get this text and have gained the support of the European parliament and Commissioners Piebalgs and Spidla.

Other issues discussed: Employment, Equality, CSR

- Employment Study - The meeting received a further briefing of the European Commission on the state of play on the Commission employment study. It was recognized that without the pressure of EPSU, and the social partners it would not have come about. The study is being finalized and case studies (a.o Dong, Centrica, Gasunie, ENEL, Vattenfall, Electrabel Poland, Eles (Slovenia), EDF, Iberdrola) are

finalized and being commented upon. The final version will be available end January 2007 for comments. It will be on the agenda of the working group of the social dialogue committee 16 February.

- Equality Conference The toolkit to assist in addressing equal opportunities and diversity will be made public at the Conference 14 December. The toolkit of the practical measures that can be taken by unions and employers to improve the situation of women in the European electricity industry. It will be sent to unions. The toolkit has been developed by Jane Pillinger who has done more work on equality for EPSU, and has been accompanied by a Steering Committee that included Siobhan Browne, ESBOA, Ireland and Karin Harder, Verdi, Germany.

- Corporate Social Responsibility Participants evaluated the conference of 12 December underlining the positive debates, usefulness of the cases presented and the need to make progress. The study was discussed with the researcher of EcoTec and cases were explored. Draft is expected for early February and final version for End March 2007. It will then be the basis of discussion and debate with the employers side.

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