

# **South East European Energy Community: the European Electricity Sector needs an extended Social Dialogue**

South East European Energy Community

Joint Statement EURELECTRIC/ EMCEF / EPSU, December 2004

## **Enlarge the social dialogue**

The social partners in the European electricity sector, Eurelectric for the employers and EPSU/EMCEF for the trade unions request the European Commission to create the possibility for representatives of the social partners of the countries involved in the creation of the South East European Energy Community to participate in the European Social Dialogue Committee for the Electricity sector.

## **Reasons for our request**

The European Commission, the Stability Pact and the countries of South East Europe are negotiating a Treaty to establish a regional energy market in South East Europe in accordance with EU legislation, preparing the ground for integration with the EU internal market. The Treaty would lead to full opening of the non-EU energy market of South east Europe by 2015. The parties hope to agree the Treaty by end-2004, with the duration of 10 years after ratification by the EU and other parties. The re-synchronisation of southeast Europe's power markets with the rest of the European network should officially begin on 1 November. The European Electricity Sector is therefore leading the process of European integration in a direct and concrete way.

This will be a process that leads to structural changes in the electricity sector. Our experience with the creation of the EU internal market has taught us that there will be negative consequences for the employees involved. It is important that these consequences are identified in an early stage in order to address them and with respect for the social dialogue between employers and trade unions, social standards and collective agreements.

## **Our experience**

The experience of the European social partners in addressing these consequences is extensive. We have organized several studies and seminars to consider these together and adopted a number of joint positions on this.

- Joint study on impact of liberalization on women (1998)
- Joint seminar on the consequences of electricity restructuring for companies, workers and users (1999)
- Social Implications of liberalization (based on a joint study project with the European Commission and marking the start of the sectoral social dialogue committee (2000
- Social implications of liberalization for the new Member States (2002)

We believe the Social Dialogue Committee for the Electricity Sector can make a contribution. It is important that representatives of the sector from SEE countries have the possibility to participate in the social dialogue committee so we can learn of problems encountered, discuss these together and offer assistance in addressing these.

## **Updated information needed**

We also recommend that the Commission and Stability Pact study the employment consequences of the internal market to assess their extend and nature. To date there are no studies known to the social partners, which have taken this up.

This statement is addressed to the European Commission, Stability Pact, European Parliament and the Council and other parties concerned.

The Countries involved in the creation of the South East European Energy

Community are: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro and Turkey. Other states are engaged in a supportive role such as Austria, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Slovenia.

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