European Social Partners call for a Just Energy Transition

(6 December 2021) The Social Partners EPSU, Eurelectric and IndustriAll-Europe recently adopted a joint statement on Just Transition in the Electricity Sector.

Making Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050 necessitates the transformation of our economy and the way we live, in a socially sustainable and acceptable way. The European electricity sector and its workforce are key actors in achieving this ambition while it is undergoing a major transformation.
With the Coronavirus pandemic and European Green Deal accelerating the speed of the energy transition, it is now time to move from talking about the Just Transition to putting the principles into practice to ensure the socially and environmentally sustainable transition of Europe’s regions and the women and men working in the sector. This also means the need to guarantee quality employment conditions in the sector through strong collective bargaining structures and to ensure a socially sustainable and acceptable transformation of our society.

The public service nature of the sector as well as the need for public planning are highlighted in the statement. Social Partners also reaffirm the importance to provide adequate financing through public investments and to undertake coherent social policies in order to leave no one behind.

Jan Willem Goudriaan, General Secretary of the European Federation of Public Service Unions, said:

“Providing workers with adequate skills and high quality jobs is necessary to achieve a Just Transition. Strengthening public services, investments, social protection systems and social dialogue are all essential elements to make sure that no one is left behind”.

The key concrete demands by Social Partners are:

- **Coherent and concrete Just transition frameworks**, bringing together all possible policy tools on the EU level to support the workforce in the energy transition.
- **The establishment of a European Observatory of Just Transition**, across the different regions and sectors and involving social partners, which are in a position to assess Just Transition in terms of social impact and economic and labour market developments on the ground.
• **A European strategy for the electricity sector and the transition of its workforce**, and the establishment of a coherent regulatory framework in which the sector operates. This strategy should be evaluated and effectively guarantee - in the context of the ecological transition - that the National Energy and Climate Plans of the Member States are consistent with the EU Green Deal objectives and guarantee the security of the European electricity network, as well as a strong social dimension embedded in a coherent Just Transition Framework.

• **A concrete monitoring of European devices and national plans**, concerning the different funds allocated to help the transition in order to make sure that these funds are coherent with the targets of ensuring a Just Transition while mitigating the risks associated with sudden rises in the prices of energy sources.

• **A European framework on the anticipation and management of change**, aiming at providing for a strengthening of industrial relations and social dialogue embedded in the EU Just Transition Framework.

• **Inclusive governance and participatory mechanisms, social dialogue and full transparency of transition planning** should be implemented by countries

• **Investment and clear European and national guidelines for the adaptation of workplaces to climate change**

• **Acceleration of new power generation projects** from investment decision to final implementation, preserving a democratic debate, Europe’s electricity could be carbon free five to ten years earlier than previously anticipated, thus helping transport, heating and industries accelerate their decarbonization.

• **The development of new business models** by means of continuous changes in terms of job profiles and the need to offer employees continuous training and lifelong learning to maintain a qualified workforce.

• **The anticipation of skills needs** and providing workers, especially those entering the sector, with a skills up-date/grade to guarantee a well-functioning electricity industry and to ensure workers’ employability.

They also commit to:

•
Promote social dialogue and collective bargaining, at all levels, by ensuring the inclusive planning of the employment transition at the appropriate level and guarantee that newly created jobs are covered by collective agreements, ensuring quality employment and an attractive working environment.

- Discuss and promote good practice cases of Just Energy Transition
- Support the anticipation of skills with a skills up-date/grade to guarantee a well-functioning electricity industry and to ensure workers’ employability.
- Support and promote reskilling and upskilling through continuous professional development and life-long learning with real certification for new, green jobs that is valid across Europe

See the European Social Partners joint statement

- Log in to post comments

Printer-friendly version

Policies
Electricity
Energy
Social Dialogue
Sectors
Utilities
Document types
Papers and publications
Joint Statement