

Energy, waste and water unions meet in Brussels for the 58th EPSU Utilities committee



(9 March 2023) On March 1st trade unions from across Europe met in Brussels to discuss developments in the energy, waste and water sector.

The main policy topics were the reform of the EU electricity market and the revision of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive. Two positions were adopted that will guide our advocacy efforts in the coming months.

Regarding the reform of the EU electricity market, EPSU has taken the position that superficial changes would not be enough. Energy is a vital good that cannot simply be left to the free market, as demonstrated by the energy price crisis. We should strive for a stronger role for public planning and control as well as a right to energy. The position lays out our main demands, based on our previous work and the recent report we have been working on together with Prof. Stephen Thomas.

The second position was on the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, which is currently being discussed in the European Parliament. The draft of the EU Commission is a recognition of some of our longstanding demands such as a right to sanitation. Also the inclusion of the “polluter pays” principle to the wastewater sector is welcome and long overdue. But the devil is – as so often – in the (technical) details – the producer responsibility scheme must stay in public hands.

Colleagues were also updated on the intention of social partners in the gas sector to enter into negotiations on a legally binding agreement. There have not been many such agreements in recent years, so this would send a strong signal that social partners are willing use the full range of opportunities in the treaties to shape a just transition.

The day finished with a presentation on plastic recycling in Türkiye. Europe has not yet shed the habit of exporting its waste to countries without the capacity to cope with the massive amounts of particularly plastic waste. Following the refusal of China to bear this burden for the EU, it is now Türkiye that receives nearly half of the EU’s plastic waste exports. The working conditions for often irregular migrant workers are dire – protective equipment is lacking and basic labour rights are ignored.

[EPSU Position on the Reform of the Electricity Market](#) also in [BCS](#), [DE](#), [FR](#), [IT](#) and [SV](#).

[Draft EPSU Position on the Revision of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive](#) also in [BCS](#), [DE](#), [FR](#), [IT](#) and [SV](#).

- [Log in](#) to post comments
- [Printer-friendly version](#)

Policies

[Electricity](#)

[Energy](#)

[Gas](#)

[Waste](#)

[Water](#)

Sectors

[Utilities](#)