Energy Community considers the social strategy: regional social dialogue and other elements missing says EPSU

(25 April 2013) The social strategy outline to accompany the regional energy strategy was presented (see below) at the 6th Social Forum. It followed the consultation which took place earlier in the year and to which EPSU contributed. The main lines of the presented strategy are based on the Memorandum of Understanding, the national action plans and the social working groups.

The social strategy focused very much also on the importance of dealing with low-income households that face a situation of energy poverty, a growing number in the countries concerned.

For the trade union side, the EPSU group argued that a number of points are missing. We want:
- To strengthen the binding nature of the Memorandum and more resources to implement it. The Ministerial Council should work with deadlines compared to the energy acquis.
- To ensure that the regional energy strategy and selection of Projects of Energy Community Interest are subject to regional democratic control – as a counterweight to the Ministerial Council. The Council committed to transparency and consultation of civil society over the regional energy strategy and mechanisms for such consultation should be developed following EU rules and the Aarhus Convention. The same is true for reinforcing the control of the European Parliament over the regional strategy. A concrete way could be to establish an Energy Community parliamentary group with MEPs and MPs from the Energy Community countries.

While the emphasis on strengthening the social dialogue and the national capacity of the social partners is welcome, EPSU, as well as the European social partners for the electricity sector argued that:

- A regional social dialogue (on the basis of the European social dialogue) should be promoted by the European Commission, Energy Community Secretariat and

Contracting Parties.

- A regional social strategy should be developed based on:

- Considering Employment and Labour Market Developments and jointly monitoring developments;
- Training (there are advantages of jointly developing skill and qualification levels) – renewables, energy efficiency;
- Exploring and developing Just transition principles and learning from each other;
- Discussing with the social partners what steps are required to create a labour market for the energy sector (recognition of qualifications, labour legislation, respect for collective agreements, licenses of companies, pensions rights) in the Energy Community, possibly starting with the Western Balkan countries;
- An urgent recognition that that the EU social acquis especially in the area of information and consultation should be adopted;
- Other contributions in the debate came from the European Commission and the International Labour Office.

- All presentations are available here

- A previous report on the social forum is available here

- Presentation by the Energy Community Secretariat: outline of the social strategy

- Outline of social strategy
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