

EPSU 8th Congress Briefing - Public Utilities

The Public Utilities section of our congress will focus on: Item 16) Resolution R.7 “Public Utilities” – introduced by {{Sven Bergelin}} (pictured), chair of the EPSU Public Utilities Committee - sets out the principles & objectives that EPSU affiliates commit to in relation to public utilities including: affordability, accessibility, high quality, preferably under public ownership and control; mainstreaming of climate change in EU legislation and policy; rejection of continued liberalization of energy, waste & water services as part of the EU internal market; a European common energy policy which addresses climate change and reduces greenhouse gas emissions and with just and reasonable prices for all users and which protects the interests of low-income users; water policy based on water as a human right. It also sets out specific commitments regarding individual utilities including:

- water – a petition to obtain a million signatures for water as a human right and water is not for sale;
- energy - critically analyzing the impact of the internal market for electricity and gas on workers and citizens, on investment and prices, demanding an independent European review of the experience with liberalization;
- waste – analyzing the implications of the Waste Framework Directive on workers and how unions can improve training and health and safety and reduce competition on the basis of working conditions;
- collective bargaining - increasing coordination of collective bargaining developments at national level, in the utilities and multinational companies, especially in the electricity and the gas sector;
- European social dialogues - continuing the European social dialogues in electricity and gas, ensuring subjects are treated which can bring real advantages to workers.

The resolution for public utilities is designed to promote your interests. Specifically in the sector of public utilities, EPSU is committed to taking actions and campaigns in support of trade unions with members employed in privately and publicly owned utilities. EPSU prefers public ownership and public control of utilities as this increases the likelihood of the service being affordable, accessible and of high quality. It is also the best guarantee to provide European citizens and businesses with safe and clean drinking water, efficient sanitation services, reliable electricity and gas and sustainable treatment of waste. EPSU rejects the continued liberalization of energy, waste and water services as part of the EU Internal market, because of the negative impact on prices, investment, workers and citizens. EPSU demands a social chapter in the EU external energy policies recognizing key issues

such as fuel poverty and cost based pricing, health and safety, mobility and skills, social dialogue and collective bargaining between the social partners. EU policy should see water as a human right. That's why EPSU wants to develop its alliance with networks of water activists that promote public water services and to support trade unions fighting privatization of water and waste water utilities. EPSU will call the new Parliament to support legislation that increases the democratic control of European energy regulators and undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the functioning of the electricity and gas market itself with a focus on employment, investment, price for domestic users and sustainable development.

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