



**European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)**  
**PRESS RELEASE – 24 March 2005**

**Europe's Energy Unions meet with Energy Commissioner Piebalgs.**

A delegation of the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) met with the Energy Commissioner, 23 March 2005. The meeting was positive. "The trade unions are a key stakeholder in European Energy Policies. It is important to engage in a dialogue with the trade unions", Commissioner Piebalgs said.

The trade unions raised critical questions over:

- The **Services Directive**. We welcomed recent proposals to amend the directive on a number of key issues but urged the Commission to withdraw the directive to end the confusion as to what will exactly be amended. The Commissioner defended the Commission position, that the Directive is important, that the Directive will be amended and that the legislative process needs to be followed. The EPSU delegation questioned that energy services were not excluded completely leaving a grey area. The Commission services and EPSU will consider this further.
- The proposals of the Environment Council regarding the **Post-Kyoto targets**. EPSU is supportive of sustainable development, the need to address energy efficiency and energy savings as well as renewable energy sources. We are concerned that the Environment Council indicated that the energy sector should anew share an important part of the burden of emission reductions. While the energy sector is an easy target and has a good reputation of reducing emissions, it is now imperative that other sectors where energy consumption is increasing also share the burden. The Commissioner strongly believes in having an appropriate energy mix including renewables, nuclear, coal and energy demand measures. He agreed that future measures should look at the employment impact as well.
- The lack of a social dimension in the Treaty to establish a **South East European Energy Community**. The Commissioner indicated that the Commission considers a Memorandum on this aspect. EPSU urged that it should be linked to the Treaty and that we expect a strong commitment from governments and the Commission. This matter is urgent since the Treaty has been initialled by the countries concerned, 22 March. It will be signed under the UK presidency.
- Progress with the **Internal Market and the problems** it is causing. We focused on the evaluation report that is to be prepared for the European parliament and the need for a full discussion on the benchmarks and criteria. An independent evaluation is appropriate. The Commissioner urged EPSU to come with proposals on how the problems we perceive can be dealt with. The Commission will have a cautious approach towards new legislative proposals and will consider "soft law" measures. It is recognised that the sector needs stability to allow long term investment policies.
- The proposed **inquiry into anti-competitive behaviour** of the companies in the energy sector. There is increased concentration long documented by EPSU and PSIRU. We discussed with the Commissioner what the focus will be of the inquiry and the need to consider the social consequences of any proposals. The trade unions will oppose ownership unbundling. Central to the inquiry will be what concept of competition is appropriate to the sector taking account of the specifics of the sector.

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***EPSU** - the European Federation of Public Service Unions is a member of the ETUC. 8 million workers organised in their 216 trade unions are members of EPSU. These workers deliver services to the public in health and social services, local, regional and central government, and the utilities in energy, water and waste. EPSU organises workers in both public and private companies including large transnational companies.*

*In the energy sector EPSU organises in electricity and gas, in production, transmission, distribution, retail and auxiliary services. Our members work in power plants using all fuels such as nuclear, hydro, coal, renewables, gas and wind. Our employers are small and large public (state and municipal) and private companies.*

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