

European Social Dialogue Committee for the Electricity Sector

EURELECTRIC/industriAll Europe/ EPSU
First follow-up of Joint position on the social aspects of Corporate Social Responsibility
Positive actions on Training/Health & safety/Equal opportunity & Diversity

Following the 2009 Joint Statement on the social aspects of Corporate Social Responsibility, the social partners in the European electricity industry, represented by:

EURELECTRIC for the Employers

and

EPSU and **industriAll Europe** for the Trade unions

recall that:

Given its economical and societal role and the impact of its activities, adequate CSR policies are of great importance for the European electricity industry.

In 2004, the social partners agreed on a framework defining their further activities related to CSR policies. In 2006 they launched a study “*Describing developments in the European electricity sector – Drivers for change: Corporate Social Responsibility*” and organised a conference on CSR policies in the electricity industry. A report was published in December 2007.

In the past, the social partners have also produced a number of studies and published joint statements on issues related to CSR such as: equal opportunities & diversity, skills needs and health & safety. Moreover, two more studies (funded by the European Commission) have recently been finalised: one on demographic change and another on restructuring in the electricity industry.

In 2009, the social partners recognised that CSR is a broad concept, encompassing economic, environmental as well as social issues. By demonstrating their social responsibility and voluntarily taking on commitments which go beyond common regulatory and conventional requirements, which companies would have to respect in any case, the social partners note that this would entail the need to monitor standards of social development, respect for fundamental and Union rights, as well as national collective bargaining praxis, embrace open and good governance including taxation, and reconcile the interests of various stakeholders in an overall quality driven approach.

Moreover, the Parties recognised that CSR is based on a positive attitude of management towards trade unions and on commitments by both parties to contribute to the companies’ and the industry’s long term security, competitiveness, high quality of service and economic, socially responsible and environmental sustainability in a European and global environment. Companies commit to fully use the appropriate information and consultation procedures regarding their CSR policies.

The social partners agreed that any activity dealing with social aspects of CSR policies should take the standards such as the Council of Europe's Social Charter, the ILO tripartite declaration on guidelines on multinational enterprises, the OECD guidelines on multinational enterprises and the UN Global Compact as a point of reference, with CSR policies being the subject of discussion between the social partners in accordance with their national laws, traditions and practices. Concerning CSR reporting, the Parties agreed on the following key areas, as identified by the ECOTEC study, such as Social Dialogue, Personnel, Health and Safety, Community Relations, Education approach, Equality and Diversity.

The social partners also supported the recommendations of the ECOTEC study as to the critical factors in the development of CSR policies. Any CSR policy must be fully integrated within the organization. This requires compliance with the following critical factors such as commitment from senior management, board members and other key members of staff, the involvement of trade unions, customers, employees and shareholders in developing adequate CSR policies, fully integrating employees into daily CSR working practices, approaching CSR as a global exercise whilst giving autonomy to subsidiaries, sharing of best practice across the group for multi-national corporations.

The social partners recommended the companies to use the Global Reporting Initiative's standards for reporting on CSR and including the Electricity Utility Sector Supplement. We welcome therefore that most companies now use these standards and strive to continuously improve its application.

The Parties acknowledge the EC proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council directives 78/660/EEC and 83/349/EEC regarding disclosure of non-financial and diversity information by certain large companies and groups sharing the logic behind to have common principles in CSR reporting in Europe. We suggest that the directive is clear to include in its scope private equity investors and non-EU companies active in the EU.

We note that several companies with subsidiaries in different countries have concluded transnational company agreements which also refer to suppliers and subcontractors with the trade unions and encourage other companies to consider these examples as good praxis.

Positive actions on Training, Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities and Diversity

With this statement, we renew the commitment of the social partners in the European electricity industry to high quality CSR as laid down in our 2009 Joint Statement. The parties confirm sustainability as fundamental element of companies overall strategy also in the current difficult financial and economic situation for many and, accordingly, encourage affiliate members to discuss possible tools to jointly manage (management and trade unions) the following aspects of CSR:

- Training;
- Health & Safety;
- Equal opportunity & Diversity
- Employment implications of Climate Change

The social partners for the electricity industry recommend that companies that are developing CSR policies consider the following positive actions:

1. Engage in social dialogue with trade unions at relevant level [transnational, national, local] on the above subjects
2. Where possible, foresee to build up joint bodies/committee with the main aims:
 - a. To set up CSR general guidelines to be pursued throughout the Group/Company;
 - b. To assess the impact of all Company policies on the principles fixed in the guidelines in order to guarantee consistency between CSR principles and companies behaviour;
 - c. To manage, and where possible, anticipate changes with an impact on Training, Health & Safety, Equal opportunity & Diversity policies and Employment implications of Climate Change

The framework of actions (2013) concluded between the European social partners for the electricity industry provides further guidance.

Follow-up

This text commits EURELECTRIC members and EPSU/IndustriAll Europe affiliates members.

EURELECTRIC, EPSU/IndustriAll Europe's members commit to consider carefully the actions underlined on the above pillars of CSR policy [Training, Health & Safety, Equal opportunity & Diversity, Employment implication of Climate Change], to engage discussions at appropriate level on the priorities mentioned above and to report within a year from the signature of the present text to the European Electricity social dialogue committee on those discussions and/or actions implemented as a result of this joint position. The social partners will provide a checklist to facilitate the reporting recognising that much work is already being done.

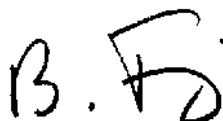
After three years the European electricity social partners will review the text for a general assessment and appropriate review and follow-up.

Brussels, January 2014



Christian Nickel (EURELECTRIC)

President of the European
Social Dialogue Committee for
the Electricity Sector



**Bernd Frieg (industriAll European
Trade Union)**

Vice-President of the European
Social Dialogue Committee for
the Electricity Sector



Jan Ruden (EPSU)

Vice-President of the European
Social Dialogue Committee for
the Electricity Sector