



COP21 UN Climate Change Conference

EURELECTRIC/IndustriAll Europe/EPSU Joint Position on addressing measures to mitigate social impacts

Climate change is one of the biggest global challenges our generation faces. It will shape the way the power industry runs business now and in the decades to come. In addition to the obvious implications in terms of regulatory, financial and technological effects – e.g. investment in low-carbon technologies – climate change has serious implications for employment in our industry.

Mitigation and adaptation measures are crucial to address global warming and the effects of climate change. Such measures need to take account of the interests of workers and companies in the transition process. This assists in anticipating and managing the adverse effects expected for our industry in the short term. These effects concern employment and employment shifts, as well as employability for workers. We have studied these effects in our joint project “*Towards a low carbon electricity industry: employment effects & opportunities for the social partners.*”

This is why EURELECTRIC, IndustriAll Europe and EPSU agreed to include in their 2015/2016 work programme the ‘Energy transition’ as a key topic. European Social Partners are determined to ensure that the transition towards a more sustainable and environmentally-friendly economy is backed up by social dialogue at the workplace, at both sectoral and European level. Economic growth and investments can be combined with a smooth social transition. We are committed to the development of skilling and reskilling programmes, the creation of quality jobs and a ‘Just Transition.’

Against this background, the European Social Partners for the Electricity Sector are firmly convinced that a joint approach which combines effective measures to fight climate change with social fairness is needed, and, accordingly, call for the following measures to be addressed by policy-makers:

- **Commitment from all Parties for long-term action to fight climate change**

All Parties will engage in a long-term global action consistent with science and the findings of the IPCC, and to a continuous political process to cope with the issue of climate change. Reaching the set objectives should be a progressive path with periodical assessments to check consistency with overall European industrial policy goals. To overcome recession and boost recovery investment in Europe’s industry and infrastructure plays a key role; however, it must be noted that such investments should be consistent with achieving the climate change goals.

- **Invest in adaptation**

All Parties commit to implement social adaptation plans and strategies for building and strengthening resilience to the impacts of climate change. The necessary Agreement should provide for compulsory assistance mechanisms backing those regions and sectors which are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

Against this background we welcome the proposal contained in the European Commission's ETS Phase IV reform proposal recommending that Member States allocate part of the ETS allowances auction revenues to the promotion of skill formation and reallocation of labour affected by the transition of jobs in a decarbonising economy in close coordination with the social partners.

As far as workers in most affected sectors are concerned – and electricity is by far one of the most important ones – the European Social Partners for the Electricity Sector call for:

- Undertaking social impact assessments, including indicators linked to industrial relations tools and CSR measures, searching methodically for synergies between the two;
- Avoiding negative social impacts where possible and, where not possible, introducing mechanisms to compensate those who are affected disproportionately;
- Ensuring that electricity remains competitively priced for all, industrial and household customers (in particular for those on lower incomes), while allowing for cost-effective investment in infrastructure and low-carbon generation capacity;
- Fostering collaboration between policy-makers, public authorities and social partners at European, national and local levels;
- Engaging local communities in the climate change policy-making debate and follow-up actions.

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