



European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)

Press Release - 1st December 2016

Commission's Winter Energy Package continues dangerous market based approach, risks leaving domestic users in the cold

(1 December 2016, Brussels) EPSU welcomes the European Commission's winter energy package as ambitious, coherent and forward-looking in terms of its comprehensive governance system which will enhance policy planning in the field of climate and energy.

It will be important for Member States to involve social partners in the social impact assessment of national energy and climate plans, says EPSU. This should take account of workers in fossil fuel based activities. EPSU believes care needs to be taken regarding the setting-up of platforms which will facilitate discussions with local stakeholders on industrial roadmaps and skills needs. The strategy recognises that energy poverty is a growing problem across Europe, a point EPSU and European anti-poverty campaigners have been making for years.

EPSU regrets that the EU's energy policy continues to promote market-based solutions which are not always the best or most efficient way to meet the Energy Union objectives. It puts the focus on consumers rather than on citizens. An ambitious Energy union must take into consideration its workers and vulnerable people.

EPSU supports the package's measures to tackle energy poverty, notably those requiring Member States to implement energy efficiency measures in households affected by energy poverty, with those in social housing being viewed as a priority. EPSU believes regulated prices for domestic users should stay and not be phased out. They are the best protection against the vagaries of the market. An Energy Poverty Observatory and benchmarking measures are not nearly enough in terms of addressing this issue at a pan-European level. The Commission should go a step further and implement a Right2Energy for all citizens in EU legislation.

According to EPSU's General Secretary **Jan Willem Goudriaan**: *'The Commission's energy package continues to stress its market approach including the phasing-out of regulated prices for domestic households. EPSU and its affiliates welcome improvements, such as the involvement of social partners, the recognition of a need for fair transition and the energy poverty measures,' but disagrees with the Commission's global approach. 'It would have been good to have seen both the EC and Member States focusing on higher public investments and a strengthening of public service obligations'* Goudriaan concluded.

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EPSU is the European Federation of Public Service Unions. It is the largest federation of the ETUC and comprises 8 million public service workers from over 263 trade unions; EPSU organises workers in the energy, water and waste sectors, health and social services and local, regional and central government, in all European countries including the EU's Eastern Neighborhood. EPSU is the recognized regional organization of Public Services International (PSI). For more information please go to: <http://www.epsu.org>