



**ELECTRICITY SECTOR SOCIAL PARTNERS HOLD BALTIC REGIONAL
CONFERENCE ON THE SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE INTERNAL MARKET IN
ELECTRICITY**

21-22 NOVEMBER 2003, TALLINN

Employers' and trade union representatives of the energy sector of the Baltic countries are meeting on 21st-22nd November in the Estonian capital Tallinn to discuss the social implications of the European Union internal market in electricity, whose rules the new Member States joining the Community have to apply. The conference, organised by the Union of the Electricity Industry–EURELECTRIC, representing the employers and EPSU/EMCEF for the trade unions, takes place within the official framework of the European Social Dialogue, with financial support from the European Commission.

Representatives of employers and trade unions from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Sweden are attending the conference.

Gunnar Okk, CEO of Eesti Energia, welcoming the guests, declared: "A constructive collaboration with the trade unions is important in the process of restructuring the electricity sector." He added: "The company is aware of its role in alleviating the social problems, for example through training and re-training and job-creation. We will act as a socially responsible company."

Enn Luuk, President of the Estonian Energy Workers Trade Union, welcomed the representatives on behalf of the trade unions. "We are going through an important phase of adjusting to the EU. It is important to learn how employers and trade unions have worked in other EU countries and to be part of the European social dialogue."

Einari Kisel of the Estonian Ministry for Economic Affairs and Communications outlined the changes in the Estonian electricity sector. He stressed that "the social dialogue is a corner stone of good labour relations."

Tiit Kaadu, representing the Ministry of Social Affairs, underlined the need for all parties, including the trade unions, to be part of the restructuring.

Points of view were also expressed on behalf of the European social partners, by Ms Aurora Rossodivita, the EURELECTRIC delegate; Mr Jean-Pierre Klapuch, representative of EMCEF; and Mr Jan-Willem Goudriaan, representing EPSU. The Tallinn conference is the last in a series of three. Earlier conferences took place in September in Prague and early November in Bucharest.

The results of the discussions will be presented to the European electricity sectoral social dialogue committee on 19th December. Representatives of the employers and trade unions from the new Member States will be invited officially for the first time to this meeting, where they will be welcomed as members of the committee. The committee will also discuss the work programme for 2004 and the next steps regarding the social implications of the internal market in electricity for the new EU Member states.

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