

Dear brothers and sisters!

An Association of Estonian Energy Workers' Trade Unions is hereby providing information on the current situation regarding the collective labour dispute at *Eesti Energia*<sup>1</sup> as a result of disagreement between the employer and the trade union upon the defining the working conditions in the new collective agreement **in some subsidiaries** of Eesti Energia.

Due to the refusal of the employer to agree on terms of the new collective agreement the trade union appealed to the Public Conciliator<sup>2</sup> with proposal to start conciliation proceedings between the parties in order to facilitate the resolution of the current industrial conflict.

On another hand the trade union called its' members to participate at some picket lines, one of which takes place on Tuesday, 18 April 2017 at 1 pm.

What are the circumstances and the reasons of the collective labour dispute in the energy sector? First of all, according to the employer's recent public statement<sup>3</sup>, management of Eesti Energia is of opinion that the collective agreement is providing excessive amenities and merits (or even "privileges") for the company's workforce and thus there is an extreme need to harmonize the actual working conditions with the norms set up in the labour legislation of the country. This includes, in particular, management's wish to eliminate the higher pay rates for working overtime and night shifts as well as to shorten the duration of the annual holiday which have been agreed between the trade union and the employer earlier.

Although the employer promised to include those "extras" into recalculated tariffs/basic wages of the workforce, this would not satisfy the 6% wage increase claimed by the trade union.

Thus one of the major reasons for this industrial conflict is the fact that the employer is not willing to accept the right on collective representation and bargaining – the basic right for any democratic society. At the same time this means that the company would not like to value the agreement of the labour market parties while preferring to limit the social dialogue to the information and consultation procedures only instead of holding the real negotiations between equal partners.

Trade unions understand very well that every unilateral decision on working conditions made by the employer could be declared null and void at any time and therefore this approach is not applicable to the industrial relations.

Association of Estonian Energy Workers' Trade Unions is not accepting employer's wish to refuse to negotiate and agree collectively the working conditions and is doing its' best to protect the freedom of association and right on collective bargaining.

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<sup>1</sup> *Eesti Energia* is the state-owned international energy company that operates in the electricity and gas markets of the Baltic countries and Poland, as well as in the international liquid fuels market (<https://www.energia.ee/en/ettevottest/avaleht>)

<sup>2</sup> The Public Conciliator is an independent impartial official who helps the parties to labour disputes reach mutually satisfactory resolutions (Collective Labour Disputes Resolution Act, article 8, para 1).

<sup>3</sup> [http://majandus24.postimees.ee/4075921/eesti-energia-tulist-ametiuhingutega-tahame-hoopis-pohitootasutosta?\\_ga=1.218127645.581134041.1477414900](http://majandus24.postimees.ee/4075921/eesti-energia-tulist-ametiuhingutega-tahame-hoopis-pohitootasutosta?_ga=1.218127645.581134041.1477414900)