

Nuclear Energy and Industry Workers' Union of Ukraine Plenary meeting on obligations of social partners

On 21 March 2019, the 6th Plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Nuclear Energy and Industry Workers' Union of Ukraine (NEIWUU) was held in Kyiv. The participants dealt with problems at the enterprises of the nuclear energy complex of Ukraine which require an urgent solution by joint efforts of social partners.

Therefore, the heads of the profile ministry, the State Agency of Ukraine on Exclusion Zone Management (SAUEZM), sectoral enterprises were invited to the event. The Plenary was held in an unusual format – panel discussions.

The first session was devoted to the situation in the Chernobyl exclusion zone, which provides for the reorganisation of enterprises. It was stressed that the decisions of the administration are taken without the consent of the NEIWUU.

The leaders of trade union organisations spoke about violations of social obligations stipulated by the sectoral agreement. The party of administration was represented by the Head of the SAUEZM Department of Radiation Safety, Labour Protection and Civil Protection of the Administration on the Issuance of the Barrier Function of the Exclusion Zone, Nature Reserve Fund, Radiation Safety, Labour Protection and Civil Protection Oleksandr Havrylenko.

“On 15 February the Head of the SAUEZM Vitalii Petruk signed the Order on reorganisation. And I, as chairman of the primary trade union organisation of the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant Facilities Management Direction (CNPPFMD PTUO),” Ihor Kravchenko said, have commitments to the workers that I represent before the administration. But I learned myself about the Order from the rumour, the official presentation was on 5 March, and the corresponding instructions on reorganisation were given to the commissions, which had already met twice. There is much incomprehensible: relocation or affiliation? There was the SAUEZM Order on termination of the activity of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in connection with the affiliation; this is under Article 36 of the Labour Code. But the decision of the commission says “relocation of staff”, and this is under Article 40 of the Labour Code. Items of the Order and the Plan of Measures disagree. After consulting with the lawyer of the Central Committee of the Union, we sent a letter to the SAUEZM Head Vitalii Petruk. The trade union proposals were taken into account and the relevant changes were made. But the point is that we have to remind constantly the administration of the need to comply with the social partnership, but while taking decisions the administration systematically ignores the union. And because of the uncertainty of its future, the workers are constantly in an irritated state.”

“The CNPPFMD are pioneers and faced with problems that will have to face other businesses,” said the NEIWUU representative at the Chornobyl united organisation of the Union Mykola Teterin. This is the sixth reform since the formation of the Chernobyl exclusion zone, and we fall into one and the same “rake” each time – the inconsistency of the administration’ action with the union, reluctance to discuss the reorganisation with the workers. The workers are worried because they do not understand how this process will take place. The union in this situation is most concerned about the promise of the administration to increase wages. At the expense of which resource, if there is no additional funding? By shortening staff? We applied for explanations to the SAUEZM Head Vitalii Petruk, waiting for an answer.”

“The procedure for coordinating the decisions of the administration with the union is determined by law,” said chairman of the CNPP PTUO Maxym Orlov. The rules laid down in the sectoral agreement must be complied with. The responsibility for non-fulfilment is borne directly by the SAUEZM Head”. Maxym Orlov proposed to express distrust to Vitalii Petruk and ask for support

to the NEIWUU Central Committee, with which other trade union leaders of the Chernobyl Zone agreed.

The second block of issues dealt with the situation in the nuclear energy complex. The Director of Human Resources and Social Issues of the SE NNEGC "Energoatom" Grygorii Muliar and chairman of the primary trade union organisation of "Energoatom" Oleksii Lych told about the complexity of the work of "Energoatom" in the conditions of low NERCP tariff for nuclear power plants, successful struggle of the union for raising wages, graduate training projects, improvement, strengthening of personnel, development of the NPP adjacent territories and relations with the administration on the principle of "mutual understanding".

Instead, there are divergences in the positions of the administration and workers at the Eastern Mining and Processing Plant (EMPP). The vision of the situation was expressed by the chairman of the Eastern United Organisation Borys Filippov and the Director of the EMPP Oleksandr Sorokin.

Due to reforms, the EMPP staff decreased within a couple of years from about 10,000 to 5,700 workers. Today, without the consent of the NEIWUU, the withdrawal of the departmental paramilitary protection (DPP) of the enterprise to a third party organisation is being prepared. The NEIWUU protested against the failure to comply with such a decision with the union. It was also suggested that the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine addresses the inappropriateness of the existence of the State Concern "Nuclear Fuel". Explaining this by the fact that the Concern is a business entity, but today does not make money, instead, it takes them to the EMPP. Concerning the DPP withdrawal from the company and the current staff reductions at the EMPP related, according to the administration, with the economy of the enterprise, it proposed to hold additional consultations with the NEIWUU in order to minimise negative consequences for the workers.