Standing Committee on Utilities elects its new presidium and adopt the Programme of Actions 2019-2024



(17 October 2019) On 2 October, EPSU held its biannual Standing Committee (SC) on Utilities which drew together EPSU affiliates from across the continent, including representatives from Russia. This was the first meeting of the SC since the EPSU Congress held in Dublin this June. As such, elections took place for members to lead the SC's work for the next five years. Matthew Lay from UNISON was unanimously elected president of the EPSU Standing Committee. Vidar Hennum from the Norwegian union EL&IT; Muriel Marcilloux from the French union FNME-CGT; and Andreas Scheidt from the German union Ver.di, were elected vice-presidents.

By endorsing the Programme of Actions 2019-2024, standing committee's members committed to continue their activities to fight climate breakdown and negative consequences of digitalisation while ensuring a Just Transition for workers and local communities. The fight against liberalisation, commodification, and privatisation of

utilities in Europe as well as the strengthening of I&C procedure in MNCs and European social dialogue were also identified as key priorities.

The state and effectiveness of Sectoral Social Dialogue in the electricity sector was discussed in depth with affiliates as well as forthcoming activities in the gas sector.

The new legislative proposals and political leadership in the energy sector was also discussed. EPSU's continued work to fight energy poverty as a member of the Right to Energy coalition was endorsed by the SC. Dr Vera Weghmann was in attendance to present her recent report, "Going Public: A Decarbonised, Affordable and Democratic Energy System for Europe". The report stimulated a fruitful debate and an exchange of views and experiences from each national situation.

The SC also addressed European Work Councils (EWCs), particularly the revision of the EWC directive and expansion into the health and social sector. Positive developments, such as the concluded agreement with Korian and opening of negotiations in Ramsey-Générale de Santé were outlined.

Also discussed was the water and waste sectors, with a special focus on health and safety, the promotion of the Right2Water campaign, and the impact of Brexit on utilities and EWCs.

The Standing Committee was preceded by a Meeting of the European Works Council and Company Policy Network Meeting. On this occasion, affiliates and EPSU went into in-depth discussions about the development and performance of EWCs in the energy sector and the health and social services sector. PSI joined the meeting to discuss global framework agreements as did the Alliance for Corporate Transparency and the Coalition for Corporate Justice to present their work on due-diligence and non-financial reporting instruments. EPSU recently co-signed an appeal of 88 organisations which demands the European Commission introduce new corporate accountability legislation requiring companies to respect human rights and the environment in their global value chains and operations.

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