



Viktor Orbán

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Dear Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, dear Minister Tamas Fellegi,

The European Council will organize a special meeting devoted to energy policy 4 February 2011. There are many issues of great importance that will be addressed during the summit. As European trade unions representing workers in Europe's public services including in the energy sector we are concerned about a number of issues which we kindly ask you and your team to also include in the debates and the Presidency Conclusions. We appreciate if:

- the Council underlines the importance of ensuring a **skilled and qualified workforce in the energy sector** capable of meeting the challenges of the future. This should be a priority. We would expect the Council to request the Commission to address with the European social partners skills and qualifications as one of the priorities of the EU 2020 Energy strategy and Infrastructure Package. Also a qualified work force needs investment.
- As unions and employers (both in electricity with Eurelectric and in gas with Eurogas) we have identified the rapid demographic change and looming skill shortages as a considerable problem which can be a restraint on the further development of the sector (in production (especially all engineering, including nuclear), smart networks, new energy services...) The European Parliament has equally identified this in its resolution on the EU 2020 strategy but the Commission does not refer to this in its EU 2020 energy strategy nor in the Infrastructure Package. EPSU research based on the annual reports of Europe's major companies backs this up. Several companies expect that up to 40% of the workforce might retire in the next 5-10 years. Research for the Commission (Future investment in Jobs and Skills) identifies the worsened image of the sector as a hurdle that social partners and governments should seek to address.
- the Council welcomes the results of the climate change negotiations in **Cancun**. An important step in Cancun was the recognition that we need a **Just Employment Transition and decent jobs**. As climate change will have a major impact on certain sectors, we expect the Council to underline this commitment to Just Transition in its future work. Employment is to be high on the agenda. Progress needs to be made to discuss these changes with the European social partners in a structural manner.
- A joint project of the European electricity employers and trade unions defines Just transition as: *'Just transition can be seen as the transition (or shift) towards a more sustainable and environmentally friendly economy, based on social dialogue between governments, employers and trade unions, in a way that promotes high economic growth and investments in low-carbon technologies while ensuring a smooth social transition through adaptation and mitigation actions as well as through the development of skilling and reskilling programs (or just new skills) and the creation of quality jobs.'*
- the Council continues the work of the Belgian presidency to address **Energy poverty** as Europe's citizens and especially the vulnerable will benefit from clear goals and policies to reduce poverty. We would suggest that the Council takes note of the joint position of the European social partners for the electricity sector on smart meters, as well as the concerns

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of consumers and representatives of low income households and underlines that these can be addressed in the cost-benefit analysis of the roll-out of smart meters of the Member States

- The joint position is available at: <http://www.epsu.org/a/7126>
- the Council stresses that energy policy will benefit from **broad based national and European discussions** involving the social partners and other stakeholders. These discussions should also include the employment and Just Transition dimension. We have been disappointed in the process of the consultation on the EU Energy strategy 2020 which was not an inclusive discussion.

As regards the discussions on the Infrastructure Package we are concerned that **Europe's future networks** (smart grids, supergrids, distribution network...) will be developed on the basis of private sector finance. We regard this as problematic given the public service nature of these networks. Recent examples have demonstrated that problems on networks cause society much damage and that therefore security has to be the prime motivator. We request the European Council to underline the public service character of networks and prioritise public investment.

We have learned that apart from the Energy Strategy 2020 and the Infrastructure Package the Council will possibly also discuss the proposed directive on **Spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste**. Appropriate regulation at the highest standards of safety is essential for the sector and including the final stages of waste. Despite the fact that the directive is to deal with the health and safety of workers and public health, workers health and safety is not mentioned as an objective (art 4) Health and safety assessments for example are not raised under the powers of the regulators (Art 6) and as important issues for the license holders (art 7). This should also include a reference to the responsibilities for health and safety in sub-contractors to prevent that these companies and their workers escape health and safety assessments. This is a serious omission and we ask the Council to include a focus on health and safety in the directive. Improved Health and safety for workers will have positive consequences for public health. Equally we believe that the regulators and license holders should inform and consult the workers concerned.

We attach the resolution of the ETUC which provided a broader and general frame for the positions of the trade unions.

EPSU is open to work with the EU Presidency to find appropriate solutions. We look forward to the outcome of your debates.

Yours sincerely,



Jan Willem Goudriaan
EPSU Deputy General Secretary



Sven Bergelin
President of the EPSU standing Committee on Public Utilities, Member of EPSU Executive Committee and Ver.di National Energy Officer, Germany

Jan Ruden, Vice-President of the EPSU Standing Committee on Public Utilities, Member of EPSU Executive Committee and SEKO President, Sweden

Reszo Gal, Vice-President of the EPSU Standing Committee on Public Utilities, Member of EPSU Executive Committee and EVDSZ President, Hungary

Encl. ETUC Resolution on European Energy Policy