



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG

Social dialogue, Social rights, Working conditions, Adaptation to Change
Social dialogue, Industrial relations

Meeting: Sectoral social dialogue committee, **Gas, Plenary Meeting**

Time: 10.04.2008 9.00- 17.00

Address: Centre Borschette
36 Rue de Froissart
1040 Brussels

Participants:

Trade Unions	Employers
1. BAUR Didier (FR)	1. ARCIERI Massimo (IT)
2. BAUER Andreas (AT)	2. BASIU Simona (Eurogas)
3. BRODRICK Ellis (UK)	3. BOUCLY Phillipe (SK)
4. BERGEN Kenneth (DK)	4. CHVATAL Roland (AT)
5. GOUDRIAAN Jan Willem (EPSU)	5. DUNSKA Ewa (PL)
6. HAKKINEN Jussi (FI)	6. GENTGES Peter (DE)
7. MACAK Erik (EMCEF)	7. IFFLAENDER-WEBER Marina (FR)
8. MOSER Marina (EMCEF)	8. NAGY Katalin (HU)
9. POLIZZI Michele (IT)	9. SZPYROWSKA Dagmara (FR)
10. RIBEIRO Luis Antonio (PT)	10. WETZEL Uwe (DE)
11. SANDER Werner (DE)	11. WOZNIAK Kazimierz (PL)
12. SCHMITZ Claudia (EMCEF)	12. WRZESNIAK Pawel (PL)
13. SZEGEDI Andrasne (HU)	
14. SZEKELY Tamas (HU)	
15. VADKERTY Richard (SK)	

Commission: DLOUCHY Dorota EMPL F.1

MINUTES

1. Opening and welcome by the Chair

2. Adoption of the minutes of the last Working group;

The minutes are approved without changes.

3. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

3. Latest EU developments – gas policy. Position of Eurogas

Simona Basiu presented the position of Eurogas on EU policies concerning Natural Gas. She informed the committee of the meetings Eurogas had with members of the Parliament and the Commission on various EC initiatives having an impact on the natural gas industry. Eurogas also send its amendments to directive and regulation on Access to Gas Networks to the EP.

Mrs. Basiu informed that EC will present Strategic Energy Review at the end of the year. She enumerates possible issues that can be elaborated this review.

At this point Eurogas finds as most important issues:

- *clarification that the focus of the regulation is on infrastructure not the commodity,
- *question of boundaries between powers of national regulators and competition authorities,
- *reduction of the implied burden of companies of the record keeping provisions and so-called publication risks,
- *clarification of provisions on art 22 of the gas directive in order to insure that exemptions on major new infrastructure are handled on the case by case basis,

Eurogas also believes that the Agency for Cooperation of Energy Regulators should have more focused role on the cross border issues including the cross border investment. It should also have stronger decision making role on technical rules.

As far as unbundling is concerned, Eurogas reckons that no single solution is needed on the European level.

Mr. J W Goudriaan EPSU presents opinions and activities of TU in this field. They are working on the issues of the fuel poverty. In particular what concerns TU is that the competition takes more important place in EU policies than the task of fighting poverty.

As far as consultation process is concerned, TU want to ensure that consumers have a say at the national level on the issues concerning the gas market.

Moreover, TU are against ownership unbundling and they informed EC and EP about their position. Trade Unions believe that Member States should decide by themselves about the form of unbundling.

One of the amendments to the Gas directive sent to EP concerns the inclusion of the article stipulating that whatever the solution on unbundling is chosen, it has to be implemented with the consent of Social Partners to prevent negative social consequences.

Mrs. Basiu underlines that Eurogas did not take position on the ownership unbundling, as there are different views among members of Eurogas on the issue.

Trade Unions propose to send a joint letter to the EC stressing two issues:

- * the need of more detailed and precise Impact Assessments of the EC proposals
- * the need of consultation on unbundling.

The employers' side decides not to co-sign this letter at this point as more internal discussion is needed. They will prepare the redraft that will be discussed with Trade Unions.

Follow – up:

1. EC will be asked to make a presentation on Strategic Energy Review at the next meeting of the SSDC.
2. Joint letter to Commission, timetable:
 - by the end of May draft amendments from Eurogas will be sent to TU.

4. DG EMPL Project on Skills needs

The Commission representative reminds member of SSDC of the most important dates concerning the project:

* 15 May 2nd Multisectoral meeting will take place. It will focus on the interim results of the study.

* 3 October – validation of results- first draft of the report will be presented.

* January 2009 presentation of the final results and workshop in Dublin. Social Partners are invited to propose the names of experts that could be invited to the workshop.

5. Project “Study on demographic changes, skills and competencies – outlook for the next decades”.

Draft terms of references were drafted and approved in February. Unfortunately the project was not introduced in March due to some technical problems. EPSU explains main activities of the future project and the expected results. The project will be introduced by Trade Unions in September 2008 under 01 budget line of DG EMPL.

6. Joint declaration on the Memorandum of Understanding of Social Issues in the Context of Energy Community.

- Introduction to SEE Energy Community/MoU

The Commission representative informs about the state of play of the implementation of memorandum. She informs the members of SSDC about the first workshop on Social Issues co-financed by TAIEX that will take place in Vienna on 27 May. She urges to mobilise affiliates in the region to take part in this workshop.

- Preparation of workshop 27 May, Social Forum October

Both Trade Unions and Eurogas pleaded active contribution to the workshop. The first part of the workshop will be prepared and chaired by Social Partners. Trade Unions request presentation on Ecotec study. The Commission agrees with the idea.

- Eurogas decided to sign joint declaration supporting the Memorandum.

7. Implementation of the Violence at Work Agreement

Mr Cerutti from BusinessEurope gives a presentation on the Framework Agreement on Harassment and Violence at work signed in April 2007.

Presentation can be found here:

http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/empl/sectoral_social_dialogue/library?l=/gaz/2008/080410_p lenartagung&vm=detailed&sb=Title

Mr. Cerutti described negotiation process, content of the agreement and additionally the implementation of the agreement and monitoring activities of the European Social Partners.

EPSU asks about implementation and reporting, whether it is done together with ETUC. Mr Cerutti informs that it is done together by all European Social Partners following the procedures established at the SDC meetings. Currently it is quite fixed process: 3 years implementation period. National members are asked to fill in jointly implementation tables during this period. Reporting is done at the SDC and the full report is presented in the fourth year.

This year full report on the implementation of the Agreement on Stress will be published.

The process is quite easy, but it requires national members to take ownership of it.

Eurogas asks about the role of the Commission in the process. Mr Cerutti reminds that as soon as agreement is signed it constitutes a legal commitment for all national members. It is not optional. Additionally it is underlined that partners are eager to preserve their autonomy. They are signed in order to ensure that social partners are in charge of their implementation.

In the fourth year after the Agreement is signed, when the final report is published, the European Commission can launch its own study on the implementation. The Commission did it in case of Telework agreement and its assessment was very similar to the one done by social partners themselves. So according to Mr Cerutti there is no need of larger involvement of the Commission in the implementation and reporting process.

Commission representative gave short information on the progress of the negotiation on the Third Party Violence Agreement.

Follow –up:

Joint endorsement of the agreement on violence stipulates that social partners in gas sector will monitor implementation of the agreement in the sector and will report to the SSDC. Thus the idea could be to ask national members to organise the implementation tables at the national level. This idea will be discussed during next presidency meeting and put on the agenda of the Working Group..

In November at the SSDC an overview of the situation as far as the implementation of the agreement will be presented.

8. Consideration of work programme 2009 (Final adoption in November)

One of the most important points on the next year agenda will be the implementation of the joint project on demographic change. Eurogas also proposes to include Health and Safety questions in the work programme. Moreover, Eurogas would like to discuss social implications of the EU directives concerning the sector and the Corporate Social Responsibility.

Trade unions propose to elaborate also following themes: restructuring; and equality and diversity. TU support the idea of including CSR, but it must be still discusses

Follow-up

The secretariats will prepare more detailed proposal based on the four issues enumerated above for the next meeting in September.

9. Date of next Presidency meeting

It will be decided among the secretariats.

10. Dates of next Working Group and Plenary

Next working group will take place on 12 September 2008 and the plenary will take place in 17 November 2008

11. Any other business

No comments under this point.