

Subject: Update on recent activities undertaken to reestablish European social dialogue in the gas sector

Dear colleagues,

The gas sector is currently facing major challenges: The EU Long-term Strategy attributes “a large uncertainty on the role of gas in the long term” which will be “a challenge for planning the energy transition and in particular, for planning the future of the gas infrastructure”. While the Commission expects a decline of the role of natural gas by 2050 there is a clear potential for increasing deployment of biogas and possibly e-gas and hydrogen. In the light of these uncertainties we believe that dialogue between the EU Social Partners is crucial to address the future contribution of the gas sector to the energy transition and the implied social dimension.

Eurogas, EPSU and IndustriAll Europe have had a long-standing history of cooperation on European energy questions and policies. This good cooperation was formally recognized by the establishment of a Sectoral Social Dialogue (SSD) in the Gas sector on EU level in 2007. Unfortunately, mainly due to a lack of engagement from employers and trade union sides, this committee has been put on standby since 2012. There is however a clear need to reactivate joint activities in order to tackle those above-mentioned challenges.

To this end, a meeting with James Watson (new general secretary of Eurogas) was organized a few days ago to explore the possibility to develop joint activities in the future. James Watson’s reaction has been rather positive and there is a clear shared willingness to reestablish dialogue with the trade unions.

After this first positive step, and in order to move forward, we now need to hear from you:

1. Please inform us if you want to engage in such process and if you would be interested in taking part in future European social dialogue activities in the gas sector. We need a strong and committed delegation to be a reliable partner.
2. Please share with us your main concerns / issues you would like to address at European level in case we manage to relaunch a formal communication channel with Eurogas. We will use your contributions to draft an indicative work programme which will be shared with the employer organization as a basis for discussion.

If we receive enough support and contribution, we would like to launch joint activities / discussion by the end of the summer in order to input the EU long-term strategy which is meant to be adopted in November 2019. In the meantime, we would like to explore the feasibility of reestablishing formal talks through the Gas Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee.

We look forward to hearing from you and we remain at your disposal should you need any further information.

In solidarity,



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