

Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in the Gas Sector Working Group Meeting

05 juin 2024, 09h00 – 13h00

Hybrid, Brussels and online

Minutes

Each social partners had their preparatory meetings from 9 to 10.30

Joint meeting:

Welcome by the Chair

The Chair opened the meetings by welcoming the participants

**Adoption of the agenda and adoption of minutes of the last SSDC meeting
(27/02/2024)**

The Chair presented the agenda and proposed to adopt the minutes of the last meeting.

There were no other comments and the minutes have been adopted as well as the agenda.

Discussions between social partners on the gas agreement

The Chair recall briefly the state of play on the gas agreement to the participants.

IndustriAll representative expressed the disappointment of the trade unions' representatives and the absolutely needed transition pathways for the gas workers and companies. She expressed the motivation of the trade union side to continue the negotiations. She asked Eurogas representative the reasons why its organisation did not vote yet on the gas agreement.

On behalf of the French affiliates of EPSU and industriAll Europe, the representative of a French trade union read a statement to the participants. This statement highlights the regret and anger of the French gas unions over the blockage in signing the gas agreement, which is very much needed to achieve EU's climate target.

The representative of Eurogas underlined that its organisation did not vote yet, thus either no vote for or against the gas agreement had been expressed. He explained that Eurogas is trying to find a solution to its internal problem. A new president had been elected. Eurogas wants to find an appropriate solution and is ready to return to the table. They remain committed to the just transition and social dialogue.

The representative of IndustriAll Europe asked the Eurogas representative if the political context was also a reason of the situation in Eurogas. She wanted to know whether Eurogas has one main or multiple reasons for not having expressed their consent to the gas agreement.

The representative of Eurogas underlined that climate change remains the top priority of its organisation. The gas sector must be part of climate change action. Eurogas is trying to find the right way to take this initiative forward. They have some members who have issues on the some parts of the text. They need to have a look at it and continue the discussion. .

A representative of the Spanish trade union recalled that the gas agreement had not been rejected yet. Then he asked if, in case of a refusal, it could be a partial refusal.

The representative of Eurogas answered that the discussion are still ongoing and he cannot speculate.

The representative of the Austrian trade union intervened saying that its union is very disappointed. The gas agreement was a great opportunity for environment and workers.

The representative of Eurogas recalled participants that the final approval is left to EPSU, IndustriAll and Eurogas. Negotiating did not mean that the agreement would be automatically signed.

The representatives of a French trade union intervened saying that she agrees with her colleagues. She regrets that no concrete reason has been given as to why Eurogas has not yet signed the gas agreement. She needs concrete reasons and for the moment, she estimates that the answers are very vague. She asked how much time Eurogas will take before taking a decision.

The representative of Eurogas explained that most of the members of the organisation are engaged in the process. He underlines that they already have taken several commitments related to just transition. He does not know how much time it will take to have a final decision.

The EC representatives underlined that the Commission cannot do anything when the process is ongoing. Social partners are autonomous. Also, the representative asked if he could have an official feedback, whatever the type of document.

An IndustriAll representative asked the EC representatives where the file on the legal framework on just transition file stands within the EC.

The representative of the EC explained that special additional social partners' meetings could be asked due to the exceptional situation, as a supporting action of DG EMPL towards a delicate exchange among social partners.

IndustriAll representative said that it was a good new to have the logistical support of the EC if needed. She concluded by saying that the trade union side was waiting for updates from Eurogas following its meeting with the new President.

There were no other reactions, and the Chair concluded the meeting.

The joint meeting was followed by a debriefing meeting on the trade union side.