

**The European trade union movement and sustainable development ahead of the Earth Summit –  
a European strategy for quality employment and the protection of the environment**

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**Trade union contribution: response to the proposals and major obstacles regarding the achievement of the proposed goals**

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The European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) is very concerned about the fact of climate change, regarding that stabilisation of the world climate is a main issue of sustainable development. We are taking into account the results of the Third IPCC-Report, confirming the former results of scientific research. They underline that the objective of stabilizing the world climate needs a reduction of the worldwide annual emission of greenhouse gases of about 50 per cent between 1990 and 2050. The industrialized countries representing only 20 per cent of mankind, nowadays are responsible for 80 per cent of the worldwide greenhouse-gas-emissions. So it is obvious that developing countries, responsible only for 20 per cent of the emissions, are not able to reduce them, even if they renounced further economic growth. But on the contrary sustainability urgently needs economic development especially in developing countries as well as stabilisation of climate. As a result the greenhouse-gas-emissions in industrialized countries must decrease dramatically – the reduction rate must be 80 per cent in only 60 years.

This objective, no doubt, is a great challenge to energy policy especially in the industrialized countries. Most scenarios and forecasts agree that without political action there will be a doubling of worldwide greenhouse-gas-emissions between 1990 and 2050 instead of reducing them. This is not sustainable, it means the collapse of the world climate. As ambitious as they might be – and indeed most of the industrialized countries will not succeed to reach them completely - the objectives of the Kyoto-Treaty can only be considered as a cautious beginning of a structural revolution of energy production towards sustainability.

Is sustainable energy production possible? In Germany the Enquete-Commission of 14. Deutscher Bundestag: „Sustainable Energy under the conditions of Globalisation and Liberalisation“ (1998-2002) has arisen this question. In the Final Report, that is in preparation, the Commission comes to the result: „A reduction of greenhouse-gas-emissions of 80 % between 1990 and 2050 in industrialised countries is necessary – and possible.“

The Commission studied two alternative scenarios for Germany:

- The scenario „promoting renewables and energy efficiency.“ That means a 30 per cent-reduction of energy use between 1990 and 2050 by accelerating the energy- efficiency-rates, and producing 60 per cent of electricity, fuels and heat with renewable energies in 2050; nuclear energy will be abolished totally, the role of fossil energies, especially coal, reduced dramatically;

- The scenario „nuclear and fossile energy-mix.“ That means no political support for renewables and efficiency, a decline of fossile energy-use according to the 80 per cent-reduction of CO2, but about 70 new nuclear power plants in Germany in 2050.

The EPSU as well as the German union of energy workers ver.di fully agrees with the majority of the Enquete-Commission that comes to the result: Both scenarios are technically possible, but only the promotion of renewables and energy efficiency is politically acceptable.

No doubt, this structural revolution in energy production means a structural revolution in job creation, too. The number of jobs in nuclear energy and in coal-mining will be declining quickly, while jobs in energy efficiency (especially construction and insulation of buildings), production and maintenance of renewables and public service (public transport, energy services) will be increasing constantly. So there are winners, and there are losers. This is a great challenge for union-policy. Surely there is no alternative to the structural revolution under ecological aspects. But what about social objectives? What about the losers, the workers in nuclear industry and coal mining? Will there be a conflict between ecological and social objectives, both important for sustainability?

EPSU is accepting the challenge, as we know that there is no alternative for a sustainable development achieving ecological objectives earnestly. And of course there will be a lot of frictions. It is our job as unionist to insist that every single worker loosing his job will be given an acceptable alternative. We are claiming a tremendous increase of educational and qualification programs for the workers concerned. Ecologically necessary development can only be called sustainable, when it is socially acceptable, too.

EPSU feels cautiously optimistic that we can reach the ambitious objective. The Introductory Paper to this workshop by UGT and CC.OO shows an instructive table I can refer to. According to the energy-scenario conducted by famous Prognos-Institute, a reduction of the greenhouse-emissions of 40 per cent between 1990 and 2020 in Germany (necessary to achieve 80 per cent in 2050) can be combined with a net increase of jobs of about 200 000. Of course it is not possible to qualify a 50 years old miner to work in energy efficiency, but certainly a 30 years old engineer working today in a nuclear power plant to work with renewable energies. Unionists have to insist that he will have that chance. And undoubtedly, we will have to fight for that in a lot of situations. So a lot of work is necessary to realize a socially sustainable development in the energy sector – but positive results are possible.

Obviously the necessary revolutionary change in energy production in Europe needs innovative regulatory policies. What to do in Europe?

A lot of countries have already begun. To be successful at least, we need a steady and non-contradictory common EU-strategy including at least the following eight measures:

1. Creating an energy chapter within the EU-Treaty, focusing on renewables, Combined Heat- and Power Production (CHP) and energy efficiency
2. Abandoning the Euratom-Treaty
3. Signing the Kyoto-Treaty and realizing it by clear obligations for each group of emittents in fair burden-sharing

4. Introducing and harmonizing energy-taxation with continual increase-mechanism
5. Promoting energy efficiency with the objective of doubling the energy-efficiency-rate until 2010
6. Promoting renewables with the objective of doubling them until 2010
7. Promoting CHP with the objective of doubling its electricity-production-rate until 2010
8. Fostering research, development and demonstration of energy efficiency, renewables and CHP