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Onderwerp: ETUC claims a sustainable EU energy policy

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1 December 2010

At its Executive Committee meeting on 1 December, prior to the EU Energy Council to take place on 3 December, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) adopted a resolution on the Energy Strategy for Europe 2011-2020, to express its proposals for the future debate on this strategy.

For the ETUC, the EU's future energy policy needs to protect consumers, including vulnerable consumers, ensure quality jobs through a just transition towards a low-carbon economy, promote industrial competitiveness and ensure emission reduction and a sustainable supply. In the debate on the characteristics of its future energy policy, the European Union specifically needs to adopt measures to ensure a just transition. In this framework, the ETUC's proposal for the future EU energy policy by 2020 is based on twenty priorities, which are as follows.

The ETUC's 20 priorities for the EU energy policy by 2020

1. Develop a European energy solidarity pact
2. Guarantee a secure supply
3. Create a democratic European Energy Agency to promote a common European energy policy of general interest and improve energy market regulation
4. Ensure energy bills reflect just prices (socially fair, affordable, based on fair rate of return and not on excessive profit taking)
5. Protect vulnerable energy consumers and reduce the energy bill of low- and medium income households
6. Give the right economic signals to reduce greenhouse gases emissions through energy policies
7. Establish funding, regulation and effectiveness of R&D
8. Integrate social and environmental criteria in public contracts for energy infrastructure and award EU funding only to companies with a solid CSR policy
9. Modernize grids adopting a regulatory and financial framework to promote the increase of smart grid capacity, to foster energy savings and to allow an optimal contribution of renewable, decentralized production as well as combined heat and power generation
10. Increase energy savings and energy efficiency in the industry, building and transport sectors and achieve a reduction of overall primary energy consumption by at least 20% in the coming decade through a binding energy saving target for each Member State
11. Establish a transformation program encouraging investments in new industrial policies based on low-carbon emission
12. Establish a renovation program for the complete housing stock
13. Provide sustainable and affordable public transport
14. Diversify energy sources by developing renewable energies and other low CO₂ emitting alternatives such as combined heat and power
15. Establish a directive on sustainable mobility ensuring an improved coordination of transport units as well as production and distribution systems
16. Take advantage of the transition towards a low carbon economy to create quality jobs
17. Ensure sustainable and quality employment programs anticipating structural changes and avoiding negative social consequences from the shift towards a low carbon economy
18. Establish permanent consultation of social partners on social and economic impacts of climate change policies
19. Promote human, trade union rights and democracy by using them as criteria conditioning public funding and when establishing energy dialogues and cooperation
20. Ensure high health and safety standards in the energy sector and in all sectors of energy use and efficiency to protect workers and citizens

At a conference organized by the ETUC on the struggle against energy poverty, the Belgian Minister of Energy, Paul Magnette, aligned to this perspective, emphasizing that the energy transition must not be implemented at the expense of social justice.[\[1\]](#) The minister, who will chair the Council on Energy, also pointed out that at this occasion that "concrete and profound progress concerning the protection of consumers and vulnerable consumers must be made".[\[2\]](#) The ETUC strongly endorses



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the minister's call for concrete EU action against energy poverty to ensure a just transition, and calls for adopting the above mentioned priorities.

- Resolution on the Energy Strategy for Europe 2011-2020: http://www.etuc.org/IMG/pdf/Energy_definitif_GB.pdf

The ETUC exists to speak with a single voice, on behalf of the common interests of workers, at European level. Founded in 1973, it now represents 82 trade union organisations in 36 European countries, plus 12 industry-based federations.

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[1] Press release by the cabinet of Minister Magnette: Comment lutter contre la précarité énergétique au travers des prix et de la réduction de la consommation d'énergie ?, p.1

[2] Ibid., p. 2

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