

Van: Media@etuc.org <Media@etuc.org>**Aan:** veerle.solia@amsab.be**Datum:** 02/03/2011 11:49 AM**Onderwerp:** Europe's Energy Strategy 2011-2020: A Missed Opportunity?

European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF)

European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)

European Mine, Chemical and Energy Workers' Federation (EMCEF)

Europe's Energy Strategy 2011-2020: A Missed Opportunity?

3 February 2011

Europe's energy strategy 2011-2020 is on the agenda at the European Council on 4 February 2011. It should be possible for the European Union to take some important decisions on energy policy by the European Union in 2011. However the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF), the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) and the European Mine, Chemical and Energy Workers' Federation (EMCEF) fear that any decisions taken might be a long way from meeting expectations and the common interest.

A robust energy policy needs to be based upon an ambitious energy efficiency policy with the aim of saving 20% of energy used by 2020, but it equally needs to be an ambitious and concrete policy of investments, in particular in renewable energies, resting on the development of research and innovation at European level. It is a policy of modernisation, adopting a regulatory and financial framework to promote the development of smart grid capacity to save energy. It must rely on the development of quality employment and the development of training to ensure genuine transitions. This is why the ETUC believes that the introduction of new funding streams such as Eurobonds or a tax on financial transactions is indispensable. Yet a look at the draft conclusions from the Council does not indicate that this is the direction likely to be pursued. On the contrary, the dogged determination to pursue and reinforce austerity policies is clearly visible in the weakness of the proposals.

This is why the ETUC believes that a major opportunity to change the development conditions by cutting something other than the share of employment – which accounts for no more than 27% today – is going to be missed. It is abundantly clear that the European Council believes that the only adjustment variable remains the cost of labour.

The ETUC's view is that the current debate about the future of energy policy offers an opportunity to create an economy with low CO₂ emissions, one which is sustainable in both social and environmental terms, via democratically controlled regulators that guarantee affordable prices for all, safety and security of supply, management of demand and decent jobs, while making sure that trade with third countries is conducted on a reciprocal basis that allows them to benefit from the harvesting of their resources in their own territories and to guarantee the development of human and labour rights.

Our members, whether workers or consumers, understand the importance for the economy of safe, reliable, sustainable and accessible energy for businesses and communities alike. Our jobs and our communities depend on clear policies that guarantee that energy is viewed as a service of general interest.

We strongly urge the Governments of the European Union to grasp the opportunity in the current debate on energy strategy to implement our **20 priorities for energy policy in the European Union 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 gas 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 renewables, 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 programme encouraging investments in new industrial policies based on low carbon emissions
12. Establish a renovation programme 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 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 programmes 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

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