

European Trade Unions: Employment and workers ignored by leaked Energy Roadmap 2050 (28.10.11)

ETUC Press Release, Brussels, 28/10/2011 - Despite the EU's commitment in the Cancun agreement to a just transition and decent work in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the European Trade Union Confederation together with unions from the energy sector and its supply chain are deeply concerned that no mention is made of the social consequences of this transition in the leaked Energy Roadmap 2050.

The Commission's draft proposals currently do not address how decent jobs and employment will be maintained and developed, the significant question of skills and qualifications, nor the increasing threat of energy poverty. A reference in an impact assessment cannot be considered adequate. Moreover, the text makes no mention that the Roadmap once published will be considered in the relevant social dialogue bodies at inter-professional and sectoral level.

If unchanged this text would represent a major step away from the commitments the EU is making internationally, calling into question its credibility with negotiating partners.

In the Cancun agreement resulting from the COP16 talks, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiating parties (including the EU) explicitly referred to the social consequences of the low-carbon transition: "10. Realize(s) that addressing climate change requires a paradigm shift towards building a low-carbon society that offers substantial opportunities and ensures continued high growth and sustainable development, based on innovative technologies and more sustainable production and consumption and lifestyles, while ensuring a just transition of the workforce that creates decent work and quality jobs;" (Cancun Agreement, I. A shared vision for long-term cooperative action, December 2010).

Furthermore, the scenarios totally ignore the EU's 20-20-20 commitment on -20% energy efficiency – a target seen as crucial for the union movement in the creation of jobs and achievement of overall EU climate and energy goals. As it stands the text would undermine the Commission's support for a 20% energy saving target, as none of the scenarios include achieving the target - neither scenario including EED measures, only 14% savings by 2020, nor the further efficiency scenario, only 17% savings.

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 84 trade union organisations in 36 European countries, plus 12 industry-based federations.