

## Speaking Notes for **Jan Ruden**

President of the EPSU Standing Committee Public Utilities

Introducing Resolution 12 Utilities a key driver for sustainable development

Agenda item 17, 22 May 2014, Toulouse

Dear Kamaraden,

It is my pleasure and honour to introduce Resolution nr 12, on the **utilities being a key driver for sustainable development** on behalf of the EPSU Executive Committee.

EPSU has been very active in the utilities area this Congress period and I thank all colleagues for your contributions.

Workers in the utilities felt the consequences of austerity policies like the cleaners and waste collection workers of Madrid organised by the Spanish unions. EPSU stood by them in their weeks long and successful strike in November last year when they rejected proposals of the employers for job and wage cuts. Austerity also meant pressure to privatise water and energy utilities. EPSU supported many unions in their fights (*to add something on Thessaloniki if successful, we will know 18 May*)

Together we started and successfully finished the European Citizens Initiative **Right2Water We will hear more about this later.**

EPSU has been working with the ETUC to influence the **European Resource Efficiency Strategy**, which can offer benefits for the environment and contribute to green jobs especially in water and waste services. These must be jobs with decent pay and conditions. We have said that the Resource Efficiency Strategy should not be another way to increase competition.

A significant event for all of us was the **nuclear disaster in Fukushima** that followed the tsunami that hit Japan and caused so much misery and havoc. EPSU has been influential in demanding the **nuclear stress tests** We met with Energy Commissioner Oettinger, EU Presidency and others. With unions organising workers in the nuclear industry EPSU was successful in ensuring that **a legislative proposal on nuclear safety will cover subcontracted workers.**

Germany is phasing out its nuclear industry. It speeded up the energy transition with more attention for renewables and energy efficiency. **EU governments have decided that the power sector needs to be near zero carbon in 2050 in the EU.** EPSU supported ambitious and binding targets for 2030 and 2040 to address climate change in ETUC and the European Parliament

This transition has profound implications. All major energy companies have come under pressure. Networks are sold to new employers such as private equity funds and Chinese companies.

**Restructuring** was and is a daily issue for the workers concerned. There is pressure on pay and conditions, further outsourcing, closing of power stations and job losses. We discussed these issues with the workers' representatives in the European Works Councils which EPSU has continued to support and at global company level via the PSI.

The Resolutions commits EPSU:

- To address reduction of CO2 emissions also with ETUC and at global level with PSI. EPSU wants a **Just transition and a Just transition roadmap to go with it.** Like the ETUC we want investments in the energy sector to make the transition possible. EPSU underlines the role of public services and public ownership in energy also in renewables and especially in networks. Do we want

the networks for electric cars for example to be run by municipalities or do we leave this future infrastructure to the private sector ?

- EU wide liberalisation of electricity and gas has caused many problem also for households. EPSU remains committed to **combat fuel poverty and will advocate the right to energy.**
- **A core commitment of EPSU is To improve Working conditions and health and safety** This also for workers in renewables as well as for subcontracted workers – so all workers can benefit from decent pay and conditions. Developing our agenda's for the **social dialogue** is part and parcel of this. We should explore further how we can overcome the problems in the gas sector with our employers.
- **Energy independence** of the EU gets more prominence as the situation between Ukraine and Russia develops. The common energy market of the EU and Russia is further away than ever. EPSU is committed to work on the **social dimension** of the European Energy Community with the countries on the Balkan, but also Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia and the various Energy dialogues like that between the EU and Russia. Cooperation over energy has the potential to build lasting relations and contributes to stability and peace on the European continent, almost like when Germany and France agreed to cooperate over their steel and coal industries after the war.
- In **water services** EPSU will work with allies to demand that water and other public services are kept outside of the trade agreements. We will continue to work on the implementation of the Right2Water-demands in the EU and other European countries and explore the possibilities for establishing a social dialogue in the water-sector.
- EPSU is the **Environmental services Federation**. This is certainly true for our colleagues in the waste sector where we will renew our policies with a focus on resource efficiency which has the potential to create green jobs. We will continue our work on health and safety also to feed a potential social dialogue in this sector.
- And we want to continue with establishing **European Works Councils** that bring workers and unions together in the same company from different countries in the utilities.

There have been several **amendments** to the resolution and most have been accepted. Two have not The Executive Committee felt that sustainable development is a broader concept then human development and that developing renewables as part of the energy mix is important. You will be asked to reject these amendments.

Dear Colleagues, the next 5 years will see **major changes in the utilities**. Energy transition and resource efficiency will impact on many sectors and all utilities. There will be debates on the role of the public sector to deliver quality, investment, affordable services and employment. EPSU wants to be part of these discussion, We want to influence the decisions so our members have decent pay and conditions, workers and their families have access to safe, reliable and affordable services and our communities can make the transition to a more sustainable society that does not destroy the environment.

Dear Colleagues, with these amendments we ask Congress to debate and adopt the Resolution.