EPSU secretariat meets Ukrainian affiliates in the utility sector



(14 February 2019) Strengthening collective bargaining, increasing wages and analysing the impact of liberalisation in the utility sector were the main focus of a 3-days visit organised in Kiev (Ukraine) from 5th to 8th of February. On this occasion, Guillaume Durivaux, EPSU policy officer responsible for the utility sector, met with Ukrainian affiliates in the energy (nuclear, electricity and gas) waste and water sectors.

Utilities unions shared their concerns regarding low wages, weak collective bargaining processes, staff shortages due to migration toward neighbouring countries and concerns regarding liberalisation of the sector following the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Union Association Agreement.

EPSU secretariat seriously considered workers‘ representatives concerns and presented its advocacy activities to strengthen collective bargaining, to fight negative consequences of liberalisation processes and to promote public

ownership of utility services. The adaptation to climate change, the impact of decarbonisation policies as well as the need to ensure a just transition for workers was also addressed during the study visit.

A roundtable on energy poverty in Ukraine, organised in collaboration with the EU-Ukraine Civil Society Platform, took place on the 7th of February. Grygorii Osovyi, chairman of the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine (FTU), participated in the roundtable alongside representatives from the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, the European Commission, Naftogaz and consulting groups. This roundtable was a good opportunity to highlight the worrisome levels of energy poverty in Ukraine and in the EU as well as to hear from Ukrainian and European institutions about social measures to tackle the issue. During his intervention, Guillaume Durivaux, EPSU, presented the latest advocacy activities of the Right To Energy coalition, denounced liberalisation as the root cause of energy poverty and calls for ambitious policy responses to address these challenges (ban of disconnections, energy efficiency measures and recognition of the right to energy for all Europeans).

The study visit was also an occasion to meet with workers' representatives in the companies Ukrenergo (transport of electricity) and Kyivvodokanal (Kiev municipal water company).

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