

# **4th International Energy Workers' Social and Welfare Activities Conference**

**Athens, 24, 25 and 26 February 2006**

**« For the development of social and welfare activities  
as a right for workers in energy companies  
in Europe and Worldwide »**



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## Opening

**Mr. Nikos Pilalidis, GENOP-DEI, Greece**

GESEE representatives, Mr. Chairman, Chairman of the DEI Council, Unicef and Unesco representatives, dear colleagues, I would like first of all to pass on to you the warmest good wishes from the 25,000 workers in the electrical energy sector in Greece, whom we have the honour of representing here.

We are delighted to welcome to our country colleagues working in the energy sector all over the world. I hope that, through dialogue and the decisions that we take, we will be in a position to meet the challenges that face us and maintain the social and welfare activities that we value so much. The changes brought about by the globalised economy and the deregulations provided for by the WTO negotiations that are taking place are challenges that require an immediate response that takes into consideration the interests of workers and of citizens. The reforms that are necessary up to a certain point in order to adapt the European Union and our countries, and the constantly changing world economy, cannot be simply economic ones. Behind the numbers and figures there are human beings, in other words what is most important in a country founded on the rule of law. We have an opportunity to fight and to make demands: that is the message sent out by the citizens of Europe when they successfully halted the European constitution process and overturned the Bolkestein directive.

Citizens have power, which something that we too often forget.

We work in companies in the energy sector and contribute towards the production and supply of a product that is a public asset, an asset that is directly related to economic development and progress. A valuable asset for which demand goes on increasing. We live close to this process and are much more sensitive to the changes caused by the globalised economy. We have observed that there have been many reforms and changes in the energy sector and that, at the same time, they are threatening the rights and institutions that we have acquired through a great deal of struggle.

We are also talking about social and welfare activities, which, for many years, have contributed towards the well-being of our workers

by offering solutions adapted to their needs and those of their families. They also help to encourage people to use their free time more profitably through culture, sport and entertainment. I believe that this conference will need to look for ways of developing social awareness by using this free time as workers and reinforcing our various forms of cooperation. Our participation in a huge range of activities, from education to culture and tourism, allows us to create the conditions required to achieve this aim at a national, European and international level.

However, if this effort is to be beneficial, people need to be able to live together peacefully, because it is only in an atmosphere of peace that cooperation can be fruitful and that we can help towards the development and economic progress that constitutes the philosophy behind our social and welfare activities.

For this reason, we need to reinforce our cooperation worldwide; peace is an issue that concerns us all, along with respect for democracy and its institutions and the fight for human rights.

Dear colleagues and guests, there is no need to be afraid of change, but we absolutely must prepare for it with great care in order to be able to overcome its effects. All changes that have an influence on the lives of citizens must be carried out with great wisdom. We cannot leave the market technocrats to make these changes alone and without restrictions.

To conclude, I hope that you will have an opportunity during your stay to discover the splendours of Greek culture and the atmosphere of modern Greece, a country in which, long ago, hospitality was placed under the protection of Zeus.

### **Mr. Moutafis, General secretary of the GFE-PPC, Greece**

Globalisation, privatisation and the deregulation of energy markets have led us along the path of reform and reconstruction in the energy sector.

Competition, maximisation of profits and cost reductions have considerably affected workers' rights. That means lower salaries, poor rewards for work, a reduction in free time and welfare expenditure, and even job losses and redundancy plans. Rather than fighting for a better job or better conditions, workers are fighting today to maintain

their acquired rights. They are having to fight for survival in the face of a lack of support from the Government and employers. In Europe, and in Greece, we are faced with a challenge to the rights we have acquired in the past. A legislative framework is currently being drawn up in Greece that will adversely affect collective agreements, especially those in the banking sector, shop opening times and laws that provide for the abolition of the 8-hour working day and the two-tier salary scheme, all of which considerably reduces workers' social and welfare activities. The unions therefore need to highlight this issue and make it the subject of negotiations, which is what the GENOP-DEI has done up to now.

Our aim is to reinforce support and solidarity between workers and bring them within the framework of collective agreements. The unions need to bring all their influence to bear on the content of these collective agreements. This conference should help us, through dialogue, to draw up a range of profitable ideas that we can use in the future.

### **Mr. Sioufas, Greek Minister for Development**

Your conference is a very important event, an international gathering attended by organisations, federations and institutions that can only be to the advantage of energy workers.

Such a meeting takes place today, in Athens. A conference that creates the conditions for expression, reinforces solidarity and adds to workers' experience and knowledge. At a time of great – and rapid – change, we are witnessing a restructuring of the economy and an upheaval in technology. The parameters of the past have become much more flexible. The arrival of the post-industrial society has been accompanied by changes in our lives, changes that create new possibilities and opportunities, but also new needs, new demands, new problems and new uncertainties. Citizens the world over are asking the very questions to which we must find an answer. We, the politicians, above all. Jobs, the harshness of life, education, the environment, health, free time... we are required to find satisfactory answers to all these questions. We are required to transform scepticism and uncertainty. We are required to be proactive and face up to the problems that come up day after day.

The energy sector is one of the key figures in this new, complex environment. It is a crucial sector in terms of countries' economic development and the quality of life of our citizens, as it plays an important role in increasing productivity and carrying out large-scale investments. It is a fact that the energy sector in Greece and abroad is in a state of permanent change.

Bearing in mind the competition between economies, we need to reinforce social cohesion so that the employment market can be a profitable one. We must apply the appropriate policies to achieve the objectives set over the last two years. Our Ministry has promoted a whole set of reforms: liberalised standards in natural gas markets, the promotion and construction of new forms of energy production and the creation of energy communication between the countries of South-eastern Europe have created the conditions required for undertaking major investment and increasing the number of jobs in the country. In this new environment of a free energy market, DEI will continue to play an influential role, opening up new prospects within a wider configuration. The creation of this community and the formation of an energy market in South-eastern Europe give DEI a chance to take on a more important role in the region by using its expertise and the experience of its managers. Central to all these efforts is the mobilisation of labour, through encouragement to innovate so that we can create more jobs and develop every region in the country. To be more precise, our political representatives, in cooperation with the unions and social welfare authorities, are trying to fulfil the following objectives: firstly, to maintain existing jobs and create new ones. Improving the quality of life and production means improving other aspects of work, such as the employee's place in society, but there are also issues concerning public health and reinforcing the ability of companies to adapt. Another point is to reinforce women's employment and promote equal access to the employment market, and, finally, to reduce social marginalisation by improving social cohesion, in order to give every layer of the population the opportunity of access, development and progress.

Permit me now to make reference to workers in the energy sector, who often surpass themselves, as you will have seen on the television.



Citizens often have no idea of the conditions in which they have to work to repair breakdowns and damage so that our homes and those of consumers can be supplied with energy. We are surrounded by daily examples of the quality of your work and sacrifice. With regard to the subject of your conference, we hope that our country can be one that accepts its social responsibilities and is respectful of the environment and of people. A competitive country with an absolute quality: we can all help to build such a Greece.

### **Mr. Kyriakopoulos, chairman of DEI**

We all take part in offering an asset and a service. Working at DEI, we have a great responsibility towards societies and people that need our support in creating vitally important infrastructures. DEI's humanistic character means that we use modern methods to support workers and their families. We should place emphasis on training and education for our workers, improving working conditions and access to culture. In this changing market, we need to take decisions that lead to better working and living conditions for DEI and our employees.

### **Mr. Kanelopoulos, Unicef representative**

I believe that this conference is a highly important event, not only for Greek politics but also for the international stage.

We have come a long way towards developing new social and participative institutions in Greece. In recent decades, and in the last few years, we have tried to make our contribution as a union to protect the rights of workers. We have tackled issues linked to economic problems both within our sector and within the Greek economy as a whole. I believe that this conference opens a new chapter in the history of energy. I have taken part in a large number of discussions, debates and conflicts. I think that we are at the dawn of a new cycle in the history of unions in Greece and internationally. We have many challenges to face with regard to competition and working conditions, particularly the harmful impact of the technological environment on our work. Labour law is a very important value and we must release ourselves from the control of bulimic employers who seek to crush us. We can see many inequalities on our planet: poverty, child mortality, and so on. Amongst these issues that imperil the very substance of Man,

the unions and workers' movements are perhaps the only component capable of structuring and uniting the forces of the world and society. For sixty years, Unicef has tried to improve the living, health and hygiene conditions of thousands of people, especially children.

In the 21st Century, our contribution should not only be a humanitarian one, but also social and political. Children's rights have now become destructured and are not taken into consideration, even though Governments – except the United States and Somalia - have ratified and adopted the children's rights charter. I have to say that Greece was one of the first countries to sign...

There are still many problems to overcome, such as child mortality caused by poliomyelitis, chicken pox and other diseases. The African delegations are well aware of these diseases and their consequences, especially Aids, as, in the Sub-Saharan region, a child affected by the virus dies every minute. To return to this conference, it leads us to a new stage in international cooperation. We need to look beyond our individual points of view and have a vision for the 21st Century. Above and beyond the technocratic debates, these social issues will help us to design a development model that can be disseminated through every social class and group.

### **Mrs. Luigina Libretti, ARCA, Italy**

I would like to thank GENOP-DEI for the opportunity it has given us to come together and discuss this fundamental issue of social and welfare activities. This year, we have decided to organise the event in Greece, with Italy, France, Greece and Morocco. We are not alone, as, at the last conference in Rome, it was decided to set up a liaison group between the different countries taking part in the conference. And Quebec and Belgium also took part in this group.

Today, we seek to emphasise how fundamentally important these activities are to us. The basic difficulty with which we are faced is to help others to understand why they are important.

What are the important surviving virtues. What are the modern values that we manage to express? We have done a lot of cooperative work with other countries and we believe strongly in it: it is a principle that unites us. What concerns us is development in the world. It is in fact the subject of our conference, and a very topical one. It is therefore

important that, when we have finished our discussions, we draw up a final resolution that the conference will adopt, a resolution that will be of enormous help to us in facing up to our problems.

## Working sessions

*(Saturday morning)*

### **Mr. William Goudrian, EPSU**

I have been working for the European workers' federation for many years. We cooperate with all the energy operators, public, private, multinationals, EDF and others. The European Public Services Union (EPSU) is an international federation that encompasses a wide range of operators. What lessons can we draw from the notion of competition within Europe?

Prices in Europe are very high for both private homes and industry. Over 300,000 jobs have been lost in the energy sector in recent years. We have seen the arrival of new companies, mergers and buyouts... And the problem is not just a European one: do you remember the blackout that occurred in California in 2003, or the Enron scandal. In the United States, a number of states have decided to put an end to these experiments in competition, saying "it doesn't work". This is an important lesson to learn. The internal energy market has also been confronted with political objectives as governments want to promote renewable energies. And that doesn't work very well either. I'd like to talk about another phenomenon: on the European and internal markets, we have witnessed a process of concentration, with major operators like EDF. Here, we have companies that are looking at long-term investment and have a constant need to find alternatives, carry out mergers and set up cartels. In Germany, there are only four electricity companies remaining on the market, one of which is looking to buy a Spanish company that is very active at the moment, especially in Latin America. Another example is Gaz Natural, which wants to buy Endesa in order to become a major Spanish energy company and extend its activities to Italy and France.

There are a lot of rumours about other companies, Electrabel, EDF, Gaz de France and Veolia... Around a million workers are caught up in these "rumours". The companies I have mentioned have a total of 10 million consumers and a million workers. And we are here to represent them. The energy sector is very different from other sectors such as coffee or cereals. Electricity is an asset that can be sold, but it is first and foremost a social asset.

There are economic and financial constraints linked to energy that are not recognised as such by operators within the European Union. The commission is aware of these problems... the only difference is the answer they give: the commission says that we need to continue within a competitive environment. Like a doctor who is content to simply increase the dose of drugs without searching for the real cause of the illness.

**Mr. Romano Bellissima, UILCEM-UIL, Italy**

We have here an opportunity to discuss vital issues that have major repercussions on our way of life. In the last few years, Europe has lived through a number of changes, mainly in the energy sector. The globalised market has encouraged systems in a number of countries to become more and more competitive. The cost of energy, in terms of competitiveness and production systems, is one of the leading parameters in this scenario. The energy issue now appears to be one that has consequences for the entire planet. The need for energy throughout most of the world, and especially for the developing countries, determines growth in demand, and that leads to price increases that create tensions between different countries. The problem of weather conditions, a deteriorating environment and carbon dioxide emissions requires the use of the very latest technologies.

We can also see the first signs of a reduction in stocks and we need to be able to re-adapt these vital resources, which poses a problem for governments. In order to have more resources at a lower cost, Europe has deregulated the gas and electricity markets and the services market. In addition to deregulation, governments have promoted the privatisation of services offered to the public. When there is free competition, prices fall and services improve.

But this isn't the case in the energy sector, as the cost of these products depends very little on factors determined by market operators or administrators. The risk of a reduction in costs is that it has a major impact on work and the working conditions of employees. The liberalisation of the market and privatisation have cost 150,000 jobs. And the benefits of this market liberalisation have yet to come. We could also talk about other fundamental rights, such as the right to strike, or the problem encountered by ARCA, for whom financing was

determined by the number of workers. The number fell, and financing fell by 50%.

The unions need to confront these problems with the government and with the companies themselves, in terms of the rights to culture, social rights and worker association rights that have been acquired in the past and should not be allowed to disappear. We should not just be talking about what is happening in our country; we should also have a coordinated, concerted plan for Europe. Neoliberal theories should not be allowed to have a harmful impact on our quality of life, and we should not allow them to be suddenly foisted upon us. For many centuries, Europe was the very centre of civilisation. Today, it is adopting forms of behaviour that do not spring from its culture; it is trying to adopt realities that are not its own, when it should be making decisions that it has shared with its citizens.

**Mrs. Evelyne Valentin, CCAS, France**

Reading of the Call of the .

**Appendix 1**

**Mr. Hassan Chahboubi, COS/ONE Morocco**

Reading of theme no. 1:

Preamble:

In a global economic and social environment, increasingly marked by new, neoliberal changes that have created upheavals in the structures and mechanisms of national economies, the first consequence has been the total abandonment of the government's public role, so vital to the management of key sectors such as health, education and the utilities (electricity, water, transport, telecommunications and housing infrastructures,...). National economic stakeholders have been inevitably faced with new realities that have totally stripped them of the advantages and benefits that they have earned through sacrifice and struggle to improve their respective situations.

We are currently witnessing a whole series of social reforms in every domain and a decline in the social welfare system, at all levels.

The direct and indirect consequences of these upheavals are very serious and will lead in future to an increase in unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

The right to work, health, retirement and social and welfare activities naturally forms a foundation, without which we cannot achieve any form of emancipation and fulfilment. And yet, the liberal strategy is seeking to reduce them, and even make them disappear altogether.

As operators in the energy sector, it is our responsibility to be aware of these new realities that are threatening our fundamental interests.

It is therefore our responsibility to act as informed citizens to correct the elitist trends underlying the new situation, and to act as mutually supportive partners, combining our efforts with those of all the active forces fighting against the danger of globalisation.

## THE NEW REGULATORY CONTEXT FOR COMPANIES

In relation to the economic and social upheavals outlined above, the legislative and regulatory context in every country plays a large part in spreading and introducing the administrative tools that allow Government and foreign interests to have a hold over national companies. Senior management plays a role in policies to break up management structures, with the long-term aim of transferring the subcontracting of Company activities to other external operators, who are sometimes more expensive, and causing employee redundancies on the way. There are also reductions or deadlock on grants allocated to social and welfare activities that are considered to be like a deferred salary to which every energy worker has a right, and this follows on from a failure to redistribute wealth fairly.

This phenomenon can be seen in other forms of dispossession of economic power in Companies, particularly through the relocation of activities and new types of insecure individual and collective contracts that do not include pensions or social security cover.

In most government programmes, the legal texts that are currently being drawn up favour privatisation, flexibility of labour, the legal transformation of public services into limited companies and social reforms, and do not take the social dimension into account.

It is regrettable to note, for example, that the reduction in working hours has been diverted from its main objective, which was to reduce unemployment and encourage full employment.

Under these conditions, deregulation is at the heart of government

policies to discharge themselves of responsibility for social action and give unconditional preference to private initiatives.

Company management bodies, appointed by the government in the public sector and by major private interests in private companies, are involved in the process of a change in the economic and social power of Company unions.

The management measures taken by these executive bodies incorporate the profitability of the social variable into their calculations. The value of financial resources allocated to employees is reduced through a reduction in employee numbers or a cancellation of production bonuses for budget reasons. These management bodies also perpetuate the policy outlined by government, sometimes in connivance with the higher interests of major groups wanting to introduce new technology, conditioned by liberal upgrade measures that have no concern for the interests of existing employees, or as part of finance projects or grants linked to restrictions relating to the social aspects of the Company.

### THE TRUE FACE OF SOCIAL REFORMS

In this new context, traditional social reforms have become outmoded and would no longer be enough to guarantee the future of the unions. In the new economic environment of high living costs, the uncertainty of decision-making, volatile prices on world markets and the goodwill of major international entities influence the evolution of the economic variables that affect nations and their peoples.

The traditional social security system has become obsolete, and there is a pressing need to replace it with an updated system that goes beyond the traditional benefits, such as health and training, towards a more complete system that combines the benefits of the traditional social advantages with the profits generated by the nationalised industry privatisation funds.

We do not need to be reminded that certain strategic production sectors, such as energy, telecommunications and transport, generate major cash flows (profits) that benefit only the financial backers, with no consideration for the fundamental interests of the Company unions and management.

Privatisation experiments worldwide have not always been convincing, and their total success remains entirely dependent on the economic



solidarity of the host country and the professionalism of its economic and social planning. In all wise socio-economic policy decisions, it is essential to consider the priorities concerning workers' economic equality and social well-being.

The various excesses and flagrant inequalities generated by these experiments are likely to handicap the rare chances offered to impoverished nations and should not mortgage their choice and distort the intrinsic data concerning their respective economies.

## FUTURE SOCIAL ACTION IN THE ENERGY SECTOR

We believe that we must be vigilant and redouble our efforts during this crucial phase to consolidate our unity, especially at an international level, and organise ourselves collectively to frustrate all attempts to challenge our acquired benefits and social rights. A plan of preventive measures will be essential if we are to maintain and guarantee these benefits and rights against all attacks and unforeseen circumstances linked to restructuring or privatisation policies not negotiated by our representatives.”

### Mr. Achour Telli, FOSS de la SONELGAZ, Algeria

This takes place against a particular background marked by threats that weigh on the revenues of our respective sectors as a result of neoliberal changes, and also by the efforts and combativeness of peoples to have an influence in and face up to these changes.

I would like to talk to you about what happened in Algeria during the '90s. Deregulation in the electricity sector in our country has been a battle since 1999, and we are trying to minimise the damage. We have tried to maintain the public service in Algiers, the transport of electricity and gas as a 100% government subsidiary and tried to transfer all the assets of SONELGAZ.

This means that all the networks belong to the SONELGAZ Group, which itself belongs to the State. We have tried to maintain this situation.

We have also reintegrated former companies restructured during the '80s, i.e. over 2000 workers amongst the 50,000 in the group. And this has not been without effort, struggle, constant vigilance and the mobilisation of the energy workers.

We have also tried to maintain the social and welfare activities sector in Algeria by setting up a special organisation. From this starting point, we organised a national conference on social and welfare activities in 2003, which was attended by trade union organisations and company employee representatives. Some major recommendations were adopted, many of which are in the early stages of implementation. We believe that we must act in advance of deep-seated changes and introduce a strategy for preserving and developing social and welfare activities in Algeria, because new economic conditions mean that, more than ever, each sector needs to have a highly qualified, experienced, stable, highly available human resource at its disposal in order to accomplish its mission. The price to be paid by companies in return for having this human resource at their disposal is the existence of a dynamic social sector. We may also consider that social and cultural initiatives help to improve the group's trademark image and act as an extra asset in the face of the competition.

Finally, social initiatives help workers to find fulfilment: we believe that social initiatives are a highly important opportunity for solidarity, that can be expressed particularly when workers and their families are going through difficult times. This solidarity should, in particular, reach out to the people who need it most, those with low incomes and workers operating in isolated places. Similarly for pensioners, widows and the children of deceased employees, who should be considered in the same way as active employees. We have adopted new statutes, creating social and cultural initiatives for the entire industrial group: an original experiment, with sector financing over and above the employer's legal contribution, which is 2 %. The implementation of this new type of organisation requires employee training: we are grateful to our friends from CCAS who have helped us train our administrative managers.

The redynamisation of social and cultural activities and the resumption of discussions with our partners is a practical illustration of the concept of a "good citizen" company. We would also like to thank our French friends for the solidarity they showed during the floods in Algeria in 2001 and 2004 and during the earthquake in 2003: living proof that solidarity between peoples and workers is possible.

As for this international conference, we propose that it should lead to practical actions that should be rapidly implemented, particularly so

that we can exchange information and experiences, develop relations and bilateral or multilateral meetings to discuss regulations, joint action programmes, solidarity initiatives between organisations and exchange programmes.

### Carlo DeMasi, FLAEL-CISL, Italy

Many changes have taken place, and perhaps we should have been better prepared for them, or have tried to take concerted action to face up to the avalanche. We have tried to protect our rights and acquired benefits, or to better negotiate our collective agreements. As a result, social and welfare activities have taken a back seat: we need to remind ourselves that they are our primary objective and the heart of the problem itself. In the light of our experience, we know that there was a convergence, a red line: the determination of employers to cut down our involvement, reduce our role and narrow our opportunities. Their justification was cost reduction, but this hid another objective of reducing or cancelling out the political structures that ran these activities and the unions themselves. Everything has changed, everything now depends on the financial aspects, and it is true that we talk less and less about public service. This endangers the future of social and welfare activities.

The energy workers' union recently undertook to improve the social rights of workers through a form of mutual benefit system. This all required considerable sacrifices on the part of workers, who chose to use their pay freely and use part of it to finance social structures. The gaps in public sector social services were thus filled by the workers themselves.

The unions were thus able to prove that they could respond to the needs of the workers they represent. However, employers often forget – or pretend to forget – where these rights come from and try to limit them or question them. In Italy, we are still in a period of tension and major debate. We continue to remind employers and market operators in general that they have no right to question our acquired benefits and workers' rights. Deregulation policies should not be implemented to the detriment of our fellow citizens and employees.

Still looking at Italy and deregulation in the energy sector, where company restructuring has had an immediate impact: a reduction in the number of workers, through a process that everyone knows

well, early retirement. This of course has consequences...because the fewer employees one has who are concerned by social and welfare activities, the less financing one receives. Enel, Italy's leading electricity company, remains passive and watches what is happening. As it uses subcontractors, the union has had to negotiate on behalf of workers moving from Enel to these subcontractor companies, which were not offering the same working conditions to their new employees. With regard to social and welfare activities, we have been able to claim the same treatment for all workers. We are at a stage at which all the collective agreements will have to be renewed, and this clause relating to social and welfare activities poses a problem: I think that the companies in charge of the energy sector in Italy are trying to prevent us from putting our objectives into practice.

**Mr. Boukhari Mohamed, UGTT, Tunisia**

I confirm our total commitment to this essential approach of uniting our forces in the fight against this plague that manifests itself in ferocious attacks on employees' acquired benefits worldwide. Unity is strength. We need to be equally ferocious in our fight against this phenomenon and those who are behind it. We are currently witnessing a phenomenon that affects every aspect of human activity, economic, political, cultural and social in particular: globalisation.

It has developed so rapidly that social activity has been destabilised. It is therefore vital to face up to this plague that is threatening employees and a whole way of life. What are the features of neoliberalism? Obviously, the expansion of the multinationals that have set up in the so-called developing countries with a view to increasing their profits. In these countries, neoliberalism takes on even more dangerous forms: the privatisation of public assets and subcontracting. These new forms of capitalist expansion will considerably affect the social and welfare activities whose mission is to protect employees from every kind of exploitation. Just how much of a threat is globalisation to employees? We need to remind ourselves that the system is based on an imbalance in the distribution of wealth. He who produces most earns least. We have to produce the maximum with minimum resources.

### Mr. Floros Evangelos, Greece

When social assets – health, education, communication, transport and energy – become commercial products and are no longer social assets, how can we sleep in peace? Can we remain indifferent to the increasing desires of employers? The opening-up of markets and the spectacular penetration of capital at every level of the economy and social life are leading to a restructuring of companies and a radical change in the very nature of work. We have a considerable number of unemployed people in our sector alone.

All of this means that employers ask more and more of their employees, who must identify with company values and work as if they were the owners themselves. The stances taken by the Greek association of entrepreneurs and industrialists is very typical.

We should leave man the right to be master of his own life so that he can benefit from energy as a social asset for all and not as a highly expensive commodity. We need to fight together to prevent an ideological investment in globalisation and its awful reality.

Europe, it appears, has lost its soul. It has lost it as a result of globalisation. The number of unemployed continues to rise, and not just in the energy sector.

We need to say no to individualism and yes to individuality. We need to act jointly to have a multiplier effect and not a subtracting or dividing effect. The unions need to become a shield of solidarity to oppose globalisation. We need to act as breakwaters to slow the growing desires of employers.

We need to take an important step, and this important step is needed not just to move forward, but also to allow us to retreat.

We need to call on the elite of neoliberal politics to take this step forward.

And if they can't do it, they should withdraw so that we can have a society with a human dimension.

### Mr. SockMademba, SUTELEC, Senegal

This is the text that was proposed this morning, which should act as a focus for our discussions. It contains important ideas concerning the conception and vision we have of social and welfare activities. When we speak of developing social and welfare activities, it is obvious

that we can no longer content ourselves with saying: we need to protect our social and welfare activities as we have received them up to now. I know that this is what poses us a problem. The text establishes a correlation between institutional revolutions and social and welfare activities. I think that the model we liked was the French one, which is now 60 years old, as it dates back to 1946. It does not appear to have aged for those who consider that social and welfare activities take place within the framework that was set out in those days. It is not because the debate has changed, because the State, which was shareholder, has given way to private initiative, that we should consider this to be a brake on the development of social and welfare activities. This is why I believe that we need to change the dynamics. Why shouldn't the 1% be raised to 5% of sales?

As far as our countries are concerned, workers need to find a framework in which they can fulfil themselves and gain access to those things that form part of the quality of life. These are extremely important aspects of what I consider to be a breakaway from the conception and vision that we have: a defensive vision. We need to be able to make courageous, or at least dynamic proposals. I think that, if Governments have modified the debate, it is because private initiative has agreed to it. And it knows perfectly well what the situation is with regard to sales, sales costs and therefore earnings. And social and welfare activities have been financed on the basis of earnings. This means that there is room for a recalculation of the rate that is applied to cover the needs of workers. In the end, it's not the Government that is the problem: it's the shareholder ...

### **Mr. Joseph Braun, DEMASZ, Hungary**

I represent a Hungarian subsidiary of EDF, and am also a member of the European Works council. Our company has been turned into a limited company. Beforehand, three groups counted for our management: customers, employees and owners. Today, management says the same thing, but we see the reality: first, the owner. Second, the owner, and third, the owner. There are now only two important aspects to life in our company. The first is to continually reduce employee numbers: we have lost half of them in fifteen years. The second is Profit, which rises continuously: for 2008, our company is looking to increase its

profit by 50%. To finish, we now fully understand why and how the transformation of energy companies reduces social and welfare activities. In Hungary, today, we are experiencing unbridled capitalism. I think that we need to act at a European and even at a world level and that the works council may be the place for this action.

### **Mr. Serge Terrier, FNME CGT, France**

What I believe is most important today is to try and analyse the resistance and alternative creation that is emerging in Europe. We saw it recently with the demonstration against the Bolkestein directive, and in certain countries with the rejection of the European constitutional treaty, and again in our own activity sector: we note that people are beginning to offer alternative proposals. In Brussels in early November, there was a meeting of the energy unions in Europe and we started to put forward alternative proposals to this liberalisation. We're beginning to say that there's another way of doing this, and this phase is particularly important worldwide. In Latin America, there are things going on, driven by Venezuela, Cuba and Bolivia; fundamental changes are going on. For example, the Venezuelans are supplying oil to Cuba, which needs it for its power stations, and, in return, the Cubans are training doctors and sending them to Venezuela.

We're moving away from a market-centred economy; we're no longer concerned with profit, but with exchange. I think that this is important. We are also seeing greater mobilisation on certain continents and indeed worldwide: I think of the social forums and their famous motto: "Another world is possible".

As far as we are concerned, where do we situate social and welfare activities? Don't they have a real role to play in this process? CCAS took part in the latest social forum and became involved in a certain number of proposals. All this supposes a practical commitment on our part. In Biarritz, in 2003, 104 organisations met and signed an appeal for the right to energy. It is important that we don't just concern ourselves with what goes on in the company, but that we include the whole issue of society.

I'll make another proposal concerning the so-called countries of the south. We know that they are suffocating with debt. At the world social forum, a comrade from Niger put forward a very interesting proposal:

link the issue of debt cancellation to that of electrification. In other words, every time we give populations access to electricity, that makes for part of the cancellation of the debt.

Shouldn't we also be thinking about a certain form of social tourism? Using very small organisations to create a form of tourism that really serves local development?

I think that the liaison committee should be putting more energy into issues concerning aid, exchanges and the circulation of information. Not just on the question of social and welfare activities, but also on the struggles that are fought on behalf of social and welfare activities. It's not a matter of replacing the unions but of working on the balance of power. Finally, I think that it is important for the liaison committee to make people more aware of certain initiatives and continue to drive them. I refer to the European works council: in July 2004, there was a meeting of the EDF works council, the union federations and the CCAS. I believe that this all needs to be given a new lease of life, and that it should be brought to the notice of others.

### **Mrs. Évelyne Valentin, CCAS, France**

Our theme this morning was aimed at measuring the impact of the change that has taken place in the energy companies concerning social and welfare activities: we have been made aware of the extent of the change and the harmful effects of the deregulation of energy markets and the strategic structural games played by transnational groups in Europe and worldwide. These personal accounts have very clearly illustrated the globalisation of ultra-liberal policies that have led to the same effects: company privatisation, job losses, higher prices for users and a challenge to workers' acquired social benefits. Brutal policies that have also caused damage to the environment. Social and cultural activities, social welfare system and the budgets dedicated to health are being challenged almost everywhere. That's what we have learned this morning. These social budgets, which are directly linked to job numbers, are declining. This is sadly not an isolated phenomenon. We have just been rightly reminded of the decisive role played by government and national policies in regulating the market and organising public services. It is up to each of us, in our countries, to join forces to oppose these policies, which are so harmful to workers and populations. We are also



seeing the resources of emerging countries being pillaged. These often have a high potential but are deliberately prevented from developing them by world capitalism. But social retreat is not irreversible, as we can see from the example of

Sonelgaz. It is increasingly urgent and important to strengthen links between workers and their organisations at an international level. There is no model and no single solution: our strength lies in our diversity. Together, but each in his particular context, we will find ways of opposing the offensives mounted by capitalism. Social and welfare activities are a means, a lever for bringing us together, exchanging points of view, with equal rights and responsibilities, and bringing company employees together.

*(afternoon)*

**Mrs. Évelyne Valentin, CCAS, France**

Since the last conference, the energy sector has continued to change worldwide. We have seen it this morning: this strategic sector for humanity has also paid the price of liberal globalisation. The rights of employees everywhere are under constant attack, are being challenged and even reduced to their simplest expression. I believe that we ought to become involved in every possible fight for a more human, more just, more mutually supportive development. Development, which brings well-being to people, stems from giving everyone the right to energy. And yet, we are seeing the opposite happen. Fossil resources are being appropriated by an increasingly restricted number of countries and private companies. Energy, essential to life, is considered as a commodity. Profits increase at the same time as shortages are being organised for entire regions on our planet. Apart from the energy sector as such, the situation for employees is of extreme concern. Most of us here are union members and we are here to defend the individual and collective interests of workers and their social rights. It is also our responsibility to claim these rights and construct new ones. Social and welfare activities fall within this field of resistance and the creation of alternatives and innovation of all kinds, in a spirit of openness and citizenship.

They may come in various forms: holidays, meals, culture, health, training and education. But they share the emancipating objective of

turning workers into citizens capable of deciding what is good for them. They aim to supportively meet individual or collective needs by placing human beings at the heart of our involvement. We should be well aware that there are disparities between one country and another, but it is our responsibility to defend and develop social and welfare activities where they exist, and to create and promote them where they do not yet exist. More than ever, social and welfare activities have progress to make, sustain and develop. Following the recommendations of the last conference, CCAS has set up a website that will enable us to be in regular contact on participative and supportive forms of action. The site will be an international space for energy workers' social and welfare activities in which everyone can communicate about their protest situation, actions and contributive initiatives. We'll give you a presentation tomorrow. The decisions that we take together will enable social and welfare activities become a basis for creating collective, mutually supportive links between human beings. I am certain that this conference will lead to the forging of new links. The various discussions and the mutual learning acquired in the debates will form a foundation for the development of social and welfare activities for energy workers throughout the world. In our social and welfare activities we need to make sure that, above and beyond our declarations of intention, human emancipation and the refusal of any kind of discrimination become a reality that leads towards peace.

History shows that nothing is irreversible and the present requires us to work together for the common good.

Reading of the theme "Justifying social and welfare activities"

### **SOCIAL AND WELFARE ACTIVITIES**

"Clearing the paths to progress for the well-being of the greatest number": the emancipating role of social and welfare activities will always be a topical one.

Social and welfare activities are a collective response to the individual needs of employees. They have been won by these employees and are a response to their claims. They aim to provide employees and their families with fulfilment and emancipation. They are implemented by

works councils or similar, unions, employee associations and company management. Depending on the status of the organisation that manages them, the concern such areas as health, culture, training, meals, insurance, top-up pension schemes, housing, leisure, tourism and holidays...

The financing and method of managing these activities vary from one country to another and one company to another.

They may be run by unions and financed by contributions, with the member employee having automatic access to the activities run by the union. In other cases, holiday and leisure activities are run by associations on behalf of employees ...

Social and welfare activities may also be financed by subsidies.

There are also works councils who negotiate with companies for financing for particular activities. There are also works councils and similar whose status allows its workers to manage its social and welfare activities: employees or their representatives manage the social and welfare activities themselves, and sometimes their own assets. In this type of structure, financing is a percentage of the wage bill or a levy on energy sales, thus constituting a deferred salary that provides a fair return for the wealth produced by employees.

## **SOCIAL AND WELFARE ACTIVITIES AS A TOOL FOR HUMAN EMANCIPATION**

The legitimacy of social and welfare activities is becoming a major issue in an economic and social environment subject to the constraints of immediate profit and competition. The consideration of a diversity of needs may be expressed as a right because it contributes towards the affirmation in every person of the potential for human development and encourages the acquisition of new abilities at an individual and social level that enhance the status of workers and citizens.

The human emancipation of employees may take on a different face in different parts of the world, but it needs to be one of the primary objectives.

Social and welfare activities should be tools for creating social ties between different employees, professions and generations. Exchange, dialogue, democracy, respect and the right to be different are essential to their development.

The widest possible access to all the activities proposed helps to create these social ties.

Since they were first won, social and welfare activities, managed by employees themselves or by companies, are an important economic issue. They escape from the market although there are attempts to capture them. They also represent a political issue in terms of the content and values that they uphold in society. The market arouses needs, while Social and Welfare Activities meet needs. Social and welfare activities with an emancipating content that are also the standard-bearers of other choices, alternatives and responses act as a brake on policies that are seeking immediate financial profitability above all else. They are thus strongly affected by liberal policies leading to privatisation, restructuring, relocation and job losses. Faced with this threat, energy company employees and their organisations are fighting for other choices, against poverty, insecurity and exploitation and for the development of new social benefits, social rights and collective guarantees.

As such, social and welfare activities act as a lever for resistance in the face of current regression and have become a vehicle for action to examine those things that are required for human development and to begin to turn them into a reality when they become a target for action, as the development of individual abilities encouraged by social and welfare activities does not only have consequences for the individual. It also has positive repercussions for the company and for society as a whole. In this context, social and welfare activities help to reinforce solidarity between individuals in a world in which competition is increasingly tending to govern relations in companies and societies.

In all their forms, social and welfare activities are a positive force for reinforcing solidarity and developing exchanges to build a future in which “human beings” are central to the debate and to the responses provided by modern public services to the needs of peoples and nations.

Energy sector employees need to claim access to social and welfare activities that offer emancipating values as well as claims regarding employment, health, working conditions and pay, as these activities are a source of intellectual enrichment. They should be preserved and strengthened where they exist, and they should be introduced and

developed where they do not yet exist.

Social and welfare activities deployed by labour organisations are aimed at greater social justice and equality. From these mutually supportive social relations come other socio-economic activities that help to develop jobs.

Social and welfare organisations could offer an alternative to the model put forward by the leisure market, by showing that it is possible to introduce a different type of tourism, play sport in other ways, come into contact with other cultures in a different way and by offering activities that are respectful of the environment and the human societies in which they take place.

Social and welfare activities form part of the social and mutually supportive economy, like cooperatives, mutual societies and associations. The aim is not profit, but a response to need. The profits are used to invest and finance new projects. Mutual benefit and cooperation should be encouraged for the sake of greater efficiency. Ownership is not private, but a collective asset.

Social and welfare activities make it possible to create links between employees via national, European and international networks. This type of synergy between individuals helps to decompartmentalise and reinforce social and mutually supportive action in all its forms. Whatever form they take, all opportunities for meetings and exchanges between energy company employees should be seized and developed.

#### **SOCIAL AND WELFARE ACTIVITIES AS A VEHICLE FOR SOLIDARITY BETWEEN EMPLOYEES**

By the work they do, energy employees carry the values of progress. They also show solidarity when it comes to providing their support in times of catastrophe or conflict.

In the same spirit, they should use social and welfare activities to construct emancipating projects in the field of leisure, holidays and culture, and concerning transverse issues related to the planet, peace, the environment, sustainable development, fair trade, etc.

In a globalised, ultraliberal environment, social and welfare activities are, in all their forms, a special area in which energy employees can meet to pool their experiences and construct joint, mutually supportive projects.

It is important to strengthen ties between employees so that, together, each within his own conditions, practices, traditions and history, they can fight at all levels to impose an upward harmonisation of fundamental rights such as the right to energy, housing, education, health, a decent salary and social rights of which social and welfare activities are a part.

The characteristics and contents, contributions and aims of social and welfare activities are at the heart of human development issues, as they can help the employees who benefit from them to achieve a potential for emancipation.

In the same spirit as the “agreement concerning the social responsibility of companies”, which was signed by EDF and other large companies, access to social and welfare activities should form part of companies’ social commitments.

The threats that weigh on employees should not lead them to give up the right to social and welfare activities, nor should these be allowed to become secondary issues.

It is legitimate for all energy employees to claim access to social and welfare activities; it is in line with the mission of these employees who are producing, transporting and distributing this joint world asset: energy.

### **Mr. Mohamed Moussa Jadallah, PCWFP, Palestine**

It is very important for us, Palestinians and Israelis, to enter into a peace process, and we ask every country in the world to help us move towards that peace. A just peace for everyone, for both nations, Palestine and Israel, for two countries, one for the Palestinians and the other for the Israelis, within the limits that were set down in 1967. This is the principle that should help us break down the wall of Racism. We are also working to free prisoners and dismantle the colonies, and are seeking a solution for the refugees, in accordance with United Nations guidelines. For our Palestinian and Israeli children.

### **Mr. Geva Sagi, UCAPSE, Israel**

I'd like to talk about peace from a particular point of view, that of the union. We cannot take government decisions as a union. We don't run the army and we can't sign a peace treaty as a union. Our strength lies

in our ability to think, to influence. The big question is: how do we go about it?

I'll tell you a little story ... One day I asked my mother to come to my home and look after my children. She's 70. She looks after our youngest while I work on my computer. I hear a thump and crying. The child has run into a corner of the kitchen table. I come out of my bedroom and see something quite surprising: a 70-year-old woman and a little girl of 3 standing by the table...

The child is crying and they're hitting the table, the thing that has hit her! To quieten the child and stop her crying, we find someone who isn't hurt or who isn't crying, and we hit him! Just like the political parties. What do they do? They say "Vote for me because I'm going to throw the Arabs out of Israel. Vote for me because I'm going to sort out world ecology. Vote for me because I'm going to throw out all the religious fanatics". Nobody says "Vote for me because I like you". And we always find a table that we can hit. If we changed the formula and said: "There's no difference between religion, race or sex; we're all human beings ... We will no longer look upwards or downwards at people, but will look each other in the eyes. Let us learn to respect each other, to love each other and understand that we all make mistakes but we respect each other". Here, we, as a union, can have an influence on things. Here, we can start along the road to peace in the world: there's no difference whether it's in Israel or anywhere else. Taking the concept of love is perhaps the right formula, the right way. Getting up in the morning and saying "What can I do, who can I help? Who can I love?" And not "What am I afraid of? Who do I fear? How am I going to defend myself?" But "How can I open myself up to others?" And I receive them.

And for the children, we'll build a wall in the house that they can go and hit. But only for the children...

### **Mr. Stamelos Hlias, Genop, Greece**

Since the start of this conference, we have heard an analysis of the problems that have resulted from the changes observed in the field of energy. These changes are a fact that we cannot deny, and they affect the public nature of energy in general. All this has led to changes and consequences for workers. Everyone agrees about that. But I'd like to

spend some time on what lies behind the very reason for these problems and on what we, as union representatives, should do. Because if we restrict ourselves to describing these phenomena, we will contribute very little as union members.

I believe that the character of these changes has to do with very nature of the capitalist system. In other words, the necessity and the need for capitalists and employer capital to register ever-larger profits. Since the Maastricht treaty, we can observe that all the changes that had been planned for the energy sector have come about or are in the process of doing so, so that the European Union and its companies can be more and more competitive in comparison with other companies worldwide. It is very important for us and our workers to demonstrate this characteristic of the changes and the interests that lie behind them in order to be able to organise the necessary reaction. Also, a few years ago at the Lisbon meeting, the European Union's objectives were set out, i.e. the privatisation of public services, changes in working relations and worker rights. This desire to increase profits has led to wars and conflicts that have caused great suffering for people, such as the American intervention in Iraq in order to control the oil resources in the region. As workers in the energy sector, we are very sensitive to that.

We have mobilised to criticise these interventions and trends. In our country there is a will to give prerogatives to the great capitalists so that they can invest in energy, in electricity and against the interests, even to the detriment of, the public service. In December 2005, a law abolished the permanent nature of employment: this was the start of a process aimed at getting rid of all existing workers' rights. I believe that no one can confuse the issue between company profits and worker interests in the field of health, education, salaries, cultural and free time activities.

Today, more than ever, all this is placed in opposition to cash benefits and profits. We cannot leave it in the hands of companies.

Above and beyond jobs and pay, union claims should also include issues concerning health, culture and education. Companies and their political representatives try to promote a conception in which the worker is supposed to have a certain view of the company; the capitalist conception is as follows:



More profit in order to be able to act like a predator. How can an employee who is on flexible working hours or who works morning to evening without fixed working hours find time for culture or sport? I therefore think that we should not just report on our observations but rather try to achieve the objectives that meet the needs of workers.

In order to oppose the interests of employers and globalisation, we need to contest their conception and vision in order to promote that of the workers. Because it is they who produce, who are society's real productive force, and it is therefore they who should benefit from these developments. In our country, where we have a broad experience of struggle, movement and reaction are becoming stronger and stronger. We recently had an eight-day strike in the ports, which involved all the employees. The government was forced to declare martial law to force the workers to go to their place of work. Various examples of solidarity were seen and we were able to show that workers can win if they don't bend to the demands of politicians. Today, this attitude is increasingly gaining ground.

I hope that, through the working sessions of this conference and its debates, we will be able to show ourselves to be more effective in our struggles.

#### **Mr. Juan–Alexis Rivero, FETRAELEC, Venezuela**

I am the general secretary of the industry workers' federation. In my country, PDV, Petrolío de Venezuela, is the leading energy company. It is going through a process of transformation to increase its social and welfare activities, for its workers and for the population. There have been a number of conferences on oil with Cuba, Argentina, Uruguay and other Central American and Caribbean countries: everything is done on a reciprocal basis, which enables us to increase our social and welfare activities and reinforce the integration of our populations. We are an example that may be used as a point of reference. Social and welfare activities should be seen from another perspective, through a different prism. As a workers' representative, it is evident that we need to continue to reinforce social organisation and the unions, add to the integration activities of workers in the energy sector and draw up collective agreements that guarantee social and welfare activities for workers. In my country, we are constructing a new framework, a new reality: that of the integration of citizens, and the structuring and organisation of the workers' struggle.

**Mr. Gostojic Milenko, EPS, Serbia-Montenegro**

I would like to talk to you about problems particular to Serbia. We have organised a general strike and negotiated agreements on working time, but these have not yet been signed. Our energy industry has achieved good results in terms of production, but we have the lowest salaries in Europe. We are still on general strike and have had problems for years concerning holiday and pleasure establishments in Serbia, whose owners are the energy industry employees. Hotels that have been rebuilt with employee salaries. We do not want the let the Serbian government sell these hotels and see people lose their jobs. It would be unacceptable. We hope that this will support our efforts and put pressure on Mr Kostounitsa's government to put an end to this plan.

**Mr. Martin Victor, GAZELCO, Belgium**

One aspect that has not yet been mentioned concerns the means of production, which have now been largely written off. In all our companies, they are being used to pump more money into the economy. In fact, takeover bids are springing up everywhere and I am concerned that, in future, the system will see dog eat dog and we will be left with no more than one or two major operators. The citizens and workers that we are will pay a high price for electricity because we can no longer intervene. The price of electricity will be dictated to us in the name of supply and demand, and we won't be able to oppose it.

I have come on to this platform because I have the strong feeling that we need to stop making observations and start making proposals. If we leave the initiative to the people who make the decisions, we will be swallowed up in no time. If we don't react soon, the freedom to express ourselves as a union will be doomed to failure.

We need to become aware in this auditorium of the fact that we should emerge from these three days of work with a motion of defiance issued by a mutually supportive European movement. We can always oppose people with texts, but I think that there should be something behind our opposition. I would also like to see us spare a thought during these three days for our thirteen Belgian comrades who opposed the Bolkestein directive and who are now in prison in France. It's the whole union movement that is in prison, because everything is obviously linked to our union freedoms. So I would ask that we don't sell the

family jewels in the same way that the Serbian government wants to sell our hotels ...

Let us defend ourselves. I'll end with the following quotation: "he who struggles may lose, but he who does not struggle has lost already".

**Mr. Boukhari Mohamed, UGTT, Tunisia**

A new form of work has been born: the insecure contract. This can only weaken social and welfare activities, as the wage bill is further and further reduced. It also affects the pension and insurance funds, which are deprived of contributions.

We should also add that every time there is a crisis, the employee foots the bill, as budget restriction measures often involve either a reduction in salaries or the cancellation of bonuses or simply massive employee redundancies. We are currently talking about what might be called company upgrading. We immediately ask the question: is the social side part of the programme? Does company prosperity go hand in hand with employee prosperity? We then have to say that the reality of our companies shows that the interests of financial backers always come first.

**Mrs. Priscilia Razafinmandimby, FISEMARE, Madagascar**

This conference will help to reinforce our unity of action and will open up new horizons in our future struggles, which will require a great deal of initiative, effort, conviction, meeting and discussion. In the current climate, it would be an error to ignore that the world of today is moving through the force of capital towards a single market, a globalisation organised by an ultraliberalism that will have disastrous consequences.

We believe that we, too, need to organise ourselves to coordinate our struggles and strengthen our solidarity, help to bring people together and fuel the debate concerning the development of social and welfare activities as a right for workers. As a result, the extension of union involvement into all aspects of life means that meetings are more and more frequent in our activity. We therefore need to capitalise on contacts and opportunities for work and joint initiatives, and especially the accomplishment of our plans in the field of social and welfare activities.

As far as the Madagascar energy company is concerned, it is under a management contract, financed by the World Bank, for 24 months from 2005, with a view to achieving financial recovery via an international company. Unfortunately, delays in financial agreements and the release of funds to implement the recovery plan are endangering the company's survival. Concerning the financing of social and welfare activities, it is virtually nil at company level. The contributions obtained by union members will never be enough to finance any social activity. How many employees could currently benefit from holidays, when their earnings are used only for the survival of their families, their rent, meals, health expenses ... The works council project is currently being drawn up as the application decree was not promulgated by the Ministry of Labour until December 2005. So where do we find the finance? Certainly, there are facilities such as accommodation in every province for holidays and sports fields, access is sometimes made difficult by owners, company managers or the authorities that occupy the premises. All the employees or their families practise a sport as a leisure activity, but travel and equipment costs are very high.

It is true that social and welfare activities are aids to human emancipation ...

But the application of the management contract encourages employees to think of no more than remaining stable in their job and of fighting only to maintain their rights and acquired benefits. They therefore reduce their social and welfare activities. I hope to see the arrival of a new, more participative strategy in national and international discussions. In my country, a number of projects could be made feasible in the various fields of social and welfare activities: leisure, holidays, culture, environmental protection and sustainable development. But we need finance to achieve this and we do not have any relations with other organisations or associations who could help us. Our economic and social assets remain unexploited.

### **Mr. Carlo DeMasi, FLAEI-CISL, Italy**

We are operators in the energy sector, but we are also stakeholders or operators in the social field. Social and welfare activities are an instrument for emancipation and a weapon that allows us to react.

It may also contribute towards solidarity between and amongst individuals in a world in which competition and profit occupy all the margins of participation.

Our role is not only the right but also the duty to protest, not just about working and safety conditions, but also about equal pay and social and welfare activities. In the conference text, it is understood that social and welfare activities make it possible to create links between all operators at an international level, and thus create synergies in order to develop joint social action in all its forms. In Italy, as a union, we have developed joint initiatives amongst energy workers, aimed at Third World communities. We have financed projects, and have also encouraged workers, retired or active, to participate and volunteer to intervene directly in very disparate regions: Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe. We need to tackle those issues that give rise to an immediate solidarity, which fits in with our tradition as public service workers. The unions need to contribute also, at an international level. We can do a great deal and share our experiences. As union members and stakeholders in social activities, we should be able to play a role in the social aspect, by informing the public and raising awareness.

### **Mr. Ghanmi Chedly, STEG, Tunisia**

STEG is a State-owned company that produces, transports and distributes electricity and gas. It has around 10,000 employees. For a number of years, STEG has been committed to introducing a social policy with actions undertaken to improve living and working conditions for employees and their families, such as loans to gain access to home ownership, holidays, leisure, sport, meals, clothing allowances and a variety of welfare grants. Every year, STEG allocates a budget to finance social and welfare activities, which are planned in collaboration with union representatives. This expenditure represents an average of 8% of the wage bill. Initially, STEG developed social and welfare activities without being required to do so by law. We believe that, in order to maintain acquired social benefits and justify social and welfare activities, an independent management structure needs to be set up that has financial and administrative autonomy.

In order to resist or oppose any attempt to challenge workers' social rights and benefits, we believe that the structure should meet the

following conditions: have fixed, sustainable financial sources -as an example, an amount calculated on the basis of the wage bill- with a fixed portion guaranteeing the continuity of social and welfare activities and a portion linked to productivity. It should also have a management committee to oversee social and welfare activities. Areas of intervention should be decided in advance. This model structure should be flexible so that it could be used in all companies in accordance with the specific cultural, social and economic features of each country. In addition, the introduction of an effective social information system helps actively to make des social and welfare activities more legitimate by giving access to the full range of organisations. Finally, broadening the Conference to include other countries will unite all workers to act as mutually supportive partners, defending their acquired benefits and rights against the danger of liberal globalisation.

### **Mr. Roberto Botta, ARCA, Italy**

I would like to attract your attention to two issues: what are we going to do to follow up on our working sessions ? I would then like to talk to you about another fact: the threats that weigh on our companies. The Italian energy company, Enel, has tried to place a large number of obstacles in front of us. For example, it has forgotten that the money from social and welfare activities is workers' money and not company money. They're not just trying to take the finance away from us – because the company obviously wants to give less and less – but they also want to replace the union within the company. They realise that the workers are satisfied with our services and they want to replace ARCA and change its image, by making distinctions between workers and offering certain services to certain categories of workers and not to others.

I think that it is important for workers to meet, workers who come from different realities. Not just at conferences, where the points of view and opinions expressed are often divergent, but also during holidays. When workers meet, they can get to know each other and this type of exchange is very beneficial. We can get a better idea of the potential problems of various workers in other countries; we can give them advice and the benefit of our experience. This has already happened in France and in other countries for GENOP-DEH for example, and

for the whole North African region, Poland and Quebec... We need to invest in this activity, which is one of solidarity and civilisation.

### **Mr. Hassan Chahboubi, COS/ONE, Morocco**

Herewith a few lines that summarise the comments made by our colleagues.

Mrs. Valentin from CCAS demonstrated the importance of social and welfare activities in terms of creating solidarity between employees, humanist values, progress and emancipation. It is absolutely vital for energy employees to meet and exchange views in order to construct a joint, mutually supportive plan to defend acquired rights and acquire new rights. As our Palestinian and Israeli friends emphasised, mutual respect, meeting and dialogue are factors for peace. Union responsibility for social and welfare activities for energy workers gives workers with converging interests an opportunity to meet. Our colleague Stamelos reminded us that it is employees who create wealth and it is just and right that they should reap the benefits. Our colleague from Venezuela demonstrated that, when workers take control of their own interests, when they are listened to by a government that is on their side, collective agreements and social and welfare activities can make progress. On the other hand, Mr Milenko told us of the difficulties that may be encountered by employees in Serbia and Montenegro when they fight against an intransigent management and a government committed to liberalism: we stand alongside them in their struggle to hold on to the rights that belong to them. Solidarity also means action, as our Belgian colleague so clearly said. It is not enough to make observations, we need to organise ourselves together, on every continent and worldwide, to create a force that is capable of opposing the power of money. We need to reinforce our unity of action to combat the evils of the single market, reinforce our social and welfare activities to improve health throughout the world, and fight against the Aids plague and against poverty. This is what the most destitute populations need. The account of events in Madagascar is particularly lucid, when people sell themselves to survive.

We don't always find it useful to make the claim, but social and welfare activities are vital as a vehicle for expressing solidarity.

**Mrs. Paola Gasparoli, Un Ponte Per, Italy**

Worked in Iraq until 2004.

Editor of the Website [www.osservatorioiraq.it](http://www.osservatorioiraq.it)

I'd like to talk to you about a different Iraq, that wants to reconstruct itself in a different way, an Iraq that is in great difficulty and is living in great violence.

I'd like to talk to you about an organisation that looks after Iraqis without concern for their race or ethnic origin. It is an organisation that aims to fight two battles. Firstly, the protection of Iraqi jobs, because subcontracting in the country "imports" workers from Sri Lanka or India, which explains the unemployment rate of 80% to 85%.

Privatisation has been prevented on the oil installations site. Organisations, unions and political organisations, have occupied the port and prevented this initial privatisation. A number of battles have been fought over pay, and these have led to a certain increase. Iraqi oil belongs to the country and to all Iraqis.

Oil, like all forms of energy, belongs to humanity, to everyone. In Iraq, it is also the country's main resource. Over and above the violence and conflict, there are people in Iraq who want to enter into dialogue both inside and outside the country.

FIAM, CGL and all the unions in Italy support this movement for peace and are trying to forge real contacts. A number of union activists have tried to form a solidarity committee and are asking for the contracts signed by Saddam Hussein to be cancelled. But it is very difficult to try and by-pass the civil war; the Iraqis have tried to reconquer all the installations, but they have found the major multinationals, particularly the American ones, in their way. And union activity in these installations is under threat; union activists are made redundant. The oil issue is a delicate one. It is important to amplify the Iraqi demand by attempting to move towards a joint, mutually supportive management of gas and oil. Because the oil sector unions are strong, not just in the Middle East but in all the oil-producing countries. They play an important role on the international stage. We therefore need to make much stronger claims.



*(Sunday)*

**Mr. Victor Martin, GAZELCO, Belgium**

Reading of the amended Call of the 4th Conference. Appendix 1

**Mrs. Luigina Libretti, ARCA, Italy**

Social coherence is a decisive factor in the development of economic processes. Identifying and meeting the need for protection, culture and continuing training means creating new forms of work and activity. It is possible to use our ideological and cultural past to implement social and welfare activities. It is here that we gather the strength to move forward into the future. These new projects require new ideological conceptions that take account of relations between different communities and of appropriate material means.

We need to assert a social identity and our action involves two very distinct roles: The political or strategic dimension that acts to remove the obstacles that create inequality and loss of social cohesion, and the operational dimension, i.e. the programming of social activities and initiatives. Things are changing very quickly today, but the ideals survive these changes. The time has come to firmly reassert the importance of our practical commitment by respecting and spreading common values through the social and welfare activities that we organise. We are in the presence of a strategy that aims to challenge the cultural organisation of a model social state, a model civil society built, not without difficulty, over the last few decades. Our duty and starting point is to create forms of unity and cohesion between workers, using our great potential for voluntary support, solidarity, reciprocity and citizenship. This is common to all the countries present here, from Europe, Africa, America and Asia, despite the different types of administrations, structures and mentalities on which activities in these countries are based. We need to have the capacity to live in this world and consider it as a common asset to be developed rather than impoverished, by adding value rather than taking it away, and by projecting a social vision for the future. That is the difference between those who privatise and take away, and those who share and coordinate, between those who act in an individualistic manner and those who seek to build social bridges to be passed down to future generations. We cannot stand by

and watch our common assets being destroyed. The concept of social interdependence, sharing and reciprocity contributes towards the definition of the principle of citizenship.

The social responsibility of companies also defines the company's social citizenship and its integration of social and ecological issues.

These will not be achieved to the detriment of the search for profit, which is still the primary objective of companies. On the contrary, they contribute towards it by creating social well-being, rather than damaging the community. A company's social responsibility should be part of its mission; it should be stated as being the company's way of being and acting. At a time when the European Union is seeking to identify common values by adopting a charter of fundamental rights, an ever-increasing number of companies are recognising their own responsibility and are considering it as being one of the components of their identity. Such a vision is the reflection of what workers are seeking, i.e. a change in the role of companies in a changing society. The major difficulty that we need to overcome is the new context of liberalisation in the energy sector. Difficulties that we thought were unthinkable only ten years ago now force us to reassert, louder than ever, the idea of the social value of energy. Europe has the leading social welfare system in the world: for example, it has better results than the United States with regard to infant mortality, life expectancy, poverty and income disparity. The aim is to defend these results in an economic context characterised by major challenges. And we do not have to negotiate between competitiveness and social cohesion. On the contrary, it has been demonstrated that high performance in terms of jobs and innovation and a well-developed, functional social welfare system can live side by side. We need even more to emphasise the importance of exporting our social and welfare activities model by spreading these rights to other workers. We need to overcome our problems by working closely together outside the boundaries of Europe. Fields of action and areas for growth will become wider as a result of cohesion between large and small countries and the contribution that each can make. Today, the social, mutually supportive economy is a great force made up of millions of workers and volunteers. Apart from the numbers, there is a commitment to the common good and social quality, to improving the protection of rights and fighting

against exclusion. Social development necessarily involves cooperation and mutual confidence between workers with a view to governance above and beyond individual differences. This also implies a social, mutually supportive economy that can mobilise effectively and open out into other areas of intervention such as sustainable tourism, art, culture, ecological activities and the promotion of fair trade. The effectiveness of the fight will close gaps in development and reduce inequalities. In these terms, we believe that the social, mutually supportive economy can be an ally for all companies and play a significant role in guaranteeing the social quality of investments and demonstrating the appropriateness of company financing. However, the new culture born from market expansion is worrying. The contemporary flow of culture is pointed in only one direction, from the rich countries to the poor. Such an assault on cultures, which is particularly visible in the new means of communication, may endanger the differences and make individuals fearful of losing their own cultural identity. We need to support indigenous and national cultures so that they can flourish alongside foreign cultures. And if globalisation is an irreversible phenomenon, the effort that we need to put in should be directed towards creating a shared global space. On this point, our social and welfare activities may be fully considered as an expression of a reciprocal recognition and therefore a better integration of the Other. In-depth, joint discussions on international cooperation should lead to the presentation of a lasting pilot project that incorporates the supportive aspects of social and welfare activity carried out with the help of internal volunteers. We therefore propose to work on the following strategic objectives:

- structure a network capable of exchanging information to emphasise the importance of the value of the activities carried out and work out a communication strategy via an effective, incisive campaign,
- add to our knowledge by collecting data from organisations in the energy sector,
- broaden the liaison committee to other countries,
- work together to organise cultural, supportive and volunteer initiatives,
- work together to draw up an international cooperation project using European Union financing funds.

### **Mr. Igor Fromitchev, STEINR, Russia**

We are all involved in the energy industry and are therefore forced to consider the trends in the development of the energy sector worldwide. What are these trends? It is well known that when industry develops, energy consumption increases in a linear fashion, as does consumption by the population. In other words, as the average salary of that population goes above a certain limit, energy consumption grows and increases considerably. And this also concerns the developing countries, including Russia, China and India. Our union covers the nuclear workers in Russia, and we cannot remain separate from the strategy and future of this branch. We need to create favourable social conditions in order to keep high-quality professionals within the sector.

Our unions are working actively with management to set up a new energy and nuclear corporation in Russia, which will oversee every stage of production, from uranium extraction and treatment to the production of electrical energy of nuclear origin. This would be a single corporation in which social and welfare activities should be the same for all. The forms and methods involved in these social and welfare activities may be different, but our main task is to offer high-level guarantees. Today, the energy sector is the leading sector in the economy of every country in the world, and needs highly-qualified specialists. The sector also has to have high standards in terms of social and welfare activities. We should all work together on this issue.

### **Mr. Agoussou Simon, ASET Paix Ouvrière, Benin**

Benin's electrical energy company and the Benin national water authority worked together for many years but were separated in 2004. And our company has no social and welfare activities at all. We have set up an association that is financed entirely by employee contributions. CCAS is our model. On this basis, and with reference to this institution, we have set up this entity, which now organises social and welfare activities countrywide. Referring to the 3rd point, which highlights the need for international solidarity and cooperation, we need to emphasise the need for our energy companies to incorporate this notion of social responsibility into their programme and project. We are not against globalisation, but we are against liberal globalisation.

**Mr. Jean-Paul Escoffier, ESF, France**

Since yesterday morning we have shared the same analysis: the situation has got worse in the energy sector. In Europe, the supporters of liberalism promised that competition would bring prices down. What we have actually seen is increased prices and the loss of nearly 300,000 jobs.

We need to understand that all these reorganisations and privatisations are mainly aimed at human profitability. I believe that the economy is there to serve people first, and not the opposite; that work, and therefore people at work, are the only creators of wealth, while capital simply picks up the greater share of the dividends on the wealth that has been created. With the search for productivity, the reduction in jobs and constant pressure on salaries, profits have risen steadily. Yes, companies are changing, but not in the way that we want. At the same time, there will be opportunities in the years to come, as the demand for energy consumption is becoming extremely high in China, India and even in Africa, where the population is little affected by electrification. We therefore have a responsibility when the opportunity arises to ensure that it is a driving force for job creation and a driving force for the creation of social and welfare activities. Companies change, but societies change too and employees are now expressing greater expectations, different from those that we saw a few years ago. There are rising aspirations to work differently, with a new balance between working time and time dedicated to living, learning, travelling, exchanging opinions, culture, solidarity or, quite simply, to loving. Social and welfare activities represent all that. Constructing social and welfare activities means constructing the future, but based on the realities of the present. I believe that struggle is central to this approach. Firstly, for those who have acquired rights in the area of social and welfare activities, but whose rights are being constantly challenged. Then there are those who have nothing and who need to create social and welfare activities. We need to lead a real ideological battle as, in the companies, the bosses are spending their time creating the conditions for introducing greater individualism as the spearhead of attachment to the company. We need to give a new boost to solidarity and we have the opportunity to do it. The real question that is posed today is “what happens after the conference?”.

Amongst the organisations present here, we have considerable capacity in terms of the means at our disposal in the field of social and welfare activities. If we take just a few European countries and add in Russia, India and Africa, we can find examples of evolution and appropriation in social and welfare activities that can act as a basis for action. We need to work from that reality and move forward to ensure that social and welfare activities genuinely meet the needs of employees. The liaison committee cannot do everything. It must be attentive and receptive, and put forward proposals for coordinating initiatives. But it is the responsibility of each of the organisations that we represent to offer a contribution, on our home ground, in our companies and with our employees. The website that was mentioned earlier can increase awareness of what we do, what our needs are and the experiments that we are leading. We must, each of us, from today, take our place in this strategy. We have confirmed in this 4th conference that social and welfare activities are an opportunity for energy employees to build joint, mutually supportive projects. I believe that this definition fits exactly with what we have just experienced. A large number of human beings on different continents still do not have access to energy. And yet, the international institutions have only one word on their lips: development. But since 2000 and its millennium objectives, nothing has happened and there has been no development. Social and welfare activities fall directly within the framework of international solidarity. The association in which I am involved, “Electriciens sans frontières”, is working closely with CCAS to carry out projects supported by local populations, which concern electricity and water supplies to meet “natural” needs linked to health, education, farming or craft activities. And we use volunteers, electricians and gas workers, to construct the resources that they then appropriate. Where these projects have been completed, they have transformed the lives of these populations because, first and foremost, they have been involved themselves. This is a tremendous starting point for the process of developing social and welfare activities.

### **Mr. Fontanelli, FILCEM-CGIL, Italy**

We need to have common objectives, as we are all faced with misguided policies, based on inequality, social policies that affect thousands

of poor people suffering from famine or other social problems. Our network, the one that we have set up, is our strength. We need to mark out strategies and set up cooperation. We offer services that are essential to society and to the economy of every country. We know that there are acquired social benefits that we must try to maintain and develop.

### **Mr. Joël da Silva, Droit à l'énergie, France**

Our association "Droit à l'énergie" was founded in 2000. It is a non-governmental, international organisation with a registered office in France, and contains around 250 associations, trade union organisations, NGOs and affiliated foundations. Our aim is to bring together those who wish to act in favour of the recognition of the right to energy as a fundamental human right. We have a special consultative status on the United Nations Economic and Social Committee and we naturally call on all the organisations that do not know us to become aware of what we do in order to develop initiatives to make this right to energy a fundamental right. The reduction of poverty in the world and development are undoubtedly the key issues of the first half of the 21st Century and the programme to reduce poverty launched by the United Nations in 2000 and signed by the 192 member countries of the UNO General Assembly constitutes an extremely important foundation for the actions to be undertaken to fight against poverty and for education, equality between men and women, and health. Sadly, things are moving forward very slowly and I feel that organisations and civil society need to be mobilised to ensure that these changes take place much more quickly. Between 2 and 2.5 billion human beings on our planet have no access to energy, other than firewood. In countries where there is no energy, especially in the form of electricity, we observe that life expectancy - for example, in certain African countries - is less than forty years. This means that energy is life, and we call upon everyone here to become aware of these vital needs.

### **Mr. Boukhari Mohamed, UGTT, Tunisia**

Acting together: more than ever, social and union action in particular is called upon to play a decisive role. Because it is not just a matter of

persuading companies to adopt measures favourable to the working class, but also of persuading the legislators to introduce laws likely to protect employees against any form of abuse. The forms of exploitation of which we have spoken are a justification for union action in companies. However, this union action should not just be about protest: it should also be involved in decision-making. Unions should be proposing one or more alternatives to measures taken by executives that are often imposed as a *fait accompli*. But without a thorough knowledge of the economic realities of the company, those who speak on behalf of employees will not be in a position to put forward programmes for economic and social recovery. The expansion of neoliberalism leaves no room for reciprocity: it comes from the rich countries and settles in the developing countries. Social action, which is needed to help face up to exploitation, falls within the framework of complementarity and mutual benefit. The fate of all employees worldwide is the same, whatever their origin or culture: we must all act together.

### **Mr. Claude Pommery, European Works Council, EDF France**

To this morning's theme "Acting together", I would add "Acting together everywhere and all the time". I say "everywhere" because I think that today there are new ways of intervening, new areas that are opening up to help us put forward our claims, especially those concerning social and welfare activities for all. It has been said over the last two days that we need to fight globalisation. Our comrade from Benin said: "We are not against globalisation. We are for globalisation in the sense of economic and social progress for all. And that is where we have a divergence of views with globalisation as it is organised today, through the international institutions that we all know: the WTO, the IMF, the World Bank, all neoliberal tools used to serve the powerful.

Through our international union organisations we can intervene with the IMF or WTO, or achieve a reference to social and welfare activities through an ILO standard. Would it not be a considerable step forward towards acceptance of the idea of social and welfare activities and of what they mean to employees?

I think the new area for concentration is within the multinationals. Energy is a source of profit: capital has understood this and the



multinationals are currently restructuring to draw maximum profit from the sector. This is a new area of intervention and today, as we all know, there is no such thing as international social law. The only common rules that exist are the ILO standards, which are not restrictive, ratified and not applied. And I think that we could add the issue of social and welfare activities into international social law. We can gain ground on social law today inside the multinationals, inside companies. I myself am an employee of a multinational, EDF.

One of the areas for intervention that I see today is the European Works Council, which is in fact the only place in which employees are represented internationally. We have already had a few initiatives on the subject, particularly in July 2004 with a joint statement expressing a desire to build up social and welfare activities across the group.

Reference is made to it in the proposed conference call. The fact that EDF head office acknowledged that social and welfare activities should be partly financed by wealth created in all the companies in the EDF group could be a considerable springboard for opening negotiations and creating convergences in the struggles in every country in which the EDF group is present. The second area for intervention is company social responsibility. Initially, the concept of company social responsibility was a voluntary one, especially for the American multinationals, who needed to re-gild their image. But if the multinationals have accepted the idea, it is because public opinion and the social movement have imposed it on them. Because companies can no longer behave in any old way. Today, Nike can no longer have its shoes made by exploiting children, because public opinion won't accept it. Through our union organisations and union movements, we should be looking deeply into this issue and making a real claim for the concept of company social responsibility. This could become a major area for intervention and I think that there are battles to be won inside the concept. An agreement has been signed for EDF. There is no reference to social and welfare activities, because we did not support it strongly enough from a union point of view. The second stage will be to support the issue of social and welfare activities, their financing and administration as part of our claims within the agreement. We need to act together, everywhere: we will need every possible means of intervention in order to take the issue forward.

### **Mr. Carlo DeMasi, FLAEI-CISL, Italy**

In the case of Italy, it is absolutely vital to intervene to ensure that we have better social services. Improved services that should be built up against a background of discussion between energy sector workers inside and outside Europe. We will thus help towards the construction of not just a social Europe, but a social world in which there will be no barriers, with economic, social and even union exchanges worldwide. My union organisation has always fought for this type of exchange, even though, on a practical level, it takes a lot of responsibility and a great deal of organising on the part of the administrators to achieve it. With regard to studies, youth and the practice of foreign languages, the school and summer holidays are areas that will help the young to integrate better, educate themselves better and better assimilate the experiences that they have enjoyed in other countries. We need to make demands, over and above the experiences we have already had. We have heard the Russian union representatives: members of this association came to Italy for an exchange of information. Today there has been a meeting between Italians and Algerians... We need to act together, i.e. share moments of success and moments of failure. We need to see which are the models that have made progress and that we can use as referents. We need to see how we can contribute to an ever-necessary integration in order to respond to the challenge of globalisation. We need to act together: it is a demand, a requirement, because we need to protect workers and improve that protection in the social sphere, just as we need to protect the identity of the different countries.

### **Mr. Michel Caouette, Hydro-Québec, Canada**

To briefly summarise this morning's discussions, I'll begin by noting that all the speakers and certainly all participants agree on a common, shared analysis of the energy sector worldwide. As we saw yesterday, the consequences for jobs and social rights are catastrophic. And everyone expressed a common wish to act together. This morning's contributions show that there are some signs of hope. We need to develop or event courses of action. The 1st series of proposals concerns better communication and more regular discussion of the local realities facing each delegation.

Our Russian colleague told us about the new forms of participation between employees and bosses to introduce social and welfare activities. The nuclear sector is developing in terms of both technology and qualification and wants to see social and welfare activities at the same high level of quality. Our comrade from Benin stated that he was inspired by what exists in France to introduce and develop social and welfare activities.

Jean Paul Escoffier for ESF reminded us of the relative nature of the energy market in Europe and more precisely in France, where the sector is suffering from takeovers. It is up to us to remain extremely vigilant with regard to changes in the sector and the situation of employees.

The construction of social and welfare activities tomorrow will be based on the realities of today.

The reinforcement of solidarity was also mentioned several times, especially by our Italian colleague and by Joël da Silva: the right to energy; the link between the development of electrification and the development of the condition of employees. Liberal globalisation was mentioned by a number of speakers, but several expressed the idea that another form of globalisation was possible. A globalisation based on solidarity, everywhere and for all.

With regard to multinational companies, as Claude Pommery from the EDF European Works Council pointed out, it is our responsibility as union activists to demand that agreements on company social responsibility should include the social and welfare activities dimension. More practically, and to create a link between solidarity and communication, the social and welfare activities website was mentioned as a means of improving exchanges between us. The Italian speaker stated that we should face up to our difficulties and work together to implement innovative approaches to developing social and welfare activities. The strength of our convictions and our common energy will help us to overcome these difficulties; the common will to work together is tangible.

We need to explore ways of getting to know each other better, helping each other in our demands and working together to construct joint projects, and we need to do this in an energetic, proactive state of mind.

**Milène Aubert, CCAS, France**

Presentation of the website, [www.international-dialogue.com](http://www.international-dialogue.com)

The idea of creating a website common to all the energy workers' social organisations was launched at a liaison group meeting in Florence in June 2002. But already the working sessions at the 3<sup>rd</sup> International conference in November 1999 were insisting on the need – I quote – “to broaden the content and circulation of the International Dialogue newsletter, organise information and use multimedia tools to create a data bank with which we can communicate rapidly and effectively, circulate initiatives and common problems, etc.”

The key objectives in creating the site are, roughly, to encourage exchanges between organisations, to publicise the social rights of energy workers in general and the right to social and welfare activities in particular, to provide greater awareness of social organisations and their socio-economic, union and professional situations, and to offer a means of communication between organisations and between employees and an information platform covering issues linked to their professional concerns.

Finally, to promote joint, mutually supportive actions. I think that all these objectives fit in totally with a number of contributions that we have heard yesterday and today, in which the liaison group has been called upon to encourage new initiatives. The site functions on the basis of contributions. Every organisation that wishes to take part is encouraged to do so.

## Closure of the working sessions

**Sr. Nikos Pilalidis, GFE-PPC, Grecia**

Mr. Nikos Pilalidis, GFE PPC, Greece

We all agree unanimously to renew ARCA's mandate so that it can set up a data bank over the next two years. The liaison committee will help you in this task. CCAS (France)'s International department will continue to provide liaison committee secretarial services. A proposal has been lodged to broaden the liaison committee to two countries: Russia and Algeria.

*(Voted unanimously)*

The next conference will be held in Algiers in 2008.

*(Thanks)*

End

*(Approval of a resolution sent to the Serbian union to support its protest against the sale of tourist hotels by company management)*

## **New composition of the liaison committee**

**FRANCE : CCAS**

**ITALY : ARCA**

**GREECE : GENOP**

**BELGIUM : GAZELCO**

**QUEBEC : HYDRO-QUÉBEC**

**MOROCCO : COS/ONE**

**TUNISIA : STEG**

**ALGERIA : FOSC DE SONELGAZ**

**RUSSIA : STEINR**

## Call of the 4th conference

Several million employees worldwide work in the energy sector.

Every day, they use their know-how, skills and professionalism to produce, transport and distribute energy. Part of their activities involves a permanent concern to provide continuity of public service and give access to energy for populations in difficulty.

For nearly twenty years now, they have been confronted with company privatisations and reorganisations that have brought nothing but job losses, insecurity, lower pay and pensions and the retreat of social rights and labour law.

Energy is a source of wealth creation, and the distribution of this wealth has become totally unbalanced. All the wealth created should be distributed to the workers to meet their social needs. While complying with and applying environmental standards, energy provides a response to the human need for economic and social development and emancipation.

In 2000, the 192 UNO member states committed themselves to achieving the 8 millennium objectives to reduce world poverty by 2015. These objectives are:

- to reduce extreme poverty and hunger
- to provide primary education for all
- to promote the equality of the sexes and the independence of women
- to reduce infant mortality
- to improve maternal health
- to fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- to provide a sustainable environment
- to set up a world partnership for development.

Access to energy is vital to the achievement of these objectives.

Faced with the liberal globalisation of energy, the union organisations and employees in the energy sector are involved in strong protest against all offensives that go against the interests of populations, especially the most underprivileged, and against those of employees in these companies.

We are beginning to see signs of a new balance of power and resistance is intensifying on every continent. The developing countries are very often suffocated by government debts. These should be cancelled. One of the ways of achieving this would be to automatically reduce them in line with investment carried out in electrification.

At the same time as making claims concerning jobs, wages and social rights, we must also claim the right to social and welfare activities.

Only work creates wealth. It is a way of life and fulfilment for individuals and an essential part of the social fabric. We therefore need to demand that companies provide finance for social and welfare activities, whatever form this financing takes. Social and welfare activities are a source of emancipation based on cultural and sporting activities, training and health. They can be constructed only on values of solidarity, justice, dignity and the right to be different.

Companies therefore need to incorporate this requirement, which is so necessary for workers and their families and so useful to the companies themselves. These schemes should be implemented particularly for energy sector employees. The construction, content and organisation of social and welfare activities are the sole responsibility of employees and their representative organisations.

There is no precedent for the organisation and financing of social and welfare activities on the scale of international groups, but the participants at this conference wish to commit themselves to an innovative, proactive approach.

The international conference therefore supports any representative organisation whose approach, with its workers, aims to open up negotiations on social and welfare activities with company representatives.

We set ourselves the objective of taking part in exchanges between peoples. We will encourage any innovative initiatives that will help us to achieve that aim.

Athens, 26 February 2006



## Final resolution

The delegations of energy worker representatives from 44 countries met in Athens on 24, 25, and 26 February 2006, on the theme: “For the development of social and welfare activities as a right for workers in energy companies in Europe and worldwide”.

All the organisations and associations that organise social and welfare activities for energy workers have had differing experiences, but all have been linked by the same theme: the determination of companies to reduce our participative space and to reduce the role and potential of social and welfare activities, all with two aims in mind:

- the intention to reduce costs
- the undeclared aim of weakening not only social and welfare activities but also the legal and union framework that surrounds them.

Together, they denounce ultra-liberal economic globalisation, which leads to:

- Job losses
- The reduction in collective guarantees
- The abandonment of public services
- Greater inequality between the industrialised countries and the emerging countries in terms of access to energy
- The control of energy resources by an increasingly restricted group of multinational shareholders
- The abandonment by Governments of control over the production and distribution of energy
- The unbridled opening-up of markets that reduces energy, a vital universal asset and a force for social cohesion, to a simple commodity
- The reduction in resources dedicated to social and welfare activities for energy workers

Together, they assert the legitimacy of social and welfare activities as:

- A vital creator of social links between workers in the energy industries
- A way of turning these workers into committed citizens within their company and in civil society
- A factor for individual and collective emancipation and fulfilment
- An opportunity for expressing solidarity.

In Europe and worldwide, they oppose social dumping, which tends to place workers in conflict and competition with each other and drag down the level of acquired social benefits.

They affirm that the all-powerful nature of the market and deregulation are sources of insecurity :

- In terms of environmental preservation
- In terms of energy management and independence for nations and peoples,
- In terms of the health and safety of energy workers.

In this context of uncontrolled globalisation, they are committed to developing links between energy workers across Europe and the world in order to create great solidarity based on social and welfare activities. They declare that they will act together to encourage exchanges that are respectful of cultures and differences.

Furthermore, the delegations agree to fight side by side against all injustice and discrimination against activists as a result of their action for greater social justice, wherever it may be. They offer each other mutual support in a joint approach to maintain their acquired social rights and to achieve new rights for workers.

They are aware that their unity and their fight for the well-being and dignity of workers in energy companies are a way of bringing about greater understanding between peoples. They act resolutely for peace in the world.

Only the exchange of information will lead to an improvement in the ability and opportunity for workers in all countries to organise social and welfare activities for themselves.

Acting together means :

- Learning through shared reciprocal experiences,
- Guiding the organisation of social institutions towards new models,
- Offering new opportunities to workers in all energy companies
- Contributing towards an increasingly necessary integration in order to meet the challenges of globalisation.

Acting together is not just an opportunity: it is a requirement that will help us safeguard and improve the protection of workers.

Athens, 26 February 2006

## Delegations present

Algeria : FOSC and UGTA

Austria : VERBUND

Belgium : GAZELCO

Benin : ASET - Paix Ouvrière

Brussels : EPSU

Burkina Faso : SNTS

Cameroon : FENSTEEEC

Canada : Cupe Local One

Congo : FOSYMINE

Djibouti : STED

Egypt : GTUPW

Estonia : Tallina Kute (Veolia)

France : CCAS, CEE-EDF,  
Droit à l'Énergie and  
Électricien Sans Frontières

Greece : GENOP

European Organisation : Emcef

Hungary : VDSZSZ

Israel : UCAPSE

Italy : ARCA and  
Un Ponte Per (association)

Madagascar : FISEMARE

Mali : SYNACOME

Morocco : COS/ONE

Mayotte : SAGEM

Montenegro : CSCM

Mozambique : SNTIME

Niger : SYNATREEN

Palestine : Pewu and PGFTU

Portugal : SINDEL

Quebec : ESVI and Hydro-Québec

Romania : UNIVERS and Mileniului III

Russia : Electrounion and Steinr

Senegal : SENELEC

Serbia Montenegro : EPS and  
TUWEPIS

Slovenia : SDE

Tunisia : STEG and UGTT

Turkey : TES-IS Trade Union

Venezuela : FETRAELEC

Vietnam : VGCL

Guests : UNICEF and UNESCO

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