



REGIONAL ENERGY TRADE UNIONS NETWORK of SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

ATHENS OFFICE :

Address: 18 SONIEROU STREET, 10438 ATHENS, GREECE Tel:(0030210) 5236118, 5244218 Fax:(0030210) 5233581, Email info@retun-see.com

BELGRADE OFFICE:

Address: Carice Milice 2, V floor, 11000 BELGRADE, R. SERBIA Tel: (0038111) 2024876, Fax: (0038111) 2620694, Email retun-see.bg@eps.rs

Website www.retun-see.com

2nd RETUN SEE CONGRESS

When we founded our network almost four years ago, we laid the foundations for our common action and an integrated intervention in our environment.

Today's meeting signals the end of the first cycle of action of the Network. A cycle which necessarily limited itself mainly to organizational issues, since our top priority was to get to know each other, to set our common objectives and to seek new ways of communication that would enable us to set a sound basis for reaching our targets.

Now, an extrovert activity is an imperative need in order to be able to tackle the common problems lying in front of us.

We are obliged as a result to act openly and not with a corporatist attitude.

The rapid changes taking place in the strategically crucial field of energy, show among other things that the workers and their trade union movement are faced with new and complex issues which no doubt have and will continue having in the future a negative impact upon employment and industrial relations.

One would expect, judging from the recent developments in the field of mergers, acquisitions and structural changes within the companies of the energy field, that new measures would be adopted for development policies that would have at their centre the worker as well as the society with its ever growing needs.

Instead of these policies we are witnessing the adoption of changes that have no development dimension and perspective and that are detrimental to the common interest since they have a negative impact on employment and industrial relations. They create chain reactions in all the companies of the energy sector having as their main objective the decrease of the labor cost.

These changes not only have negative economic and social consequences, but they also reveal serious political dimensions, since the supremacy of the EU law over the national law in the case of international mergers, in combination with the lack of combativeness on behalf of the competent national authorities, is the reason for the creation of a difficult and irreversible situation in the energy market.

The new corporate schemes emerging in the energy sector have a direct impact upon workers:

- decrease of employment, restructuring of industrial relations, "atypical" forms of employment, indirect hiring of workers "lending of workers", outsourcing through various "support" companies, "voluntary" leaves.
- Weakening of the Insurance Funds, of the institution of collective agreements and down grading of the democratic and social rights at workplace.
As a result from now on, the Network of Trade Unions of the Energy Sector all over Central and South East Europe should:
- first of all, reveal the real reasons and the preexisting causes resulting in such "entrepreneurial" decisions and
- Subsequently develop a COMMON front of intervention, in order to face the adverse developments in the labor market.

Within this framework, we should reinforce and turn to our advantage the friendship forged among us in recent years, so that through the action of the Network we will be able to create the conditions, the necessary institutional framework, the infrastructures and the adequate climate in order to enhance furthermore the ties among the workers of the broader region.

To ensure cooperation and better coordination of our trade union activities in the whole of the energy sector:

- We should collectively participate in the shaping of a progressive and clear response to ever-growing political, social and economic problems, in a world which is more and more interdependent.
- We should aim at shaping a coherent and effective response to the neo liberal policies and thus activate the workers' resistance through the trade unions and social movements.
- We should claim the type of economic growth that will safeguard jobs, will guarantee the implementation of the labor and social security legislation without any discrimination and will protect the environment.
- We should be determined to work for Peace and Solidarity in our Counties.
- We should reinforce the struggle of our Trade Unions for industrial issues, Democracy and international Solidarity, beyond national borders and within multinational and transnational Enterprises.

There is no doubt that by forging and utilizing our close ties of friendship and cooperation, we create the safest conditions for Peace, Security, Growth, Employment and improvement of the living standards of the workers we represent.

In spite of our possible differences, we firmly believe that the efficacy of a strong pole of the labor forces such as RETUN SEE will grow and be enriched by its very diversity, if only we learn to cooperate efficiently and to share our experiences.

The only way to reach objectives lies in the continuation of our struggle, the expansion of our cooperation, our mutual support and solidarity.

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