

Confrontations for a European Participative Democracy

ENERGY

GENERAL INTEREST

AND FREE MARKET

THE RESPONSABILITY OF EUROPEAN COMPANIES

Conference – Debate

Brussels

European Parliament. Room A3G2

5 MARCH 2003

14H30 – 17H30

The responsibilities of the energy sector main European companies

General interest missions and single market

At the national level, energy companies, be they public or private, take on general interest missions (energetic security, public service, etc...). The European Union builds up a single market, has competition rules be respected and tries to create compatibility between market obligations and national interest missions. But, it does not have the legal competence to assume these missions.

However, this situation is changing. The perspective of a common European action is emerging in the energetic sector. It would lead to the elaboration of a legislation that would combine the organisation of a free market with universal services, supply security, efficiency and environmental obligations. To be implemented, this project requires evolutions of both Member States policies and companies actions.

The aim of our conference is to examine what responsibilities these would like or could take.

We will focus on the following issues:

- 1) What general interest missions and in particular general interest services missions these big companies and utilities could integrate in their projects? For example: how could a legislation on electricity be implemented? With what social and territorial dimensions? In the context of the enlargement, what specific responsibilities should be elaborated in order to develop local capacities, modernize sectors and guarantee safety?
- 2) The end of State monopolies being acknowledged, does the « neutrality » that the Union invokes in terms of ownership and control accurately correspond to reality? Is there not a need to create economic efficiency criteria and specific financing modes in order to achieve the objectives of the Union in the energy field? Is there not a need to diversify the status and ownership modes in order to integrate a social and « mixed economy » dimension to the European industrial policy?
- 3) As regards big European companies in the energy sector, what role employees, consumers and civil society actors in general could have in the definition of missions, efficiency or evaluation? How could participation and partnerships be developed? What should be the relationship between the Commission and national regulation authorities?

14h30 Registration. Coffee

15h00 Debate on « General interest missions and European companies responsibilities »

Moderator: Philippe Herzog, Member of the European Parliament, President of *Confrontations*

with **Loyola de Palacio**, European Commissioner, Vice-president of the European Commission in charge of energy and transport

and **François Roussely**, Chairman of EDF

16h15 Debate on « *Challenges in public utilities sectors and enlargement* »

Moderator: **Claude Turmes**, Member of the European Parliament, Greens/ALE

With **André Merlin**, Chairman of RTE and ESTO (European Transmission System Operator)

And **Denis Cohen**, General Secretary of FNME-CGT

Jan Kowalczyk, Vice-Chairman of PSE SA, Poland

Dr. Eberhard Meller, Chairman of VDEW (association of German electricity companies)

Jean Claude Steffens, In charge of European Affairs, TRACTEBEL

17h30 Conclusions

Simultaneous translation in English, French and German will be provided.