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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Energy Union - Employment and social dimension
- Information from the Commission

Delegations will find attached a document from the Commission on the above subject with a view to the meeting of the EPSCO Council on 7 March 2016 (Any Other Business item).

Employment and Social dimension of the Energy Union

Information from the Commission

The first State of the Energy Union was adopted on 18 November 2015. It is the first annual stocktaking of the progress regarding the implementation of the Energy Union following the adoption of the Energy Union Framework Strategy on 25 February 2015.

The Energy Union as a multi-dimensional project entails changes that will have a direct impact in the field of employment and social affairs. This is manifest through the call for skills upgrading, the targeted intervention of EU funds in favour of training, or the benefits consumers should reap from an integrated energy market.

Above all, delivering on the commitments towards energy transition offers significant business opportunities for innovative EU enterprises and will create jobs and growth in the EU, therefore necessitating new skills and investments.

At the same time, the energy transition will lead to changes in many sectors and as such will require a closer involvement of social partners. This could include ensuring that skills and training schemes match the needs of new job profiles, looking at working conditions in new sectors or facilitating a socially fair transition in sectors or regions where jobs will be lost. Changes in demand on the labour market will require determined policy efforts supported by funding.

The State of the Energy Union package also recalls that citizens should benefit from new technologies and increased competition to reduce their bills, as well as participate more actively in the market in order to see a successful and fair transition towards a low-carbon economy and society. Policies to facilitate this transition should include a specific focus on vulnerable consumers.

The State of the Energy Union is accompanied by concrete proposals for further action: the 2nd list of Projects of Common Interest (PCIs) sets out those infrastructure projects which are urgently needed to meet our energy policy targets and objectives; guidance on national energy and climate plans provides the basis for Member States to start the development of their plans for the period from 2021 to 2030; the proposed methodology on key indicators is the first step towards measuring and monitoring the delivery of the Energy Union.

The State of the Energy Union also includes policy conclusions derived from the experiences of the Energy Union Tour of Vice-President Šefčovič and the bilateral technical discussions with Member States concerning their country factsheets. These policy conclusions include the issues mentioned above, among them skills needs, social dialogue and vulnerable consumers.

On 16 February, the Commission adopted an ambitious energy security package with a set of initiatives of particular relevance for security of supply, notably with regard to natural gas, including inter alia the revision of the regulation on Security of Gas Supply and the revision of the Inter-Governmental Agreement Decision, an LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) and storage strategy and a strategy for heating and cooling. In the latter, the Commission invites, among other actions, Member States to ensure that a share of energy efficiency funding is dedicated to improvements for vulnerable households or those living in the most deprived areas for example by investing in energy efficient heating and cooling equipment.