Edited by Luigi Ulgiati, UGL Deputy Secretary, member of the EESC N. 150 14th of November 2025

EESC, ULGIATI IN BRUSSELS FOR OPINION ON THE NUCLEAR SECTOR

On the 12nd of November, the Transport, Energy and Infrastructure Section (TEN) of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) held its first meeting in Brussels since its five-year renewal in October. The agenda included various Opinions to be adopted, including a very topical and interesting one on the European Commission's Communication on the indicative programme for the nuclear sector, which outlines the role and trajectory of nuclear energy in the European Union's plans for decarbonisation, energy competitiveness and security until 2050, serving as a vision for the nuclear sector in EU energy policy. Councillor Luigi Ulgiati states that «the contents of the Opinion in question (TEN/856) are acceptable», emphasising in particular that «electricity produced from nuclear sources generates low carbon emissions and ensures production flexibility and grid stability through a constant flow, as, unlike energy produced from renewable sources, it is not affected by weather conditions and sunlight. Furthermore, nuclear energy is also well suited to the creation of an integrated energy cycle with other sources, helping European Countries not only in the transition, but also in achieving independence and stabilising energy costs». As for radioactive waste, which is increasing due to both nuclear power plants and the use of nuclear technologies in the health and medical fields, Ulgiati believes that «it is necessary not only to identify dedicated storage sites based on hazardousness, but also to disseminate technologies suitable for treating and deactivating the waste itself». With regard to employment, Councillor Ulgiati points out that there will be a significant increase, with an estimated 300,000 new jobs in Europe, and that in this regard, «the skills of workers in the sector must be enhanced and financed through continuous training on new technologies and increasing levels of safety, as well as the excellence of universities that already offer specific courses for the training of excellent engineers».

EUROPE, WAGES RISING BUT ITALY BELOW EU AVERAGE

In 2024, the average full-time annual salary in the European Union was €39,800 gross, an increase of 5.2% compared to €37,800 the previous year. In Italy, however, wages rose by 2.6% over the same period, exactly half the EU average: from €32,650 to €33,523. The data released by Brussels a few days ago therefore paint a picture of a Europe in which wage growth has returned to strength after two years of high inflation, but also of a Continent that is still deeply divided in terms of pay. Among the 27 Member States, the highest average annual wage was recorded in Luxembourg, where an employee earns an average of €83,000 gross, followed by Denmark (€71,600) and Ireland (€61,100). These are economies characterised by high levels of productivity, strong specialisation in high value-added services, and very dynamic labour markets, where collective bargaining is able to respond quickly to price increases. At the bottom of the table are Bulgaria, Greece and Hungary, Countries with the lowest wages, where nominal wage growth has failed to fully offset price increases, maintaining a wide gap with the rest of the Old Continent. Among the Mediterranean Countries, Italy remains below the EU average, slightly surpassed by Spain, which saw an average income of €33,700 in 2024. However, the Italian national figure shows a small improvement compared to 2023, a sign that the erosion of purchasing power suffered during the inflationary two-year period 2022-2023 is beginning, at least in part, to be recovered. In order to accelerate wage growth in Italy, there is therefore a twofold challenge: on the one hand, to stimulate productivity growth through innovation and training; on the other, to make the bargaining system more efficient by encouraging workers to share in the benefits of the company.