



Together for efficient representation interests of employees of companies in extractive sector

Addressed to the Entities:

Comisión Europea

***Representaciones Parlamentarias de Polonia,
Bulgaria, España, Lituania y Rumanía, en el
Parlamento y el Consejo de Europa***

***Gobiernos Nacionales de Polonia, Serbia,
Macedonia, Bulgaria, España, Lituania y Rumanía***

***Interlocutores Sociales y Gobiernos de otros países
afectados por procesos de Descarbonización***

The energy transition towards a green economy, the cornerstone of the fight against climate change, calls for a shift towards primary energy sources that reduce CO₂ emissions into the atmosphere, which means introducing measures to consume less energy by making sectors more efficient and replacing conventional sources with renewable energy. This process has a major and serious impact on the extractive industries sector, especially coal.

La Unión Europea apuesta por alcanzar la neutralidad climática en el año 2050 y, para ello, está generando fondos de transición justa y desarrollando distintas estrategias, entre las que se encuentran los *procesos de descarbonización*, iniciados con la *Decisión 2010/787/UE, del Consejo Europeo*, junto a otras Resoluciones que la han ido complementando.

It is precisely this process of decarbonisation that is causing the mining industry in Europe to restructure the sector, with changes in management and business models that do not always guarantee the continuity of current employment; and, on the other hand, the challenge for workers in the sector and the companies themselves, in terms of work, profession and their daily lives, in the face of the closure of the mining industry. companies, the losses of thousands of jobs and the territorial, economic and social impact it is having.

Both the Paris Agreement and the ILO and the European Union itself, in various resolutions and guidelines, consider that the ecological transition must be transversal, carried out in a planned way under the guidance of the public authorities and under formulas that guarantee the participation of the social and economic actors involved.

In addition, this energy transition, carried out through the corresponding Just Transition Plans, negotiated with the representative unions in each territory, should:





Together for efficient representation interests of employees of companies in extractive sector

- To have specific support measures for the sectors and industries concerned.
- Include social protection for workers most vulnerable to the energy transition process, including direct, indirect and induced jobs.
- Include the design of territorial regeneration plans, which focus on diversification of economic activities and rural development, with particular emphasis on women and youth groups.
- Establish training and training plans for workers in relation to new green jobs. Employee representatives must be involved in the design of this training if it is to be truly effective.
- and, include the necessary economic funds through the budgets of each State and green taxation

The trade union organisations participating in the project Together for efficient representation interests of employees of companies in the extractive sector, financed with funds from the European Union, and signatories of this document, have discussed, during the course of the project, the levels and effectiveness of the participation of workers in the extractive industries, through information, consultation, collective bargaining or social dialogue, with the aim of: influencing business and government decisions on environmental policies and strategies for sustainable development throughout the European Union and reaching Just Transition Agreements in the decarbonisation processes that are taking place in our companies and states.

In recent years, guidelines have been issued by the Commission and the European Parliament, stressing that it is not possible to achieve a fair energy transition without the involvement of the workforce and employees, pointing out that the Just Transition must be the subject of social dialogue.

More recently, it has been the Von der Leyen Commission that has repeatedly affirmed this commitment to social dialogue in communications on the energy transition and climate change such as: the European Green Pact; a strong Europe for fair transitions; the annual sustainable growth strategy and the country-specific recommendations; or in the objectives of the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism, for instance the most recent.

Or, the Porto Declaration of 8 May of this year, point 4 of which states that:

The social dimension, social dialogue and the active involvement of the social partners have always been at the heart of a highly competitive social market economy. Our commitment to unity and solidarity also means ensuring equal opportunities for all and that no one is left behind.

These are conclusive statements that we, the signatories of this letter, believe that they are not always being complied with by companies and national or territorial governments, within the framework of the Energy Transition (the degree of involvement of trade unions in aspects related to climate protection





Together for efficient representation interests of employees of companies in extractive sector

and the restructuring of the sector is barely 50% in the Union as a whole); and that when some system of consultation with the social partners is set up, the proposals made by these bodies are almost never accepted (up to 20% of these proposals are not considered at all and 50% are not sufficiently considered).

This situation is causing many extractive industry workers in many Member States are falling behind in maintaining their current living and employment conditions.

We all share the view that there is a need to improve the participation of workers through their representatives and trade unions, both in the development and implementation of environmental policy at company level and in the design of global strategies to combat climate change, with an impact on the extractive industry sector, with a view to climate neutrality by 2050.

And we are also aware of the need for us throughout the Union to continue working to improve European and national standards in these areas, because the process of Europeanising industrial relations at sectoral level has been a slow and difficult process, not yet fully completed.

For these reasons, and on the basis of the conclusions drawn from the research phase carried out during the project, a research which gives us a transnational dimension and an assessment of strategies and data which can be “exportable” to all the countries of the Union, we have drawn up a series of proposals to improve the involvement of workers, through the social partners, in the strategies defined by companies and governments. in the fight against climate change and with the aim of achieving a fair energy transition.

In this regard, the undersigned trade union organisations, members of the project Together for efficient representation interests of employees of companies in extractive sector, aware of the Union’s duty to guarantee the application of the rights of participation, information and consultation of employees in co-management with their companies and considering its continuous and strong affirmations in favour of the participation of the social partners and the social dialogue, demand of the European Commission the implementation of the following actions:

- 1) To promote, without conditions, an energy transition carried out under formulas that guarantee the participation of the social and economic actors involved, since a just transition is not possible without the participation of workers and their representatives.
- 2) Strengthen the use of information and consultation mechanisms to anticipate strategic changes and monitor company greening policies, promoting their adaptation to the needs of employees for the green transition





Together for efficient representation interests of employees of companies in extractive sector

- 3) Establish the Just Transition as a priority of the social dialogue between governments and social partners and between workers' and employers' representatives to meet the challenge of transformation by thinking about jobs and the livelihoods of workers in greening industries, especially extractive industries.
- 4) To define as fundamental elements of the Just Transition in the Extractive Industry Sector: the guarantee of quality employment; the provision of adequate training for workers; the establishment of social protection for the most vulnerable groups; and respect for human and labour rights, protecting the territorial areas affected by these processes.
- 5) To extend the scope of collective bargaining at sectoral, regional and company level on the issues of the energy transition, such as employment, retraining, pay and the impact on the safety and health of workers.
- 6) Promote global policies with specific measures to guarantee the maintenance of current, decent and quality employment; and anticipate new green jobs by training current workers in the extractive sector through lifelong learning.
- 7) Establish social protection systems on climate change, based on the principles of universality, equal treatment and continuity, integrating them into national policies and targeting workers most vulnerable to the energy transition, especially older workers and those with lower vocational qualifications.
- 8) Promote the negotiation of Territorial Action Plans to reactivate the geographical areas affected by the mining industry, supporting the territories and workers most affected and ensuring a diversification and modernization of the local economy that will allow the natural, social and economic recovery of these territories.

Secondly, during the implementation of our project, we have had the opportunity to analyse various aspects of the way in which each Member State of the Union or candidate country is carrying out these energy transition processes; we have assessed the different timescales of implementation of these measures and their impact on companies and workers; and, finally, we have seen the different degrees of compliance and non-compliance of the Member States with regard to development. the strategies proposed by the European Union and developed in the National Energy and Climate Plans.

In this respect, we have concluded that the European Union is abandoning certain territories, despite the assertions of its leaders, which will be required to





Together for efficient representation interests of employees of companies in extractive sector

fulfil obligations that are impossible to achieve in the proposed timeframe, because they do not have the necessary renewable energy sources to replace coal or the economic funds to tackle the decapitalisation of a key sector in many Member States. the Union and the candidate countries to join the EU, nor are they being offered a way out to ensure that current jobs are maintained or that they can be adapted to other green jobs that may be created.

We see how there is a lack of harmony between the European Union's pronouncements and the needs of some Member States; this leads to a lack of compliance or a resistance to addressing them; and how there is a lack of alternative resources which, moreover, are making current energy more expensive and which would require the European institutions to address energy price regulation.

Finally, we ask ourselves: And after 2050, the date of climate neutrality in the European Union, what do we do? We are suffering from a serious lack of future plans and forecasts; a system of life and work is being decapitalised and destroyed without knowing where we are going; and it does not seem to make much sense to destroy a productive fabric in certain Member States or among the candidate countries, while the major GHG emitters, the USA, China, India or Russia, are still not tackling decarbonisation and generation processes. by emitting 60% of these greenhouse gases.

Faced with this dark scenario facing the entire Extractive Industry Sector, especially in countries such as Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Serbia, among others, and having analysed Regulation 2021/1119 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality, we are obliged to implement the so-called Climate Law. a series of reflections addressed to the European institutions, to Members of Parliament and to national governments themselves, on the basis of certain statements made in the regulation:

1) It states that the energy transition must be fair and inclusive, leaving no one behind; and we ask ourselves:

What is the priority of the European institutions: neutralising emissions or guaranteeing jobs and the quality of life of workers and the recovery of the affected areas?

2) It is recalled that since 2016, the Commission has been implementing an "ambitious decarbonisation programme" which specifies that "The Union is a world leader in the transition to climate neutrality"; and we ask ourselves:

What is the point of the Union taking the lead in decarbonisation, leaving behind thousands of workers and the economies of some states, if countries such as the USA, India, Russia or China are not committed to this neutrality?

Are we not running the risk of impoverishing certain countries and their workers and not solving the underlying global problem?





Together for efficient representation interests of employees of companies in extractive sector

3) It is recalled that the Communication of 17 September 2020 analysing the PNECs of the 27 Member States spoke of “Increasing Europe’s climate ambition for 2030: investing in a climate-neutral future for the benefit of our citizens”; and we asked ourselves:

Is benefiting the public an objective that can be achieved instead of leaving behind a large number of workers and geographical areas?

Would it not be necessary for the institutions to look for instruments that combine the healthy life of the population with the life and survival of the miners and their families?

4) Climate change is identified as a cross-border problem requiring “coordinated action at Union level to effectively complement and reinforce national policies” with measures in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality; and in view of this, we ask ourselves:

Does the Union really care to coordinate these actions on the basis of these principles?

Why, then, are there so many differences in the treatment of decarbonisation between workers in the sector depending on the country in which they work?

5) The Commission will facilitate an inclusive and accessible process (at European, national, regional and local level) with the social partners to exchange best practices and identify actions contributing to the objectives set out in the Regulation; indicating that each Member State should establish a multi-level climate and energy dialogue to discuss the achievement of climate and energy objectives; and we wonder, in addition to “good intentions” dialogue between governments, employers and trade unions

What concrete and real measures will be taken to ensure that the Member States negotiate with the trade unions, on a compulsory basis, environmental policies and their implications for the energy transition in the mining industry?

6) Finally, it is argued that investments in renewable energy create jobs.

Analysis of the PNECs shows that they do not provide the necessary training or retraining of the workers concerned and young people with a view to preparing them for future jobs.

Why, then, are concrete resolutions not being drawn up requiring the development of this training in order to enable access to the new jobs created by renewable energies?

In short, the organisations participating in the project Together for efficient representation interests of employees of companies in extractive sector, which subscribe to this document, insist on the need to strengthen the procedures for information, consultation, social dialogue and collective bargaining in the energy transition processes, and demand from the various institutions of the European Union, from the members of the Parliament and the Council and from national governments a greater We must be resolute in our decisions, bearing in mind





Together for efficient representation interests of employees of companies in extractive sector

that the objective we must pursue, alongside climate neutrality, is the defence of the regions and workers affected by these processes of decarbonisation (energy transition), not allowing anyone to be left behind.

In response to this request, we express our support to the European Commission in this matter and our readiness and willingness to work with the Commission, Parliament and our respective governments, as well as with other European institutions, to achieve the implementation of the principles and demands requested.

Signed on 18 November 2021 by the following Organizations

Organización	País		Firma
Związek Zawodowy Pracowników Przemysłu Miedziowego [ZZPPM]	Poland		
Federation of the Independent Syndicates of Miners [FNSM]	Bulgary		
Coalición Sindical Independiente de Trabajadores de Madrid-CSIT UNIÓN PROFESIONAL	Spain		
Samostalni sindikat metalaca Srbije SSMS	Serbia		





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Organización	País		Firma
Federatia Nationala Mine Energie [FNME]	Romania		
Lithuanian Unification of Metalworkers Trade Unions LMPSS	Lithuania		
Samostoen Sindikat na od Rabortnicite Energentika, Rudavstvo i industrija na R.M. SSERI	Macedonia del Norte		

