

EUROFER
The European Steel Association

 **industriAll**
EUROPEAN TRADE UNION

**JOINT WORK PROGRAMME OF THE
EUROPEAN SOCIAL PARTNERS
2020-2021**

FOR THE STEEL SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE

1. Introduction:

The Social Dialogue Process

The **European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee (SSDC) for steel** was formed in 2006 between *EUROFER* (employers) and *industriAll Europe* (trade unions). Both European social partners aim to contribute jointly to the sustainability and competitiveness of the steel sector in Europe.

Supported by the European Commission, the SSDC has recently:

- Participated in the Commission's EU safeguard consultation including the publication of **a joint letter to Commissioner Malmström (March 2019)** demanding further measures to safeguard European industry and jobs.
- Worked jointly on **anti-dumping and anti-subsidy cases** emerging during 2019.
- Contributed to and jointly supported EUROFER's document ***Towards an EU Masterplan for a Low-Carbon, Competitive European Steel Value Chain (2018)***.
- Campaigned for fair trade measures by co-signing the ***European Industrial Manifesto for Free and Fair Trade (February 2016)***.
- Released the joint position: ***Review of the EU ETS post 2020: reconciling climate ambition with industry's competitiveness and employment (November 2016)***.
- Lobbied for EU trade defence instruments to protect the European steel sector from unfair dumping from third countries.

Topics of mutual interest

The social partners continue to work together on topics of mutual interest with the aim to improve the competitiveness of the European steel sector. These topics include:

- **Energy and climate change policies**, with a special focus on the Commission's new Green Deal for Europe, the implementation of the EU Emission Trading Scheme and the proposal for *A Regulatory Framework for CO₂-lean Steel Produced in Europe*;
- **Trade policies and their (more effective) implementation**, including trade defence instruments (including anti-dumping methodology), EU steel safeguards, foreign direct investment, state aid, and overall trade practices, such as protectionism, in non- EU countries, WTO reform, global steel over-capacity and public procurement;
- The **evolution of the EU steel market** and latest developments, focusing on new technology and **skills needs**.
- **Research**, in particular Clean Steel Partnerships, Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEIs) and Horizon Europe;

Objectives

Based on its work programme, the SSDC seeks to:

- Monitor the social, economic and employment consequences of EU policies on the steel sector;
- Develop concepts and proposals to influence European and national debates and to give directions and recommendations to contribute to policy developments;
- Conduct exchanges on topics of mutual interest and to develop a capacity for subsequent joint action including statements, position papers and projects.

2. Fields of Action:

A. Market, Employment and Policy Developments

This remains a permanent item on the agenda and the social partners will:

- Provide information on market and policy developments (*EUROFER*) and employment changes (*industriAll Europe*);
- Update the participants on key topics and files being discussed by the EU institutions, including trade, environmental, economic, budgetary and employment and social issues;
- Undertake joint actions when required.

B. EU Masterplan for a Low-Carbon, Competitive European Steel Value Chain and A Regulatory Framework for CO₂-lean Steel Produced in Europe

Ensuring the competitiveness, and in turn the success, of the European steel industry is a priority for the social partners. As such, *EUROFER's* policy discussion papers *Towards an EU Masterplan for a Low-Carbon, Competitive European Steel Value Chain and A Regulatory Framework for CO₂-lean Steel Produced in Europe* will be debated in detail at the SSDC meetings and the social partners will define potential joint actions when appropriate.

The Masterplan and the Regulatory Framework may result in joint actions such as:

- Requesting significant EU investment for research and development to encourage innovation and support investment;
- Requesting public financial support for implementation of CO₂-low production technologies and for upscaling breakthrough technologies into industrial demonstrators
- Calling for guaranteed access to sustainable and low-cost energy (preferably from renewable sources), which has a strong supportive infrastructure, at affordable prices;
- Providing a critical assessment of current, and proposed, EU climate, environmental and energy policies regarding their effects on the competitiveness of the sector and organising possible events accordingly.

C. Energy, environment and climate change

European environmental and climate change policies have a significant impact on the European steel sector. The SSDC will:

- Discuss and monitor the Green Deal for Europe package, along with the possible development of the Carbon Border Adjustment measures;
- Debate and monitor the development of the needed regulatory framework for CO₂-lean steel production in Europe, including the role of R&D and new innovative technologies, public financial support for implementation of CO₂-low production technologies and the energy infrastructure required;
- Monitor and analyse the potential impact of the EU ETS implementation;
- Discuss various energy issues that will impact the sector including pricing and availability;
- Discuss potential methods to incentivise the use of scrap steel to keep raw materials in Europe and increase steel's role in the circular economy as well as improving Europe's competitiveness on the global market;
- Work on joint position papers when required on relevant issues.

D. Trade

The European steel sector requires fair trading practices to survive in an expanding global market. Trade issues will feature heavily in the SSDC agendas and the social partners will:

- Monitor and analyse the potential impact of various EU policies and measures relating to trade defence instruments (including the anti-dumping methodology), EU steel safeguards, WTO Reform, foreign direct investment and public procurement;
- Discuss various trade issues relating to third countries including state aid and protectionist measures (e.g. export restrictions on raw materials, other unilateral measures and enforcement of existing commitments);
- Work with the EU institutions to provide expert opinions and information as appropriate;
- Produce joint position papers when required on relevant issues.

E. Qualifications and Skills

The social partners agree that skills and training play an important role in the changing technical advancements within the European steel sector. As such, the SSDC will:

- Invite experts to discuss relevant topics, such as skills and training, in relation to changing technologies, in the sector;
- Continue to participate to, discuss and monitor the progress of the EU-funded project: *Blueprint: “New Skills Agenda Steel”: Industry-driven sustainable European Steel Skills Agenda and Strategy*”.

F. Industry 4.0

Industry 4.0 technologies will influence and change the production process of the industry. The SSDC will monitor and analyse the potential impact of “Industry 4.0” on employment and skills in the sector. The SSDC will establish clear aims and objectives to ensure that the European steel sector, and the quality jobs in the sector, do not suffer negatively from the changes that “industry 4.0” will bring by:

- Looking at the impact of new technologies, mainly digitalisation, robotics, and automatisisation;
- Inviting experts, such as *ESTEP*, to share technical information and trade union representatives to share examples of best practice of worker involvement;
- Establishing ways to determine market and product changes, anticipating skills needs (and potential re-training needs) and researching EU funding and investment.

G. Presidency

The Presidency of the SSDC will rotate on bi-annual basis and be assumed by one representative from *EUROFER* and *industriAll Europe*.

2020 – 2021 Presidency *industriAll Europe*

2021 – 2022 Presidency *EUROFER*

H. AOB

The SSDC covers a range of topics including European policies (environmental, energy, trade, economic, budgetary, employment and social), skills (training and education), promotion of the sector and promoting high European social standards in a global market. The social partners continue to value joint discussions and joint actions when appropriate.

New items of importance may be added to the agenda at short notice.