

**Every workplace
with a union.
Every worker
in the union.**

 **industriAll**
EUROPEAN TRADE UNION



**The Organising Programme
by industriAll Europe**

GIVES GREATER INFLUENCE

EMPOWERS AND MOBILISES WORKERS

LEADS TO BETTER AGREEMENTS

ENSURES SOLIDARITY

ORGANISING

BUILDS A MORE SOCIAL EUROPE

WORKS EVERYWHERE



Foreword

Organising is key to building trade union power. The power and strength of trade unions come from members. More members make trade unions stronger. An active trade union membership is the most effective way of delivering on our demands. Active members also recruit and grow the union further.

Stronger unions negotiate better collective agreements, improve wages and working conditions, ensure a safe and healthy workplace and solve individual and collective problems when they occur. Organising is our way of making sure that workers get their fair share of the revenue they generate.

If Europe is to successfully transition to a greener economy and a fairer society, unions must have a seat at the table. The climate agenda, the greening of our industries and digitalisation can only succeed if all parties, including trade unions, are able to negotiate these transformations.

The COVID-19 crisis has further highlighted the need for strong trade unions. Around Europe, unions have pressed governments and employers, and negotiated arrangements at all levels to secure social protection, healthy workplaces and support mechanisms for workers.

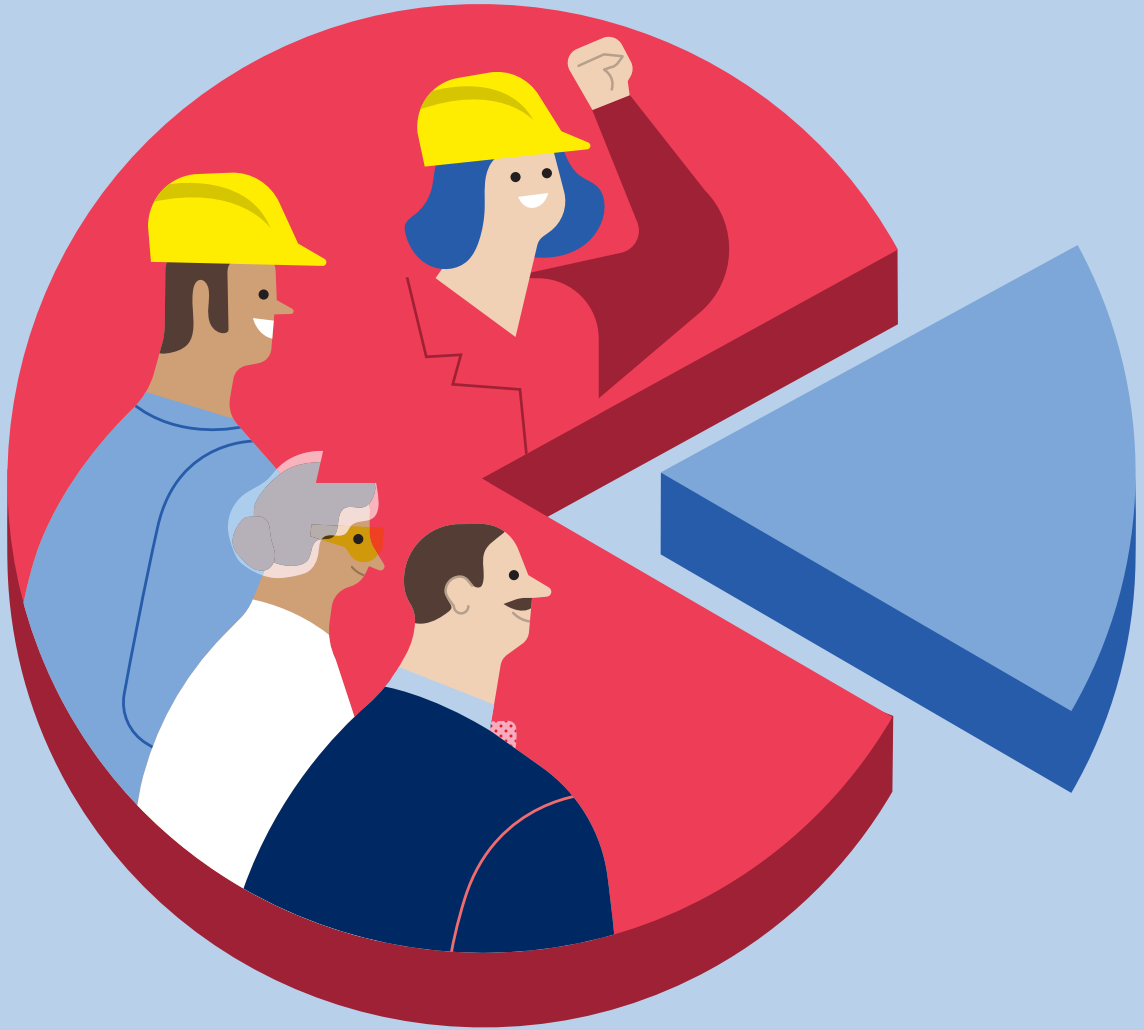
Strong trade unions are always needed but become vital when rights and working conditions are under pressure. Well-organised workplaces are fundamental to our strength and influence at sectoral, national and European level.

For industriAll Europe, building stronger trade unions is a key priority. Together with our affiliates, we are committed to strengthening trade union power throughout Europe with the slogan: **Every workplace with a union. Every worker in the union.**



A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'Luc Triangle'.

Luc Triangle
General Secretary
industriAll European Trade Union



Why do we organise?

Organising is about much more than convincing a worker to fill in a membership form. It is part of building a collective voice for workers so they can address their issues together, both in the workplace and in the wider society.

The benefits of organising are many:

- ✓ **Organising means empowerment:** Recruitment and retention of more members helps to build and mobilise workers' power. Greater membership involvement means more engagement and a sense of ownership of the union.
- ✓ **Organising means better agreements:** More active members means greater strength and leads to better collective agreements, fair pay, and healthy and safe working conditions.
- ✓ **Organising means greater influence:** Building collective power through strong unions and bargaining is the only effective protection for workers' rights whilst also strengthening unions' influence in society.
- ✓ **Organising works everywhere:** Organising and mobilisation works no matter what the national context, legal framework, sector or union culture may be.
- ✓ **Organising means solidarity in action, including in times of crisis:** Strong unions can put pressure on governments and negotiate agreements to mitigate the impact of crises, as has happened during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ✓ **Organising helps to build a more social Europe:** IndustriAll Europe gathers the strength of affiliates to build a unified workers' voice to fight for the interests of industrial workers and their families in Europe.

Organising is essential if the trade union movement is to maintain and strengthen its legitimacy as the voice of working people. Unions are an important pillar of democratic societies and guarantors of social and economic justice.

Increasing membership is the proven way of maintaining our influence. Making recruitment and organising central to everything the union does will help us return to growth.

That is why we organise and build trade union power.

IF Metall, Sweden

"Our goal is to reach an 85% unionisation rate and keep members in the union. In 2020, we recruited 1200 new members. We train shop stewards and other activists to integrate organising into their regular work at the workplace and to always keep a focus on the membership. A rolling campaign also encourages existing members to enlist new members. A digital campaign on Facebook and YouTube enhances our positive message: You win by being in the union!"



How do we organise?

The affiliates of industriAll Europe have defined organising and building trade union power as one of their key priorities. This includes fundamental changes in the way affiliated unions operate.

We need to establish an organising culture in every union. This means recognising that our power lies in our workers, our members. If we want to maintain and grow that power, we need to invest human and financial resources into recruiting more members and keeping them through an active membership policy. The shift in focus towards an active membership policy calls for a profound transformation.

The world of work is changing. New forms of work, corporate structures and supply chains demand new approaches. Specific groups, such as young people, women and white-collar workers, require different methods to convince them of the need for collective action.

IndustriAll Europe is promoting organising at four different levels:

✓ Mainstreaming

- Include a membership focus in all our policy areas, sector networks and specific target groups
- Collect and publish [best practices](#) on our website
- Offer affiliates support and training to develop strategies and concepts for establishing an organising culture
- Initiate a debate with other European federations and the ETUI on establishing a network of lead organisers

✓ Company level

- Provide affiliates with support and training on organising methods and strategic research
- Encourage affiliates to build partnerships for organising transnational companies, initiate and coordinate cross-border campaigns
- Motivate and train European Works Councils to support organising non-unionised sites and increasing density in weakly unionised locations

Teollisuusliitto, Finland

"We built an organising team and mapped 29 workplaces of a media and printing company. Potential leaders were identified, and phone calls and online group meetings were used to come up with a survey and petition to the employer, thus building collective power and pressure. In Corona times, this proved successful even by using only digital tools. We reached 70% union density, and finally the company agreed to recognise the shop stewards and to join a sectoral collective agreement."

Unionen, Sweden

“During the COVID-19 crisis, people have been confused, angry and worried about the future. We reached out to them through phone calls, social media and TV commercials. The purpose was to show workers that our union cares for them and we have the policies, tools and services to help them. We got positive feedback – and recruited 30,000 new members.”

✓ Sectoral level

- Initiate discussions in sectoral networks to identify strategically important sectors and develop flagship initiatives
- Encourage affiliates to prioritise sectoral collective bargaining campaigns and support them with cross-border coordination
- Continue pilot projects on organising, collective bargaining and living wages in the South-East European garment and footwear industries

✓ Specific target groups

- Provide training for young leaders on organising principles and best practice
- Support the White-Collar Working Group to develop a tailored action plan which considers the needs of these employees
- Support the Equal Opportunity Working Group on developing a BTUP action plan

Strong unions with strong bargaining power are the only effective protection against the individual and collective dismantling of workers’ rights. Faced with the economic crisis brought on by COVID-19, trade unions must negotiate from a position of strength and unity for a fair recovery underpinned by safe working conditions and better pay.

Key to our success will be the contribution and participation of all of industriAll Europe’s affiliates through their own membership policies, action plans and allocated resources. Building trade union power through organising and collective bargaining is our common goal for securing quality jobs and good working conditions. Cooperating across national borders is an expression of concrete solidarity among industrial workers and their unions in Europe.



Support and training – learn with industriAll Europe

OS Kovo, Czechia

“In close cooperation with industriAll Europe, we built a strategy to raise union density in an automotive company to over 50% and to improve communications between the workers, union and management. We trained lead organisers who built an organising team, with members in each department. Due to COVID-19, we had to change the approach from personal contacts to mobile phones, WhatsApp, Zoom and Skype. That proved effective. It is still early days, but we have already doubled our membership in the company.”

IndustriAll Europe offers your union support to develop your organising plan and training for your officials to implement it in workplaces. When needed, we can help you build support from unions in the country where a multinational is headquartered and in other locations throughout the supply chain.

Our experience shows that successful organising campaigns are built on several elements:

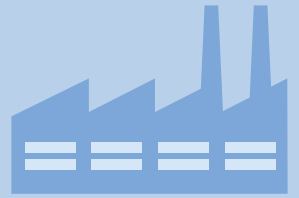
- ✓ **Decide on a strategy and identify targets:** Research is key to designing organising campaigns. Knowing the target will help you build up pressure.
- ✓ **Allocate resources:** Organising is done by people. They will need time and some financial resources to do a successful job.
- ✓ **Identify and train organisers:** Knowledge of organising techniques and communications will guide your activists to choose the appropriate course of action in different situations.
- ✓ **Create a good contact database:** Every organising campaign needs broad contact data. Identify the key people and potential leaders in the workplace and expand the list further.
- ✓ **Communicate through listening:** Prepare your organising team to become good listeners with specific training. Organisers and activists should contact workers directly in person, by phone or online.
- ✓ **Find good issues:** The issues of a campaign should come from workers and meet their needs.
- ✓ **Form a convincing narrative:** Build your communication on feedback from workers and make them see how building a union will help solve their problems.
- ✓ **Keep the momentum:** Use phone calls, video calls or messaging apps for a bridging period when you cannot meet in person. In the long run, a good campaign requires face-to-face meetings.

- ✓ **Decide on an escalation strategy:** Think one step ahead. Be prepared in case an employer is not willing to engage in a meaningful dialogue or even launches anti-union activities. 'Vaccinate' your activists against union busting by getting members to think about how an employer might react and ways to counter any retaliation before it happens. Have your lawyers ready.
- ✓ **Build trust:** Help workers understand that union membership is in their best interest. When workers solve their problems together, the solutions last longer and are more robust.
- ✓ **Find allies:** In many campaigns it helps to build cooperation with civil society, local politicians, consumer or environmental activists and the local media. Companies are often dependent on public opinion.
- ✓ **International solidarity:** In a globalised economy, most companies are part of an international supply chain and/or have sites in different countries. Establish cooperation with trade unions in other countries and build solidarity.

ACV Metea, Belgium

"Our union is involved in the Re-member campaign of our confederation, which focuses not only on recruitment, but also on keeping members. Young workers, women and smaller companies are special target groups. We have trained our union staff and activists, developed a company analysis tool, and used Facebook and phone calls to reach members who are late with their fee payments. We have managed to retain a good number of members and we have recorded a net increase."



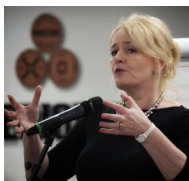


Why organising is important



Wolfgang Lemb, Executive Committee Member, IG Metall, Germany:

“Collective agreements don’t just happen, we have to fight for them. And we win when we have lots of members in a workplace.”



Sharon Graham, General Secretary, Unite the Union, UK:

“Without organisation at the workplace, trade unions are nothing. Without Shop Stewards and Reps, trade unions are nothing. This is what underpins our strategy. We must grow our power at the workplace and drive real change from that powerbase. The principles of Organising are nothing new, but an effective Organising Strategy must focus on the industrial. Now is not the time to batten down the hatches; we must embrace change to build industrial power.”



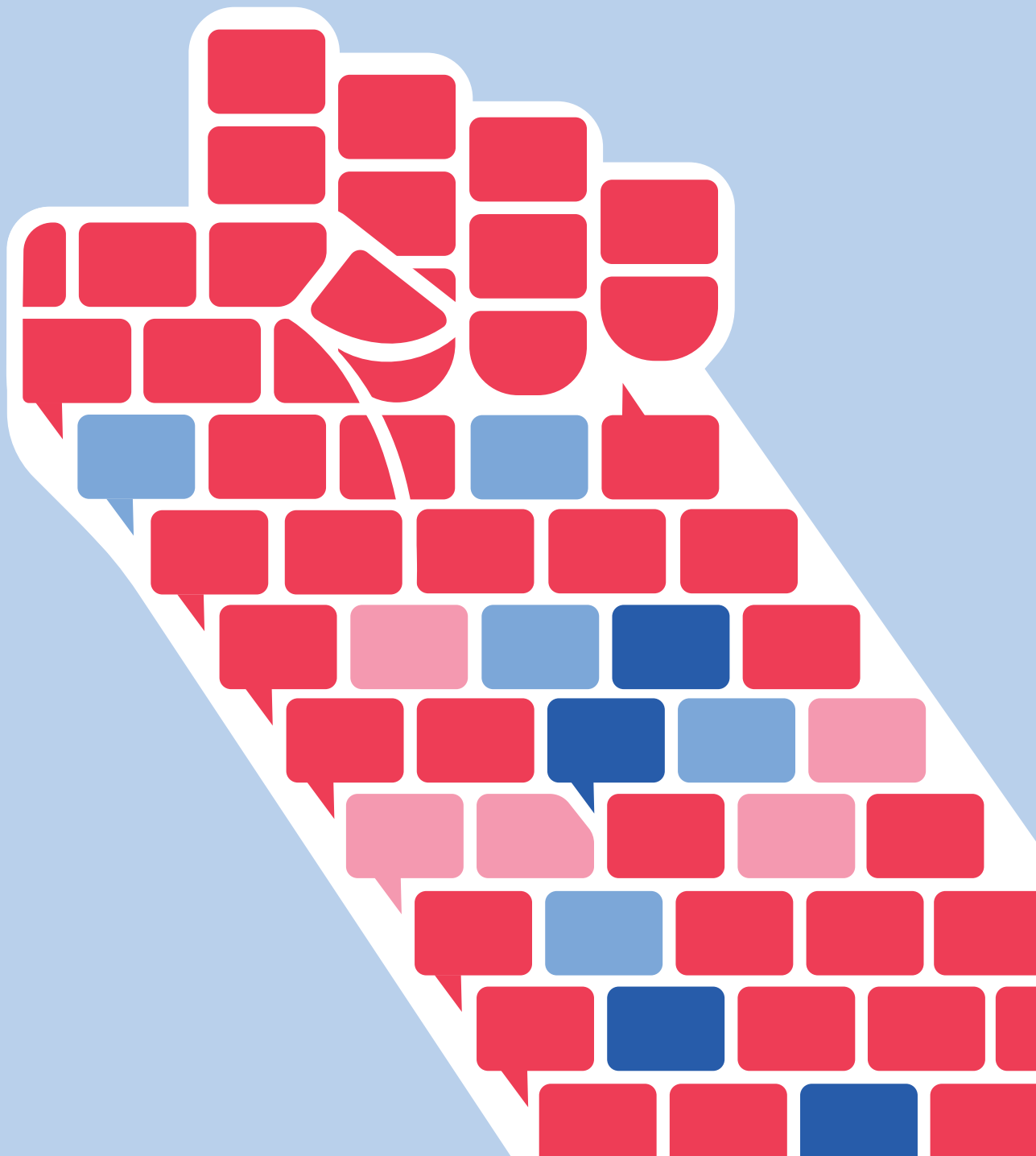
Livia Spiegléné Balogh, President of VASAS, Hungary:

“In Hungary, neither the state nor employers recognise the importance of workers’ role in the economy. Employees can only count on each other if they want to fight for the recognition they deserve. It is not enough to be organised in workplaces, you need to show strength at the sectoral level and along international supply chains. VASAS has developed a long-term strategy and training programme for organising. We cooperate closely with trade unions in other countries and with international organisations, primarily with IG Metall and industriAll Europe.”



IER Nezavisnost members at Golden Lady, Serbia:

“After eighteen years without a union, we realised that this was the only legitimate way to fight for better working conditions. We want a living wage, not just a wage we can survive off. We’ve come together to fight bullying, discrimination and violations of the law by the employer. All employees must have equal rights. We all deserve respect and we’re all united in the struggle to realise those rights.”



Join the industriAll Europe Organising Programme

Together we can ensure that every workplace has a union, and that every worker is in the union.

This is what you can do:

- ✓ Discuss membership policy in the democratic decision-making bodies of your union. Is your union losing members or winning new ones? Are you happy with the present situation? Or could your union use more influence and bargaining power by growing? We guess your answer is yes.
- ✓ Take a democratic decision to make organising a key priority in your union.
- ✓ Allocate human and financial resources, begin to identify and train organisers and start thinking about strategic organising action and campaigns.

Once you have decided to become an organising union, please contact industriAll Europe. Let's discuss how we can work together to build an organising culture and develop the necessary strategies, tools and skills.

We want your union to join The Organising Programme. Are you ready?

IER Nezavisnost, Serbia:

"At first we were only three women who got together in a textile plant and decided to form a union. Then we started meeting workers in a local café, built trust and learnt about union matters with the help of a branch leader. After 9 months we already had 200 members. Workers in another plant saw an article about us and now they have organised 100 workers. We communicate using messaging apps and consult workers before taking decisions. And now we have successfully negotiated a collective agreement."

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www.industrial-europe.eu

