

Political Platform – Just Transition Campaign

Just Transition: ‘Nothing About Us, Without Us!’

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As industrial, mining and energy unions, industriAll Europe and its members support the objective of climate neutrality by 2050 and recognise the need for increased ambition for 2030 to reach this. Climate change is happening, and we have limited time to avoid the worst scenarios which will hurt workers and the most vulnerable in society and in the world hardest. Decarbonisation must lead to transformation, not de-industrialisation – the market alone will not deliver this.

In supporting the European Green Deal, European leaders have committed that the necessary transition will come with a Just Transition. We urgently need that rhetoric to turn into concrete plans and action, as every one of our members and sectors will be impacted by the decarbonisation of our economy and society. Bridging the investment gap in order to accelerate the roll-out of the required technologies and infrastructure, maintaining European industrial leadership in strategic technologies and value chains, and creating good quality jobs across our Continent, demands a social and industrial policy commensurate to our climate ambitions. Negotiated transition pathways to 2050 for all industries, with realistic interim goals, is vital to frame actions at different political, geographical and industrial levels.

European politicians have the chance as the so-called Fit for 55 package passes through the European Council and European Parliament. IndustriAll Europe calls for:

A robust EU Just Transition framework for all affected industries and workers

‘Just Transition’, once a trade union campaign slogan, has finally made its way into the common language of European policymakers and national leaders. For trade unions, Just Transition means the anticipation and management of change in which the participation of trade unions and workers is a prerequisite – ‘Nothing about us, without us’.

The final adoption of the Just Transition Fund (JTF) in June 2021 marks a significant victory for trade unionists – but it is too limited in scope and scale. Moreover, resources are only part of the story. Rarely is the link made to the need for a real toolbox of rights to ensure that transitions are smooth for individual workers. However, the existing tools have been under sustained attack through the decentralisation of collective bargaining systems and weak social dialogue in many European countries particularly accelerated by the austerity policies in the aftermath of the last global financial and economic crisis. Reversing the trend is a prerequisite for shaping a socially fair and responsible transition towards climate neutrality, while ensuring trust and support of European workers and citizens.

What are our concrete demands?

1. Adequate **resources** for a Just Transition leaving no one or region behind: a Just Transition will only be delivered if good quality jobs are maintained and created, all regions are able to flourish, and socio-economic inequalities are addressed. Europe needs a sustainable industrial policy that will tap the job potential of moving to a zero emission industry, while securing investment to transform the industrial base. Job-to-job transitions must be supported, and this entails serious investment in active labour market policies, retraining and upskilling: it is estimated that it costs €10k to upskill/retrain a worker. Currently, the JTF is inadequate for the task at hand. Resources must be drawn from EU budgets, national funds and industry. While a Just Transition is not free, the costs of poor transitions are much higher for individuals, regions and society at large.
2. Despite the importance of the industry and scale of transformation underway, **a clear, granular mapping of the employment consequences** of a shift towards climate-neutral industries at the regional level is still to be done. Without understanding where exactly the workers impacted are, reskilling and upskilling programmes cannot be tailored to ensure job-to-job transitions. This analysis must be conducted by public authorities in coordination with social partners.
3. **Anticipation of change and social dialogue for all workers:** in 2013 the European Parliament proposed a European legal framework on the anticipation and the management of change – this should be created to ensure workers have the right to co-decision during the transition in their workplaces and regions, strengthening social dialogue and collective bargaining.
4. **A toolbox of rights to ensure that transitions are smooth for individual workers:** active labour market policies must address the urgency for education and training that ensures reskilling and upskilling to equip workers for jobs within and between transforming industries. Every worker, regardless of contract, must have the right to quality training and life-long learning.
5. **Policy cooperation and exchange of good practices:** a Just Transition will happen locally in regional economies and workplaces, but there is much that can be framed by common policy objectives and the exchange of good practices. The Just Transition Platform should be extended to cover all the sectors impacted by the European Green Deal. To give an example, mobility ecosystem - representing 16 million jobs in Europe, including in manufacturing - will be heavily affected as a direct consequence of the Fit for 55 Package proposals, such as stricter emission standards. However there is currently no Just Transition framework at EU level reflecting the transition in this important sector. Transition pathways must be co-designed through social dialogue and worker participation.

Without a social deal there will be no Green Deal

Political inaction or tokenism on Just Transition has major risks for Europe. Given the number of jobs at stake and the magnitude of the ongoing transformation, social disruption due to a badly managed transition might severely undermine the ability of the European Green Deal to succeed.

We are conscious that the world is watching how the EU and national governments implement our climate ambitions. We would like Europe to lead the world in implementing Just Transition as well. Workers across Europe are mobilising to assert their right to be involved in reshaping our jobs and industries today, for the future.