



POWER
in
a UNION

industriAll Europe
Mid-Term Conference

A strong voice for
industrial workers in Europe

Strategic Plan

2023 - 2025

At the time we started to write the Strategic Plan, Europe has been going through a structural and economic crisis which is unlike anything most Europeans have experienced in their lifetime, and which threatens the current socio-economic model and poses major challenges for our industrial fabric.

We are currently experiencing a new economic crisis that is threatening the unity of the EU socio-economic fabric. Among many other military conflicts, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, combined with the speculation on the commodity market, and new geo-political realities are changing the socio-economic outlook, propelling the EU into political uncertainties. Inflation is at record levels. The energy crisis, driven by gas import dependencies, increased electricity demand and the failure of the current pricing model, threatens to stall European industry. The spiralling cost of living is increasing social inequality and decreasing the purchasing power of European workers, and driving millions into poverty and stoking fears of social unrest.

Although we cannot predict whether the war will be over when we discuss the Strategic Plan in Thessaloniki, we can already predict that for years to come we will have to continue dealing with the scarring effects of the war combined with the rippled effect of the COVID-19 crisis.

This context forces us to rethink Europe's geopolitical relations. Both China and the USA are stepping up their efforts to play the leading role in the production of crucial future technologies. For this reason, the Inflation Reduction Act was created to support American industries in the energy transition, and aims to reindustrialise the country by emphasising the development and creation of well-paid unionised jobs. Europe is now challenged to find a response that focuses on good, unionised jobs and public investment for the transformation of our industry.

It will be necessary to stand up to multinationals who only focus on short-term profits. The role of industriAll Europe will be to fight and oppose relocations and job losses resulting from choices that only result in increased shareholder profits without taking into account the sustainability of companies and jobs. Against this background, the activities of industriAll Europe for the period 2023-2025 must be concentrated on three main priorities:

- Building Trade Union Power for strong, sustainable industrial jobs in Europe
- Building Trade Union Power for fair pay and conditions
- Building Trade Union Power for European solidarity and peace

Strengthening trade union power is essential to increase our impact and achieve our priorities. Recruiting and organising new members in all sectors and among different groups, as well as retaining members, will be a fundamental underpinning for achieving our political objectives. We must also strengthen our mobilisation power.

We cannot build trade unions if the unions, union members and workers are threatened and sometimes condemned for what they are and for the actions they take. Therefore, industriAll Europe and its members must mobilise all tools and networks to come to the aid of all those who are threatened, pursued and sometimes even unfairly condemned. Workforces must then mobilise themselves to support these employees and make management yield. Governments and the EU must protect and guarantee freedom of association, the free exercise of union activity, free expression and above all the non-interference of employers in the life of trade union organisations.

To achieve this, the European elections in 2024 must be used to make our voice heard. It must be made clear why the elections are so relevant for the industrial trade unions in this important decade and for the industrial policy agenda of the EU.

1. Building Trade Union Power for strong, sustainable industrial jobs in Europe

At industriAll Europe, we are united in the belief that Europe needs an ambitious, future-oriented industrial strategy. Over the past few decades, whole sections of European production have been relocated and we are currently paying a high price for this. So there needs to be more networking between the European partners – coordination between them and not fierce competition. For this, we need political strategies for investment and innovation. We need alliances and smart clusters for the industrial areas where Europe is strong, to bring them back to the international forefront. A massive commitment of resources and an absolute will to promote the reindustrialisation of Europe are needed. A reindustrialisation policy must be put in place which will be spread across all the countries thanks to the return of strategic activities and products for Europe. Europe must play its role as an industrial and political power to defend its internal market and jobs.

To build strong industrial trade unions, we need strong and stable industries. Equally, to build a strong and sustainable industrial fabric, we need the collective organisation of workers at every stage of industrial supply chains where fundamental labour, trade union and human rights are respected. There is no stability without sustainability. There are no sustainable industries without social justice.

It is only with sustainable industries providing good jobs, with negotiated terms and conditions and high-level social guarantees that we can ensure prosperity for this generation and future generations. This decade is critically important for investment in the transformation and development of sustainable, low carbon industries. The green and digital twin transition is happening in Europe and elsewhere in the world. The challenge for us as industrial trade unions is to ensure that workers are at the centre of this transformation. The pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine revealed the weaknesses of global value chains, energy strategies and dependencies and led to a pushback against pure market doctrine in favour of state intervention and active industrial policy. While the market is regulated for environmental reasons, politicians have a direct responsibility for putting in place the necessary tools to carry out an orderly and Just Transition through social dialogue, with workers at the core. Decarbonisation and digitalisation must take place without deindustrialisation, noting fierce global competition in many sectors and furthermore the lack of a global level playing field.

We commit ourselves to the EU's climate targets. While others are joining Europe in the green transition, a truly global effort and cooperation is needed to effectively stop the ecological impact of industrial production on climate and environment. Technology alone will not make these transitions successful or fair, and they will only be delivered if there is a strong social agenda – a true Just Transition. Workers and their trade unions have a vital role in ensuring that good industrial jobs are created, transformed and maintained. Workers in carbon-based industries with transition/transformation projects must be heard. Their projects, promoted by their unions, must be studied before concluding decisions.

The Just Transition and the technological changes that accompany it must make it possible to stimulate a new industrial boom in line with the needs of the workers. IndustriAll Europe defends sustainable, well-paid jobs with high-level working conditions throughout Europe. Europe must redirect the means and tools to decarbonise in a manner which is respectful to both the environment and workers. There must be 'nothing about us, without us!'

We will:

- i. Call for the implementation of an inclusive, sustainable and resilient European industrial policy which strengthens the strategic autonomy of Europe, respects fair and sustainable international trade, promotes growth and social progress within the different regions of Europe, as well as prevents competition between regions to attract investments, to combat deindustrialisation, ensuring that the public funds of the Member States and of the European Union have enforceable obligations to ensure social justice strings are attached. All aid must be conditional on the protection and guarantee of quality employment. In this context, the distribution of dividends must also be conditional and monitored. We insist on a fairer redistribution of wealth. European proposals for a green European industrial strategy must be actively accompanied and rapid measures must be called for in order to implement a determined European response to the US IRA. This response must reach out through fair international trade and cooperation with the common goal of achieving a green and digital transition and it must be ecological, socially just and thus oriented towards strengthening the European trade unions, including binding trade and sustainable development conditions and enforcement. Initiatives based on solidarity are necessary to support industrial workers and critical sectors, such as the automotive and sectors where emissions are hard to abate, during the transition.
- ii. Develop a common trade union approach to the reform of competition law and the revision of the state aid regime with social and environmental conditionalities attached.
- iii. Oppose purely shareholder-value driven corporate strategies which lead to European deindustrialisation by developing sustainable industrial alternatives through strong trade union coordination in multinational companies.
- iv. Continuously scrutinise and challenge the impact on the quantity and quality of jobs in our industries. Defend and promote good and sustainable working conditions and healthy and safe working environments, emphasise occupational health and the prevention of occupational hazards, and seek to reduce the number of accidents at work, and at the same time contribute, through training, to solving the labour and skills shortages, and the effective enforcement of OSH legislation.
- v. Highlight that the shortages of labour and necessary skills, due to a lack of training throughout working life, will potentially hamper a fair transformation with serious impact on workers. It is essential to ensure that national recovery plans and the European Semester include schemes for up-skilling and reskilling, facilitating transitions between jobs and ensuring that no one is left behind.
- vi. Develop organising approaches and plans for emerging industries and companies, while strengthening unionisation rates in existing industries. Support affiliates by mobilising union solidarity and taking all the necessary steps to protect the employees, union members and unions who are threatened in their union action either by the companies or by national governments themselves. We will help our affiliated organisations to develop new strategies and tools to organise, recruit and train more members, to establish strong national and sectoral collective bargaining agreements, with special attention paid to workplaces in emerging new industries (due to digitalisation and the greening of industries) and to digital organising.
- vii. Pay special attention to young people, advocating for apprenticeships (or equivalent pathways) and training programmes with job retention guarantees, with decent working conditions and permanent full-time employment contracts.
- viii. Take into account in all our demands the gender perspective, to guarantee equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex. The promotion of women in technical professions and STEM

- areas, where they are underrepresented, must be paid special attention on the one hand, as a way to provide a solution to the shortage of skilled workers and, on the other hand, to offer women better pay and career opportunities in technical professions.
- ix. Beyond the energy emergency, campaign for a revision of the EU energy policy which ensures stable supplies of affordable low-carbon electricity and gas for a sustainable future. Energy cannot be guided only by the market; the system needs to be properly regulated and organised to ensure clean safe and affordable energy supply for all, as a common good. Speculation and profiteering on essential goods must be denounced and prevented through price monitoring, and we must continue to fight against liberalisation steps in essential goods and services.
 - x. Campaign to keep the compass set on our collective duty towards future generations in terms of carbon neutrality by 2050, zero waste and the building of a circular economy. This must go hand in hand with a Just Transition agenda, which brings effective reindustrialisation and guarantees that a solution is found for every worker and region through planning, the anticipation and management of change.
 - xi. Explore the potential of digital technologies to support the transition towards a future-proof, smart, clean and innovative industry creating added value for a fair and inclusive society, underpinned by a strong, green and social industry approach. We demand that the EU devotes significant funds to fundamental research to ensure these objectives.
 - xii. Call for action to tackle the supply shortages of key components and materials. It must be ensured that in the future, no unilateral dependence on third parties is created that endangers industrial production and the supply of essential goods for people in Europe (including medical supplies). The present situation has underlined the strategic need for European self-sufficiency within key industries (notably in terms of investment in R&D), as well as strong policies on essential mining and the promotion of the circular economy.
 - xiii. Work to ensure that macroeconomic policies are in line with our industrial policy objectives.
 - xiv. Call for a fast adoption of the European Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive. EU-wide regulation should set a common minimum standard, but no country should be prevented from more progressive measures. We advocate for a European solution so that companies not only proactively comply with ILO core labour standards and environmental standards, but also implement and promote them to the entire value chain. IndustriAll Europe, together with IndustriALL Global Union, should play a collaborative role with the trade unions from the headquarter countries when handling complaints about violations of human rights due diligence.

2. Building Trade Union Power for fair pay and working conditions

Social dialogue, collective bargaining and workers' involvement have proven their worth in the fight against the pandemic. With growing recognition of the value of collective bargaining and social dialogue, we will mobilise to strengthen the power of workers, to reap the rewards of their labour and steer the transition. But strong collective bargaining depends on a triple engagement: primarily of trade union organisations and employers, but also of national governments which must promote and not prevent negotiations. Today, in many European countries, we are asked to negotiate a reduction in rights – this is not acceptable. Strong collective bargaining depends on a solid foundation of members. We will continue to defend the autonomy of social partners and support our affiliates in developing new strategies and tools to recruit more members and to establish collective bargaining agreements, with special attention paid to workplaces in emerging new industries and to organising the “new normal” world of work. An investment- and wage-led recovery is the only way out of this crisis. The sirens of austerity must be silenced.

We will:

- i. Campaign for a fair pay rise to protect workers' purchasing power, allowing them to live well on their wages, and ensure workers get a fair share of the wealth that they have helped create. The current cost of living crisis shows that wages are not driven by inflation; it is the real root cause of inflation that needs to be addressed. The first step is therefore to increase real wages substantially and maintain wage mechanisms to compensate for inflation in order to kick-start the economy. IndustriAll Europe and its members must raise the demand for a fairer sharing of wealth in our societies.
- ii. Denounce and fight social dumping on jobs and the living and working conditions of workers.
- iii. Strengthen collective bargaining systems, rebuilding them where they have been dismantled and ensuring that they provide fair and collective solutions for all.
- iv. Take advantage of the Pay Transparency Directive in an effort to narrow the gender pay gap and we will also reinforce our coordination to fight violence against women and girls inside and outside the workplace.
- v. Support industriAll Europe's affiliated organisations to develop new strategies and tools to recruit and organise more members and develop bargaining space and increase collective bargaining coverage. This will also be achieved by building on the EU initiative on social dialogue and on the adoption of the EU Directive on adequate minimum wages and the promotion of collective bargaining. It is worth underlining here the responsibility of national governments to implement national action plans in a coherent way. Promote the positive trade union message of improving the lives of all working people and the benefits of trade union membership for workers and the society as a whole.
- vi. Fight against tax evasion, tax havens and for a fair progressive tax system, including taxation on windfall profits, the introduction of an ambitious (minimum) corporate tax and a fairer redistribution of wealth overall (including through well-resourced social protection measures), as increasing inequality is tearing the social fabric of our societies and tax competition in Europe is ruinous.
- vii. Strengthen effective information, consultation and participation of workers in transnational companies to secure that they have a say at the earliest stage of strategic processes and are fully involved in shaping the transformation of our industries. Campaign for a robust EU legal framework for more democracy at work (a stronger EWC Directive in line with the demands of the European Parliament), greater corporate transparency (ambitious European reporting standards), and their effective implementation in national laws.
- viii. Empower trade union representatives in multinational companies and coordinators assisting European Works Councils and European Companies (SEs) by providing political guidance and practical recommendations on how to enforce and strengthen the operation of EWCs/SE-WCs as well as transnational dialogue on strategic issues and vigilance on the rollback of national worker participation rights.
- ix. Take advantage of the new European Commission initiative and EU legislation on social dialogue and collective bargaining to promote social dialogue, both at national and European level, in order to strengthen workers' rights. The European social dialogue (at industry level as well as at cross-industry level) must be made possible regularly and in-person. It must continue to be provided with the appropriate financial means by the European Commission. Where requested, agreements between the social partners must immediately be transposed into binding legislation by the EU institutions.

- x. Promote active social dialogue and workers' involvement and participation at the workplace and at all levels, as these are the foundation of an orderly and just transition. EU support for trade union capacity building is needed. In this regard, we will work to ensure that national administrations and governments involve trade unions in the administration, management and supervision of European funds intended for the development of the productive fabric of the Member States.
- xi. Denounce any attack on the right to collective bargaining, the right to strike and other trade union rights and trade union freedoms. We will strengthen our united trade union network in order to defend the exercise of trade union rights for all of our members.
- xii. Tackle digitalisation and its impact on the world of work. Ensure that workers, companies and society as a whole reap the benefits of digitalisation by making sure it is properly regulated, collectively negotiated and risk assessed, especially in relation to AI systems.
- xiii. Fight for decent jobs for all and against precarious employment, including defending working time policies that guarantee, create and redistribute jobs, and that improve health and safety at work and work-life balance while taking into account the gender dimension in the approach to decent working conditions.
- xiv. Tackle upward convergence between Eastern and Western Europe, centre and peripheries, and fight against the exploitation of migrant workers in the labour market and call for a revision of the European reception system opposing the idea of a fortress Europe on whose borders people continue to die.

3. Building Trade Union Power for European solidarity and peace

We must claim and highlight the value of our victories when they come – the historic EU recovery package and pooling of common debt was a victory in our campaign for a more social Europe over the last decade. But there are always new challenges to surmount. We cannot ignore the fact that the deterioration in citizens' living standards and rising unemployment has fuelled nationalist solutions and the rise of populist ideas and Far Right ideas and parties. European cooperation must build solidarity among countries and people, as well as trade based on universal rules that protect the people and the planet. Furthermore, solidarity must extend to and across our continental borders. We must unite and act to oppose structural inequalities and discrimination.

While some companies try to take advantage of the situation and pit workers against each other within and between countries, we must build transnational solidarity between our members from different countries and reinforce our unity, campaigning for more democracy at work, speaking out for each other and defending each other's rights and jobs, and working in solidarity with workers along our industrial value chains. We will fight and oppose relocations and job losses resulting from choices that have no basis other than increasing shareholder profits without taking into account the sustainability of companies and jobs. We are committed to working towards equality and equal opportunities at the workplace and to fighting all forms of discrimination.

We will:

- i. Closely monitor and engage in the European Semester and in preparation of the Tripartite Social Summit to ensure that austerity is not back on the political agenda, as recession is looming and central banks around the world are converting to tighter fiscal policies. Austerity policies will not deliver on the Green Deal ambitions and the European Pillar of Social Rights. It will not help an exit from the crisis.

- ii. Promote active social dialogue, workers' participation and collective bargaining as a solution and showcase why trade unions are vital for everyone at the workplace.
- iii. Extend solidarity between countries and towards workers impacted by successive crises. Cooperation and solidarity must also be shown and strengthened by and between governments, employers and social partners together. No single country can address these crises alone and solidarity must be extended to all economic and social actors. We need to find genuine European solutions and practise solidarity!
- iv. Call on workers to resist the sirens' calls of populist and xenophobic politicians and to stand together and ensure that we emerge stronger, not divided. With increasing precariousness of workers, the stronger the perceived competition from immigrants will be and the more they turn to populist and xenophobic politicians. We must resist this as unions and stand together to prevent division.
- v. Stand in full solidarity with the people of Ukraine, our brothers and sisters in the trade union movement and reiterate our demand for an immediate cessation of Russia's acts of war, while we call for dialogue and talks for peace. The EU institutions must do their utmost to contribute to peace as declared in the founding treaty. It is the rule of law that must prevail in Europe, and never the law of the strongest.
- vi. Build a strong response to counter the populist, extremist and far-right strategies and narratives and to develop coherent trade union actions to defend and strengthen democracy and the Rule of Law. Raise awareness about these strategies at the workplace, identify and promote agreements and clauses negotiated by trade unions to combat these strategies at the level of the workplace.

Conclusions: Building trade union power in industriAll Europe at the core of our work

Strong unions are vital for strong, sustainable industries in Europe, delivering shared prosperity for our societies and workforces, and underpinning social cohesion and peace in Europe. We commit to building the power in our movement and unions to create the foundation for a good society for all.

We need to use the next two years until the industriAll Europe Congress to have a debate on how a stronger membership and its embedding in the workplaces and factories can be understood to be a crucial power resource. It is about membership recruitment, organisational development and capacity building to face the current challenges of transformation.

This presupposes, first and foremost, the willingness for a change in awareness and culture among the members of industriAll Europe themselves.

In this context, transnational exchange of mutual experiences is a crucial success factor. IndustriAll Europe could play a decisive role in the organisation and coordination of this and be a dynamic engine in the necessary change, both internally and externally with political decision makers for a better consideration of our role. Our collective voice and action must be clear, united and visible.



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