

Making training a reality for quality jobs in European industries

TRADE UNION GUIDE



PART 1 – SECTORAL LEVEL

Introduction

This Resource Guide has been designed as a tool to make training a reality for quality jobs in European industries.

Who is it for?

This Resource Guide has been designed as a tool to support trade unions in affiliated organisations of industriAll European Trade Union so that their officers and representatives are better equipped at the sectoral and workplace levels to make training a reality for quality jobs in European industries.

What is in it?

This Resource Guide presents a practical trade union approach to the development of workers' training – at the sectoral level (Part 1) and at the workplace level (Part 2).

How to use it?

This Resource Guide presents 10 different ways in which trade unions can participate in and/or advocate for the development of training. Each section provides a brief introduction to the subject and a checklist of issues designed to support trade union reflection and action.

It can be used as a stand-alone resource or as an aid for awareness-raising and capacity-building within trade unions in Europe. It will clearly be more effective if it forms part of a broader trade union strategy.

Part 1 – Sectoral Level will provide an opportunity to consider the following:

Part 1/Section 1

Supporting the right to training

Part 1/Section 2

Engaging in social dialogue on training

Part - 1/Section 3

Implementing training policies and programmes

Part 1/Section 4

Navigating the conditions for access to training opportunities

Part 1/Section 5

Establishing a sectoral trade union strategy for training

Part 1/Section 1 – Supporting the right to training

Article 14 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union grants everyone the right to education and to have access to vocational and continuing training.

As stressed in the Council Recommendation of November 2020, continuing vocational training has a key role to play in the upskilling and reskilling of workers and in developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes which are required for them to thrive in their professional, social and personal development.

This right to continuing vocational training is formally recognised in the vast majority of EU Member States and underpinned by legislation in most countries at the national level; or by legislation at the regional level, as for example, in Belgium and Germany. These regulatory frameworks establish the basic conditions which govern workers' entitlement to temporary leave of absence for training purposes and remuneration during the training period.

In Italy, for example,

'Workers, employed and unemployed, have the right to continuing training courses throughout their lives, to increase professional knowledge and skills. The State, the regions and local authorities ensure that a training offer is structured throughout the territory and, where necessary, integrated and accredited.... The training offer must allow for personalised courses, which are certified and recognized as training credits at the national and European levels.

Training can correspond to workers' own choices or be prepared by the company, through corporate or territorial training plans agreed between the social partners'. (Article 6.1 – leave for continuing training).

In Luxembourg, for example,

'Special leave known as "training leave" is established and intended to enable employees to take part in courses, prepare for and take part in examinations, write dissertations or carry out any other work related to training.

The following may benefit from this leave: employees, normally employed in a workplace located on Luxembourg territory, linked by an employment contract to a legally established company or association and active in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and having a length of service of at least six months with the employer with whom they are in an employment relationship at the time of requesting the leave'. [Article 234-59 of the Labour Code]

In order to gain a better understanding of the extent to which the right to training is underpinned in your own country, please consider the questions in the template Part 1/Section 1/A –Supporting the right to training on the following page.

Part 1/ Section 1/A – Supporting the right to training

1. Regulatory framework for training - 1

Is access to training in your sector regulated by law?

Yes

No

2. Types of training covered by the law

If yes, what types of training are covered by the law?

- vocational skills – e.g. linked directly to existing work
- transversal skills – e.g. problem-solving, communication, teamwork
- basic skills – e.g. numeracy, literacy, digital skills
- personal development – e.g. improving self confidence
- other

Please give details

3. Types of workers covered by the law

If yes, which workers are eligible for training?

- all
- white collar
- blue collar
- indefinite contract
- fixed term contract
- full time
- part time

Please give details

If yes, which workers are not eligible for training?



Please give details

4. Provision for time off for training covered by the law

If yes, what provision is made for time off?

- none 1-5 days per year
 6-10 days per year more than 10 days per year
 other

Please give details

5. Remuneration for time off for training covered by law

If yes, what provision is made for remuneration?

- full partial none

Please give details

6. Regulatory framework for training - 2

If no, is the right to training underpinned by any other regulatory measure?

- Yes No

Please give details



Part 1/Section 2 – Engaging in social dialogue on training

The right to training, presented in Part 1/Section 1, offers a basis for a regulatory framework, which in many countries may be complemented by the provisions of social dialogue agreements. The latter may take the form of tri-partite training strategies approved by governments and social partners – trade unions and employers’ organisations, or of bipartite collective agreements negotiated solely by trade unions and employers’ organisations.

In Germany, in 2019,

the government, trade unions and employers’ organisations agreed a National Skills Strategy, which included the following priorities:

- ‘Supporting the transparency of continuing vocational training opportunities and programmes
- Ensuring full-coverage, lifelong guidance and strengthening skills development advisory services, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises
- Reviewing and enhancing the quality and quality assessment of continuing vocational training programmes and products
- Increasing the visibility of and recognising the skills acquired by workers through continuing vocational training
- Developing continuing vocational training qualifications and programmes
- Supporting training staff and equipping them with the skills required for the digital transformation
- Strengthening strategic forecasting and optimising statistics on continuing vocational training’

In Sweden, in 2021,

trade unions and employers’ organisations negotiated a national intersectoral agreement on skills development in enterprises.

They agreed that social partners should jointly contribute to good conditions for all employees to meet new knowledge and qualification requirements. ‘A basis for this is ongoing, systematic and goal-oriented development work that aims to:

- Increase the enterprise’s adaptability to new requirements for improved competitiveness
- Create a profitable business for the enterprise
- Expand employees’ versatility and collective skills for improved flexibility and performance
- Strengthen employees’ job security, so that employees should be able to have a good working environment and good salary development
- Develop the conditions for equality between women and men in the enterprise’ (Article 1)

This agreement has provided the basis for labour law reform which was introduced in 2022 and which includes the following:

- 'The new Transitional Study Grant, which can reach a maximum of 3 EUR per month when combined with public aid and additional supplements, enhances opportunities for transition and skills support. Main agreements significantly bolster support for job-to-job transitions and lifelong learning for employees, offering a crucial benefit for job security by enabling employees to upgrade or re-skill within the labour market. This also benefits companies by fostering a more productive and skilled workforce'.

In Germany, in 2021,

the trade union IG Metall negotiated a framework agreement with the employers' organisation from the metalworking and electrical sector on the future, competitiveness and employment security. It tackled a series of issues, including the development of employment on the one hand and staffing and qualification planning that aim to secure existing jobs and create new jobs on the other.

There has been a cascading effect, and agreements have been signed at the regional level – for example, in Bavaria, and at the company level – for example, in Bosch, GKN Automotive, Mahle, Opel, Stabilus and Till Hydraulik.

In Italy, in 2021,

the employer's organisation and the trade unions in the metalworking industry signed a three-year sectoral agreement which included a section on continuing vocational training.

'Workers with at least 5 years of seniority will be able to request, over the entire period of their working life, a period of unpaid leave equal to a maximum of eleven months... in order to complete compulsory schooling, achieve a secondary qualification, university diploma or degree or to participate in training activities other than those implemented or financed by the employer.

The worker must submit a written request to the employer at least 30 days in advance for leave lasting up to 10 days and at least 60 days in advance for leave lasting more than 10 days, specifying the reasons for the request and attaching the relevant documentation' (Article 9).

At the time of writing, the three Italian trade unions representing workers in the metalworking sector have published a common negotiating platform which includes a section on training.

In order to gain a better understanding of the extent to which social dialogue can make to the provision of workers' training, please consider the questions in the template Part 1/Section 2/A – Engaging in social dialogue on training on the following page.

Part 1/Section 2/A – Engaging in social dialogue on training

1. Contributing to sectoral training strategies

Has your trade union been involved in contributing to sectoral training strategies?

Yes No

If yes, Please give details

2. Negotiating sectoral training agreements

Has your trade union been recently involved in negotiating a sectoral training agreement or a sectoral agreement which includes a chapter on training?

Yes No

If yes, what types of training were covered by the collective agreement?

- vocational skills – e.g. linked directly to existing work
- transversal skills – e.g. problem-solving, communication, teamwork
- basic skills – e.g. numeracy, literacy, digital skills
- personal development – e.g. improving self confidence

Please give details

If yes, which workers are eligible for training?

- all
- indefinite contract
- full time
- white collar
- fixed term contract
- part time
- blue collar



Please give details

If yes, what provision is made for time off?

- 1-5 days per year 6-10 days per year
 more than 10 days per year
 other

Please give details

If yes, what provision is made for remuneration?

- total partial none

Please give details



Part 1/Section 3 – Implementing training policies and programmes

In many countries, trade unions have a statutory right to be involved in the deliberations of sectoral training bodies which are responsible for implementing continuing vocational training policies and programmes.

In Italy,

trade unions and employers' organisations are responsible for managing Joint Interprofessional Funds for Continuing Training, which, in the metalworking sector, have the following functions:

- Promoting and guaranteeing workers access to training, through the reduction or elimination of costs for enterprises
- Promoting the qualification of workers' skills, and providing a greater guarantee of employability
- Promoting the development of enterprises and increasing their competitiveness

In Italy, there are 19 different Joint Interprofessional Funds, which are funded on the basis of 0.30% of the compulsory contribution that employers pay per employee for insurance against involuntary unemployment. The Joint Fund for the manufacturing sector, Fondimpresa, was set up in 2002 on the basis of a collective agreement. According to its latest Annual Report, 48% of enterprises in the industrial sector carried out training activities in 2020. Of these enterprises, 71% provided training activities to update existing staff members' skills and 13% trained staff to perform new tasks.

In the Netherlands,

trade unions and employers' organisations are jointly responsible for managing bipartite Training and Development Funds, better known as O&O Funds. They are 89 in number and have a fundamental role in funding continuing vocational education and training programmes. The training fund for the metalworking industry, OOM, aims to raise the level of craftsmanship in the sector, bringing the prospect of 'lifelong learning' to the attention of approximately 15,000 enterprises and 160,000 employees. OOM is funded on the basis of a social partner agreement which stipulates that enterprises should contribute 0.625% of their payroll costs annually.

In Portugal,

trade unions are represented on sector consultative bodies which support the work of the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Training. Their main task is to update the National Qualifications Framework, in the light of the specialised technical knowledge of the skills needs of the sector that they represent. They submit proposals for the inclusion, exclusion and/or changes to qualifications, and they facilitate coordination between different stakeholders in each sector. They cover 18 sectors, including the chemical, metalworking and fashion sectors.

In Spain,

trade unions are represented on sectoral joint committees that have been established through collective agreements, according to the requirements of the 2015 Law regulating the Vocational Training System in the Workplace. These committees are responsible for establishing the guiding criteria and the general priorities of sectoral training programmes (Article 26).

In order to gain a better understanding of the extent to which trade unions are involved in the implementation of training policies and programmes, please consider the questions in the template Part 1/Section 3/A – Implementing training policies and programmes on the following page.

Part 1/Section 3/A – Implementing training policies and programmes

1. Implementing training policies and programmes - 1

Is your trade union represented on a sectoral training body which implements training policies and programmes?

Yes No

If yes, which of the following functions are carried out by these sectoral training bodies?

- Interpreting skills and labour market information

Yes No

- Promoting the benefits of training

Yes No

- Developing skills standards

Yes No

- Developing qualifications

Yes No

- Developing learning resources

Yes No

- Managing training programmes

Yes No

- Monitoring the quality assurance of training providers

Yes No

- Promoting the benefits of training

Yes No

- Securing training funds

Yes No

- Administering the expenditure of training funds

Yes No



Please give details

2. Implementing training policies and programmes – 2

If no, in what other ways can your trade union influence the implementation of training policies and programmes?

Please give details



Part 1/Section 4 – Navigating the conditions for access to training opportunities

As already seen in the previous sections, the conditions for accessing training opportunities vary considerably from one country to another. Let's take a closer look at one particular case study – France.

In France,

the government, in conjunction with employers' organisations and trade unions, set up a programme Collective Transitions in 2021, which aims to help employers and workers address changes in work organisation and technological transition. It specifically aims to promote the mobility of workers in vulnerable professions.

To be eligible for retraining, workers must:

1. Be employed – on an indefinite contract, on a fixed term contract, or on an 'interim' contract - in a post which is identified as vulnerable.
2. Be prepared to take up a 'future-proof' occupation, which is defined as a new area of activity or as a profession in demand in sectors that are struggling to recruit.
3. Be supported by a professional development adviser and have the authorisation of the employer.
4. Enrol on a training course which
 - is carried out over a maximum period of two years or 2,400 hours
 - is organised by a registered training organisation
 - leads to a vocational qualification recognised by the State or by a process of validation of knowledge and experience

During the period of training, workers are entitled to:

1. Maintain their employment contract.
2. Be paid, in line with the minimum wage.
3. Be exempt from paying training fees.

In order to gain a better understanding of the types of conditions that may determine workers' access to training, please consider the questions in the template Part 1/Section 4/A – Navigating the conditions for access to training opportunities on the following page.

Part 1/Section 4/A – Navigating the conditions for access to training opportunities

1. Conditions for enabling workers to gain access to training programmes

In the light of your national circumstances, which of the 4 + 3 conditions presented in the French case study Collective Transitions could realistically form part of your own trade union's strategy for training?

To be eligible for retraining, workers must:

- Be employed – on an indefinite contract, on a fixed term contract, or on an 'interim' contract - in a post which is identified as vulnerable
Yes No

- Be prepared to take up a 'future-proof' occupation, which is defined as a new area of activity or as a profession in demand in sectors that are struggling to recruit
Yes No

- Be supported by a professional development adviser and have the authorisation of the employer
Yes No

- Enrol on a training course which
 - Is carried out over a maximum period of two years or 2,400 hours
Yes No

 - Is organised by a registered training organisation
Yes No

 - leads to a vocational qualification recognised by the State or by a process of validation of knowledge and experience
Yes No



During the period of training, workers are entitled to:

1. Maintain their employment contract

Yes No

2. Be paid, in line with the minimum wage

Yes No

3. Be exempt from paying training fees

Yes No

Please explain your choices



Part 1/Section 5 – Establishing a trade union strategy for training

In 2023, the Executive Committee of industrial All European Trade Union adopted a document Urgency to invest in workers, training and quality to loosen the tight labour market and meet the shortages, which included a series of demands for training and employability for future-proof occupational pathways, as follows:

- General demands
- Demands towards policymakers
- Demands towards employers

General demands

- An individual right to training negotiated collectively and preferably guaranteed by collective agreement, to secure access to training for ALL, irrespective of age (young/senior), gender, level of occupation (blue/white collars), type of contract (open-ended, precarious)
- High-quality training leading to qualifications which are validated (quality assurance) and recognised (thanks to a qualification framework comparable between Member States)
- Obligation to elaborate skills forecasts at sectoral/regional levels (e.g., local skills observatories) and at company level (e.g., strategic skills planning, including career guidance)
- Much major public and private investment in vocational education and training (VET). Work-related VET (to adapt to one's occupation) must be cost-free for workers and provided during working hours
- Full involvement of trade unions (and social partners, more broadly) in all skills-related initiatives/strategies designed at company, local, sectoral and national levels
- Flanking industrial and employment policies to secure that re- and up-skilling lead to quality/sustainable jobs in thriving industries

Demands towards policymakers

- Set social conditionalities that link all national and/or EU public funding opportunities and tax incentives to the creation of quality jobs, respect for collective bargaining and for trade union rights and training
- Ensure that all workers have access to education and training, regardless of their age, gender, level of occupation or type of contract
- Develop national, regional and local skills strategies with the full involvement of trade unions, including in the design and implementation of training programmes

- Make full use of all available opportunities of EU funding to step up sustainable public budgets for life-long learning
- Work together with the social partners at all relevant levels to reach the targets of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan by 2030 (at least 60% of all adults should participate in training every year, and at least 80% of those aged 16-74 should have basic digital skills)
- Ensure that social protection systems and employment policies are adequately designed to facilitate job-to-job transitions, including across sectors, by providing adequate schemes, income security, career guidance and care services (in line with the Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality)
- Fight against labour migration exploitation by ensuring equal treatment for equal work, involvement of trade unions, both in countries of origins and destination at relevant levels, and ensure that minimum requirements and quality standards are imposed on Private Employment Agencies in accordance with ILO Convention C181
- Secure a clear and comparable system of skills/qualifications recognition to ensure the respect of the principle of equal treatment for migrant workers

Demands towards employers

- Invest in workers, workforce planning and training: offer good-quality jobs and step-up funding and access to on-the-job training
- Ensure all workers are equipped with the skills required to cope with changing industries through good quality, cost-free training during working hours
- Engage in social dialogue and collective bargaining at all company and sectoral levels to ensure skills identification and an adequate training programme for all workers
- Ensure that periods of workload reduction are used for training, especially in anticipation of the twin transition, but also other relevant training
- Ensure the validation of formal and non-formal training through qualifications and concrete forms of compensation
- Engage in reindustrialisation

In order to gain a better understanding of the different ways in which trade unions can establish a strategy for training, please consider the questions in the template Part 1/Section 5/A – Establishing a trade union strategy for training on the following page.

Part 1/Section 5/A – Establishing a sectoral trade union strategy for training

1. Establishing a sectoral trade union strategy for training – general demands

- Take a look at the general demands adopted by the Executive Committee of industriAll European Trade Union on the previous page and consider which would be priorities for inclusion in your own trade union's strategy for training.
- As a supplementary point, consider the term 'full involvement of trade unions' and make recommendations to ensure that your trade union is 'fully involved'. What would it mean in terms of resources and dedicated staffing?
- What measures would be required to disseminate information about your trade union's position?

Please explain your responses.

2. Establishing a sectoral trade union strategy for training – demands towards policymakers

- Take a look at the demands towards policymakers adopted by the Executive Committee of industriAll European Trade Union on the previous page and consider which would be priorities for inclusion in your own trade union's strategy for training.
- Consider the term 'social conditionalities' and make recommendations to demonstrate what your trade union would need to do to advocate for these 'social conditionalities'.
- Consider how your trade union advocates for the development of 'national, regional and local skills strategies in the design and implementation of training programmes'.

Please explain your responses.



3. Establishing a sectoral trade union strategy for training – demands towards employers

- Take a look at the demands towards employers adopted by the Executive Committee of industriAll European Trade Union on the previous page and consider which would be priorities for inclusion in your own trade union's strategy for training.
- Consider the term 'cost-free training during working hours' and make recommendations to demonstrate what position your own trade union takes to ensure that training is free and is carried out during working hours.
- Consider the demand 'ensure the validation of formal and non-formal training through qualifications and concrete forms of compensation' and what your trade union does to further this objective.

Please explain your responses.





