

# Activity Report

2023-2025

2025  
CONGRESS

uniting workers  
for an industriAll  
future



 **industriAll**  
EUROPEAN TRADE UNION







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# Introduction

This congress period has been characterised by a series of crises, starting from the pandemic, war in Europe and on its borders, through the energy price crisis, and accelerating technological change and climate change impacts. Working people across Europe have been significantly impacted in their living and working conditions. IndustriAll European Trade Union has found ways to respond rapidly and proactively to this multi-faceted polycrisis, whilst also dealing with an internal change of leadership.

In June 2023, during our Mid-Term Conference in Thessaloniki, industriAll European Trade Union adopted a Strategic Plan for the upcoming two years. The decision to divide the four-year term into two phases was made at the 2021 Congress, due to the great uncertainties the world and industrial workers were facing. A first implementation report covered the period 2021-2023 and the 5 priorities set out in the Strategic Plan.

This report outlines our response to the Strategic Plan for 2023-2025.

All three priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan are rooted in the concept of union power, with membership serving as the foundation of our influence vis-à-vis our employer counterparts and political decision-makers at both national and EU level. The trade union movement is the bedrock of the European social model. Our federation fights for sustainable industrial jobs in Europe, fair pay, solidarity and peace.



## An ever-more challenging context

The main challenges from the first two years of this congressional term persist. The cost-of-living crisis continues to heavily burden workers and pensioners, making it increasingly difficult for them to meet their basic needs. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 prompted increased public spending on defence. However, far too little is invested in other sectors to safeguard employment, foster training, and facilitate a Just Transition.

In June 2024, the European elections resulted in a rightward shift in the European Parliament and the EU Commission. Employers positioned themselves immediately after the elections, reiterating the familiar refrain about “burdensome regulations” and “rigid labour markets”. Furthermore, austerity has firmly returned to the European agenda, and trade unions are striving to counter this trend. Even more worrying is the increase in MEPs who adhere to anti-union, far-right ideas and ideologies. This situation mirrors national developments, as many European countries have witnessed far-right parties enter or prop up national governments.

At the global level, the re-election of Donald Trump threatens to ignite a trade war that will inevitably impact our sectors. Meanwhile, China is intensifying its efforts to export goods to Europe, exacerbating the challenges facing key industries, such as automotive and steel.

**Our three priorities for the years 2023-2025 are all linked to trade union power as a precondition for good industrial jobs.**



## Changing leadership and strong cooperation with our affiliates

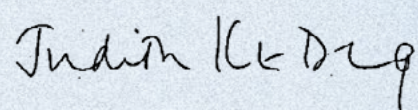
Mid-term, our General Secretary Luc Triangle stepped out of industriAll Europe (initially temporarily) to lead the International Trade Union Confederation. After a decade leading industriAll Europe, he left the organisation on a solid footing, despite the choppy waters outside. In February 2024, Judith Kirton-Darling was elected as General Secretary alongside Isabelle Barthès as Deputy General Secretary. Acting as a jointed team, we have tried to steer our organisation through the external crises we have faced.

This has only been possible with the strong engagement and commitment of our affiliates to a strong and united voice at European level. In our context, marked by risks related to massive plant closures, little investment, and pressured social dialogue nearly everywhere, industriAll Europe has adopted proactive strategies with its affiliates and pursued them at all levels.

Together, we are promoting good industrial jobs for our members. We rely on your continued dedication as we move forward!

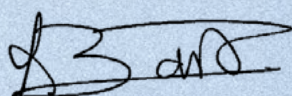
### **Judith Kirton-Darling**

General Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith Kirton-Darling".

### **Isabelle Barthès**

Deputy General Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Isabelle Barthès".









**priorities**







# Building trade union power for strong, sustainable industrial jobs in Europe

Robust and sustainable industries in Europe need strong trade unions in the manufacturing sector. Achieving this requires collective organisation of workers throughout the entire supply chain, ensuring the respect of fundamental trade union and human rights. Stability cannot exist without sustainability and social justice.

Since 2008, Europe has lost 2.5 million manufacturing jobs. Our organisation has undertaken a wide range of initiatives to promote inclusive, sustainable and resilient industries. In May 2023, we adopted a [position on the EU Commission's Green Deal Industrial Plan](#), identifying several weaknesses in the Commission's approach, most notably the absence of a social dimension. Moreover, the plan should have included policies for export-oriented sectors while designating foundational industries as strategically important for Europe.

In autumn 2023, industriAll Europe launched its [Good Industrial Jobs](#) campaign. This campaign was staged in the lead-up to the European elections and presented to the [EU Employment Ministers](#) in June 2024. Years of austerity and rapidly growing inequalities have harmed people across Europe, leading to social and economic insecurity. IndustriAll Europe subsequently published a policy brief on [good-quality jobs](#), urging the EU to develop an ambitious strategy for a future with innovative, strong and stable industries.



**A European Industrial Deal is imperative to deliver the Green Deal and to ensure good-quality jobs in Europe. It cannot be implemented without the involvement of workers.**

Our priorities '[Good Industrial Jobs - 5 Wins, 5 Demands](#)' were actively pushed before the European elections, presenting a common manifesto that encouraged workers to vote for candidates endorsing quality employment and trade union values. Our priorities were [updated](#) by our Executive Committee in November 2024, deciding to mobilise support for good industrial jobs ahead of the introduction of the EU's Clean Industrial Deal. A significant part of this mobilisation took place in the streets of Brussels in February 2025.

Before the European elections in June 2024, we also developed our [youth demands](#) to enhance the attractiveness of manufacturing industries for young workers and to facilitate quality apprenticeships with retention guarantees. Young workers were encouraged to engage in the elections and make their voices heard.

IndustriAll Europe remained committed to implement the objectives outlined in our [Just Transition Manifesto](#) and has actively engaged in drafting the [EESC Opinion on advancing the EU Just Transition Policy Framework](#) adopted in December 2023, as well as the [European Parliament resolution on Just Transition and Impact Investments](#) adopted in November 2023. We successfully integrated our three core demands – a regulatory framework for anticipation and management of change, social conditionalities, and the establishment of an EU Just Transition Observatory – into both reports. These three elements were part of the discussions at the [Belgian Presidency Conference](#) for a Just Transition in which industriAll Europe participated.

IndustriAll Europe's efforts are bearing fruit: the European Commission has announced the establishment of a Just Transition Observatory by Spring 2025.



Our work with the Belgian Presidency of the EU led to the inclusion of workers' rights and collective bargaining in a Just Transition in the [Council Conclusions on the 8<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Programme Mid-term Review](#). Moreover, our demands for social conditionality have fostered greater consensus among a diverse range of stakeholders that public funding must yield a higher return to the public good. This was affirmed by industry leaders from 20 sectors, who, together with trade unions, signed up to '[The Antwerp Declaration for a European Industrial Deal](#)', presented to Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. The Antwerp Declaration also underscores the industry's commitment to Europe, climate targets, and the preservation of high-quality jobs. In this context, unions insisted on a coherent European policy framework that does not undermine social objectives.

Additionally, there was a [Joint Statement](#) on 'A European Industrial Deal focused on ensuring quality industrial jobs in Europe'. Building on the Antwerp Declaration co-signed by over 1,000 leaders from both industry and unions, European sectoral social partners and industrial associations submitted a call to the EU institutions for a European Industrial Deal to implement the Green Deal with quality jobs in Europe.

IndustriAll Europe has **addressed high-level European meetings**, such as the [Tripartite Social Summit](#) and [Council of Ministers](#), to articulate our political positions on topical issues, including labour shortages, industrial and energy policies for a successful Europe, a much-needed response to the United States' Inflation Reduction Act, as well as measures to support the European economy. Furthermore, we have promoted our goals at the EU Commission's [Industrial Forum](#). We made it clear that the Green Deal cannot be implemented without workers' involvement.

We followed the process towards a [Council Recommendation on Social Dialogue](#), arguing that the sectoral social dialogue committees must not be deprived of the necessary resources. After all, it is the sector unions that possess the most extensive experience in negotiations at the national level and they can bring valuable insights to the European level. All European social partner organisations joined forces and demanded resources for sectoral dialogue to fund in-person meetings. The [Val Duchesse Summit](#) envisioned a Pact for Social Dialogue in early 2025.



In the autumn of 2024, our federation welcomed an important part of [Mario Draghi's report](#) on the future of Europe's competitiveness, as it strongly focused on industrial development and called for an unprecedented investment of €800 billion per year. However, we lamented the report's weak social agenda, as key aspects of Europe's social model were completely absent from Draghi's policy framework. We believe it is essential that public investment and subsidies are accompanied by social conditionalities to ensure that funds are allocated solely to enterprises investing in production in Europe and providing good jobs, while respecting collective bargaining and workers' rights. Another essential demand from our side is for monitoring of dividend distribution and share buybacks to prevent excessive payouts to the detriment of investments, including those in workers.

IndustriAll Europe had the opportunity to exchange views with Enrico Letta in preparation for his report '[Much more than a market](#)'. This report aligns with our analysis of deindustrialisation and fragmentation among Member States. It presents significant recommendations for the legislative period 2024-2029, emphasising

**Massive investment is needed to ensure growth and a Just Transition to a decarbonised economy.**

Just Transition elements and social conditionalities on State aid to promote wages, workers' rights, and support for less developed regions. It also recommends that public procurement be used to encourage the creation of high-quality jobs anchored in collective agreements.

Acknowledging that investment in future-oriented industries cannot occur without favourable economic governance, industriAll Europe consistently engages with the ETUC and EU social partner bodies to address macroeconomic policies, including the European Semester. Fiscal policies in the Eurozone have long been influenced by the Stability and Growth Pact. This framework was originally designed to enforce balanced budgets. Although the Pact was suspended during the pandemic, it was reintroduced in 2024 with only minor revisions. Trade unions have opposed plans to rapidly reduce debt-to-GDP ratios, arguing that such measures would impede the dual digital and green transitions.



Fair taxation, including for multinational corporations, was discussed with our affiliates at our [economic school in Florence](#) in September 2024.

IndustriAll Europe operates its own [Just Transition Database](#), compiling and sharing evidence from various countries on how the industrial transition is being implemented on the ground.

## **Dramatic crises in several industries**

Towards the end of the reporting period, industriAll Europe's Secretariat received news almost weekly about possible plant closures. The urgent [need for industrial investment](#) was highlighted in a position paper adopted in November 2024.

The automotive sector is currently facing exceptional challenges as production recorded in recent years remains considerably below pre-COVID-19 figures, primarily due to low demand. In response, industriAll Europe adopted a position paper in November 2024, calling for [sustainability and investment](#), including resources from the Social Climate Fund, established alongside the Emissions Trading System 2. An [Automotive Action Plan for 2024-2026](#) was developed to provide affected member organisations with a roadmap encompassing our main activities and political initiatives. This Plan offers increased visibility on relevant actions for the automotive sector and will be regularly updated.

At the end of 2024, [Volkswagen](#) (VW) announced the shutdown of three of its sites in Germany. On 20 December 2024, IG Metall reached a deal to gradually downsize in VW without plant closures. However, Stellantis decided to shut down facilities in the UK and Italy, while Audi's flagship electric vehicle factory in Belgium faced a similar fate. These examples are just the tip of the iceberg.

Our Executive Committee [sounded the alarm](#) in November 2024 by adopting the position '[Workers of the automotive industry and its supply chain's wake-up call for Europe](#)'.

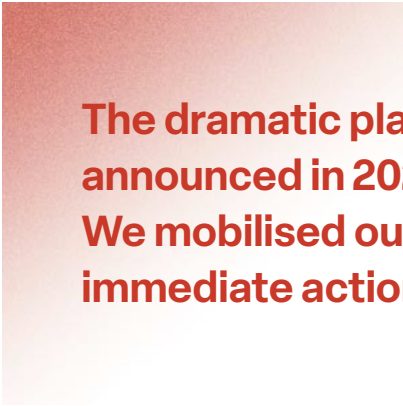


It sent a strong message to the new European Commission at the start of its mandate: the automotive industry is in crisis and Europe must respond quickly. The position paper advocates for concrete actions to protect workers and safeguard jobs.

The European Commission has determined that electric vehicles made in China benefit from unfair subsidisation, inflicting harm on EU producers. IndustriAll Europe reacted positively to the Commission's decision to impose tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles. Establishing principles and rules is a prerequisite for fair global competition. This move is not a protectionist reaction but rather a fair policy instrument to defend the EU's legitimate interests.

Nonetheless, tariffs alone do not constitute an industrial policy. Manufacturing workers want to see a comprehensive strategy to align the European automotive industry with the climate challenge. The policy puzzle to make quality electric vehicles affordable remains unsolved. We expect the new European Commission to support the European automotive industry and its workforce. Unless this happens, the benefits of the tariffs are likely to be diminished.

IndustriAll Europe and CEEMET (the European metal, engineering and technology-based industry employers) co-organised a workshop in December 2024 in Brussels. This workshop addressed the social dimension of the ongoing transformation in the sector and aimed to develop tools and activities to enhance skills within the automotive sector. The event, part of an EU-funded project called TRI REME, gathered over 70 participants from trade unions, employers, research institutes, and the EU Commission.



**The dramatic plans to close production plants announced in 2024 are unprecedented. We mobilised our members and demanded immediate action from decision-makers.**



Another project, called '[Putting Trade Union Power into European Batteries](#)', aimed at unionising the expanding electric vehicle battery industry. At a kick-off seminar in November 2024, unions agreed to focus on the countries with the greatest growth potential - Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and Serbia - while inviting unions from other countries to join the organising action. The year before, a [conference on the battery supply chain](#) was co-organised with IndustriALL Global Union in Budapest. Additionally, we have established an ad hoc working group specifically for the battery industries and created a [Charter](#) for Occupational Health and Safety in this sector where the work involves serious hazards.

Currently, there are over **300,000 steelworkers** in the EU, but their future is uncertain. Up to half of Europe's production capacity could be lost in a sector that is crucial for both the green transition and the EU's strategic autonomy.

Overcapacity and high energy costs, along with trade issues, have put the entire industry in a state of reconstruction. Major players, such as Liberty Steel, ArcelorMittal, Tata Steel, and ThyssenKrupp, have all announced plans to shut down production sites in Europe. The situation at Liberty Steel is particularly alarming, as mismanagement and financing problems at this company alone have put more than 4,500 jobs in jeopardy. As a result of IndustriAll Europe's actions on company cases, the Commission [organised a high-level meeting](#) in March 2024 to address the situation in the sector. To raise awareness about the severity of the situation, a [Steel Action Day](#) was staged ahead of a high-level EU steel summit.

Steelworkers and their trade unions across Europe called on EU policymakers, national governments and companies to act quickly to safeguard the vast numbers of jobs in danger. IndustriAll Europe published a [joint EU Steel Action Plan](#) in collaboration with EUROFER. This Plan garnered support from over 60 MEPs and was referenced in a steel plenary debate in the European Parliament and in Commissioner Séjourné's hearing. IndustriAll Europe demanded a strong and ambitious EU Steel and Basic Metals Action Plan within the first 100 days of the new Commission and for a [high-level EU steel summit](#).



The automotive and steel industries stand out as the sectors with the most dramatic prospects in the mid-2020s. However, there are also massive challenges in other sectors.

**The Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear (TCLF)** industry is undergoing a huge transition linked to the EU Textiles Strategy and 16 pieces of legislation to ensure that all products in the EU market are sustainable. IndustriAll Europe has worked on this Strategy with EU policymakers, [social partners](#), and [civil society organisations](#). We have also been closely involved in the [EU Textiles Ecosystem Transition Pathway](#) and in various projects on Just Transition, including partnerships with the [ILO](#) and the [Just Transition Centre](#). The change in TCLF production will impact all workers in the sector, and trade unions are insisting that this be managed responsibly, making sure that no worker is left behind. The new, EU-funded Social Dialogue project, *Stitch Together*, aims to help national social partners prepare for the green and digital transitions while garnering support from national policymakers and other relevant stakeholders.

The **aerospace sector**, too, has been affected, although there has been some recovery in orders post-COVID-19. Concerns persist about the supply chain's ability to keep pace and implement the necessary changes related to the green and digital transition. This situation led to the launch of the [EU-funded FLY-SUS project](#), focusing on a successful green and digital transition throughout the supply chain. A kick-off event took place in Bordeaux, France, in 2024, with three regional workshops planned for 2025. Special attention was given to the space sector following announcements of thousands of job losses at Thales and Airbus Space & Defence. IndustriAll Europe has [called for action](#) to back this strategic sector in retaining its high-quality jobs.

The accumulation of negative results across nearly all sectors, coupled with the ongoing energy crisis, is having a considerable impact on **the chemical industry**, which serves as a supplier to all other manufacturing sectors. More than 11 million tons of production capacity were closed in Europe in 2023 and 2024, putting 20,000 jobs at risk in the short term.







Moreover, essential investments are predominantly being made outside the EU, while machinery and production processes within the continent are becoming obsolete. If the situation continues to deteriorate in other sectors, the outcomes could be dire. This is why industriAll Europe is engaged in the implementation process of the [Chemical Transition Pathway](#), a strategic initiative designed to promote investments in a competitive and resilient chemical industry. Our involvement in this key initiative serves as a constant reminder of the importance of managing the transition in a manner that maintains quality employment in Europe.

For many years, industriAll Europe has been [advocating](#) for a European **shipbuilding** and maritime technology strategy. There have been unilateral and joint initiatives with our sectoral social partner SEA Europe and other maritime sector stakeholders. In summer 2024, the new Commission announced that such a plan would be part of the 2024-29 work programme. Europe needs more shipbuilding, not less. The shipyards, with the first-class expertise of their employees and their innovative and increasingly climate-friendly ships and other products, are of strategic importance for energy supply, transport and security in Europe.

**The defence industry** stands as an exception, largely due to the war in Ukraine. In our [Warsaw Declaration](#), we reiterated that companies must invest in their workers and ensure quality employment. Despite the urgent demand for supplies to Ukraine, workers' rights in the defence sector must be upheld. IndustriAll Europe, in collaboration with the ETUC, successfully opposed [a legal instrument](#) that would have allowed ammunition manufacturers to circumvent existing working time regulations, which are already sufficiently flexible.



# Crucial need for a just energy transition

IndustriAll Europe closely monitors the **energy crisis** and facilitates discussions with our members, as well as with EU institutions. We have stressed the necessity of an abundant, stable and affordable electricity supply that ensures the competitiveness of energy-intensive industries. However, the EU's policies fail to effectively address the skyrocketing energy prices and supply disruptions affecting our industries and members. A comprehensive strategy for investment and a Just Transition is lacking. We have demanded a deep reform of Europe's energy regulatory framework, including windfall taxes that do not hamper investment.

Within the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Gas, industriAll Europe has collaborated with the European Public Service Union (EPSU) and the employers' federation, Eurogas, on a Just Transition for the sector. Together, we developed a study report as part of an EU-funded project.

Later, these three organisations launched negotiations aimed at Just Transition plans, quality training, and job-to-job transitions, all underpinned by workers' and trade unions' involvement. After concluding a Just Transition Agreement in the spring of 2024, Eurogas failed to adopt it. IndustriAll Europe and EPSU strongly condemned this setback, viewing it as a significant blow to the European sectoral social dialogue. In response, EPSU and industriAll Europe urged the European Commission to promptly propose a Just Transition Directive.

Following a workshop with EPSU in December 2024, industriAll Europe and EPSU adopted joint recommendations on how the EU's Grids Action Plan can contribute to a just energy transition for workers. We called for an ambitious strategy that acknowledges the role workers play in the maintenance, modernisation and upgrading of Europe's electricity infrastructure.

In April 2024, industriAll Europe established a working group for trade unions organising workers in the **offshore wind sector**.



This working group operates under the Energy Network to strengthen cooperation within an emerging sector and identify common issues, including the question of unionisation of industry workers, workers' rights, and the regulatory framework governing health and safety standards in the sector. It will also explore how industrial policy can ensure quality jobs in the European offshore wind supply chain.

## Challenges in the supply chain

Due to the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, trade distortions and other factors, global supply chains are fragile. This fragility poses challenges for industry across Europe and its affiliates, across multiple sectors.

In the **extractive industries**, unions and employers have called for strong social dialogue and cohesive policies related to the [Critical Raw Materials Act](#), introduced in March 2023. The social partners welcomed the Commission's initiative to address the supply of raw materials and advocated for a cohesive framework and robust social dialogue. Minerals and metals are crucial for the realisation of the EU's most urgent and ambitious goals, ranging from the green and digital transition to the [EU's Renovation Wave](#). However, Europe's heavy reliance on other countries for strategic raw materials calls into question Europe's autonomy. A joint [Declaration](#) highlights that strong social partners and collective bargaining are vital for sustainable extractive industries with good working conditions, a safe and healthy environment, job satisfaction, and decent wages.

The **basic materials sectors** are among those grappling with the challenges faced by energy-intensive industries. Being small and rather decentralised, they frequently lack the strong voice and capacity of larger industries. There are, however, other important topics for these sectors, such as the Council [Regulation](#) on Packaging and Packaging Waste, adopted in December 2024. While supporting the objective of reducing the environmental impact of packaging materials and minimising waste, we have in a policy brief expressed our concerns about certain provisions of the Regulation, such as the prioritisation of reuse over recycling.





Renewables and low carbon energy are gaining ground throughout Europe.

This approach poses a significant risk of undermining a mature recycling industry and jeopardising large numbers of jobs in Europe.

The COVID-19 pandemic has drawn political and public attention to the provision of affordable medication. In fact, a reform of the European legislation on the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products was already planned. A legislative package was published by the EU Commission in April 2023. It aims to tackle, in particular, the unequal access to medicines for patients in different EU countries, the scarcity of pharmaceuticals available for rare diseases, the need to prevent shortages, and the objective of retaining a competitive **pharmaceutical industry** that invests in research, development, innovation and production in Europe. IndustriAll Europe engaged in this political debate and adopted a position paper titled 'Affordable access to pharmaceuticals for all and good jobs in the European pharmaceutical industry'. Lastly, we are a member of the Critical Medicines Alliance. The EU Commission is expected to publish a proposal for a Critical Medicines Act in March 2025.







# Building trade union power for fair pay and working conditions

Workers across Europe have experienced a decline in purchasing power during the cost-of-living crisis of the 2020s. There is pressure on collective bargaining almost everywhere. Employers often attribute the lack of competitiveness to what they perceive as excessive regulation, lagging productivity and labour and skills shortages. They see deregulation and importation of skilled labour as a solution. Additionally, they erroneously claim that the skyrocketing consumer prices of this decade are driven by wages.

Workers and their trade unions need knowledge to tackle the new challenges. IndustriAll Europe and its affiliates have held a host of events to exchange views and draw on each other's experiences. We have developed multiple political positions that have been shared with our European umbrella organisation, the ETUC, and EU lawmakers.

**The European Pillar of Social Rights**, proclaimed by all EU governments back in 2017, remains the cornerstone of further enrichment of the EU social acquis. In April 2024, high-level tripartite stakeholders gathered in La Hulpe, outside Brussels, to sign a Declaration on the Future of the Pillar, reaffirming that social policy will remain at the heart of the EU project. Although this Declaration is not as ambitious or concrete as we would have preferred, particularly on Just Transition, it does include references to important trade union priorities and can be leveraged for tangible legal initiatives in the future. Regrettably, the largest European employers' federation, BusinessEurope, distanced itself from the Declaration and chose not to sign it.



# Fighting for fundamental rights

Collective bargaining is a crucial instrument for ensuring equal treatment. In this context, we organised an EU-funded workshop on [bargaining for equality](#) in Istanbul in late 2024. Dedicated participants came together to strengthen their unions' capacities to advocate for more equal opportunities in the workplace for disadvantaged groups, including women, LGBTQI+, and workers with disabilities.

The longest-lasting industrial action in Europe in recent years has been the protracted struggle for a **collective agreement** in Tesla's repair shops in Sweden. After five years of futile negotiations, IF Metall had no option but to call a strike in the autumn of 2023. Elon Musk, the company's owner and the world's richest person, claims that collective agreements are simply not part of his business model.

More than a year on, the struggle continues. To demonstrate solidarity with the striking workers and their union, industriAll Europe's General Secretary Judith Kirton-Darling, along with ETUC General Secretary Esther Lynch, visited a [Tesla picket line](#) in October 2024. A victory against Musk would have extended effects for workers, not only in Tesla's factories, but also in many companies with owners from the US, China, South Korea and beyond, which do not respect the European social model.

IndustriAll Europe continually supports its member organisations in their struggles to maintain acquired union rights and political influence through social dialogue. In [Finland](#), the entire labour movement has protested fiercely against new laws that effectively limit **the right to strike**. Political strikes are now severely restricted, as is the right to sympathy actions, a measure often used in the Nordic countries, as seen during the recent Tesla conflict. These laws not only violate core labour standards, but also sharply contradict the Nordic model, which fosters fair social and economic practices.

In multiple European countries, trade unions have had to push back against **austerity measures** that harm workers and social rights.



Unfortunately, a number of governments, pressured by the EU Commission, have chosen to repeat the mistakes made in the early years following the financial crisis, alerting unions to react at every level. In the [Czech Republic](#), a large manifestation was staged in May 2023 to protest against a reform package that included pay cuts; reduced social benefits; an increased retirement age and lower pensions. This reform worsened the cost-of-living crisis and increased the number of impoverished workers and pensioners, all implemented without any regard for social dialogue.

**IndustriAll Europe supports its affiliates in their struggles against austerity measures and attacks on collective bargaining.**

A new [EU Directive on Pay Transparency](#) aims to close the gender pay gap. While this Directive requires implementation into national law, it can also inspire trade unions in collective bargaining, as seen in Italy, for example. Equal treatment can only be achieved if wage data is disclosed. We followed the process towards the adoption of the Directive alongside the ETUC.

**White-collar workers comprise a growing segment** of industry employment, accounting for around 40%. To further boost unionisation in this group, we organised the EU project '[Better Representation of White-Collar Workers](#)'. As part of this initiative, we developed a [toolbox for organising white-collar workers](#), available in several languages. During a [visit to the Nordic white-collar unions](#), it became evident that many affiliates could benefit from the successes of Unionen and the Nordic Engineers' unions. These unions are actively engaged in shaping the future of work within their region.

More attention has been paid to **Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)**. Our ad-hoc group has transformed into a permanent working group, with a strong focus on the OSH risks emerging from climate change and the green transition.



A [Collective Bargaining Database](#) was established during this congressional term. It has been further developed over the last two years and complemented by a monthly newsletter. Negotiators and policy officers often draw valuable lessons from the creativity and achievements gained by sister unions throughout Europe. This database contains up-to-date information sourced from a Europe-wide network of trade union experts. Our network of correspondents comprises approximately 150 experts in 35 countries. This resource can also be leveraged to promote transnational solidarity, such as sending support letters to sister unions in conflict situations.

## **The EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages**

The adoption of the EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages in 2022 represents a historic milestone in the European social model. Never before has the EU adopted a legal instrument that so clearly recognises bona fide workers' organisations, ambitious targets for extending bargaining coverage, and measures for combatting in-work poverty.

IndustriAll Europe has placed a high priority on this Directive since the Commission published its proposal in 2020. It has been a central topic at every meeting of our Collective Bargaining and Social Policy Committee and the subject of a series of [seminars in Eastern Europe](#) as well as being discussed in sectoral networks such as the one for TCLF, where many low-paying jobs can be found. The East and South-East are regions where only a small percentage of workers enjoy protection through collective agreements and the possibility of taking industrial action to secure a fair share of profits and productivity in their sectors.

During the seminars, we also explored how the implementation of the Directive can help unionise workers. We have provided [guidelines in nine languages](#) to equip our members with the tools necessary for an effective transposition of the Directive. The deadline for national implementation was November 2024. Pressure from both national unions and their European federations via the EU Commission is essential, as the Directive primarily contains objectives and recommendations, but few legal obligations for the Member States.





**The Minimum Wage Directive has the potential to be a game changer. We assist our affiliates in the transposition phase.**

## **New technologies and new challenges**

Trade unions are actively developing strategies to tackle **artificial intelligence (AI)** in the workplace, which raises a multitude of questions related to workers' rights and privacy protection. Employed people should also reap the benefits of new technology through appropriate regulations.

The management of AI for the benefit of workers was debated at a [workshop in Helsinki](#) in November 2023. Around 60 trade unionists, experts, researchers, and policymakers concluded that the usage of AI must be integrated into social dialogue to mitigate negative impacts on workers. Training will be key to a fair digital transformation.

While AI presents a huge potential for productivity gains, it also carries substantial implications for monitoring and control of workers if left unregulated. The outcome depends on how AI is shaped and utilised. The human-in-command principle must be respected. Trade unions do not oppose technological progress, but good jobs are our compass for AI.







To define our challenges and policies, we have adopted a [position paper on taming AI](#) and a policy brief titled '[AI in the industrial world of work](#)'. In addition, we published our study '[All eyes on AI](#)', developed by the consultancy firm Syndex, as part of an EU-funded project. The study analyses the major questions around new technologies in the world of work and provides recommendations to ensure that they are used to the benefit of all, safeguarding workers' rights. Its main conclusion is that the current EU legislative framework needs to be supplemented to address the impact of AI in the workplace.

Furthermore, the [recommendations](#) to coordinators and worker representatives in European Works Councils on how to deal with Artificial Intelligence at the workplace have been updated to include all recent developments.

**Digitalisation** and the usage of AI in the workplace were the subjects of a [training event](#) organised for young members and hosted by the ILO Centre in Turin in November 2024. A few weeks later, IndustriAll Europe adopted a [comprehensive strategy](#) to tackle AI at work. A [joint project with CEEMET](#) (European Metal, Engineering & Technology-based Industry Employers), called 'Innovating Social Dialogue and Collective Bargaining towards AI in the MET Industries', was launched in June 2024.

The European Commission published new rules in July 2023 to ensure stronger enforcement of the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** in cross-border cases. In light of this, we published our [GDPR toolbox for trade unionists](#), to explain how unions can effectively engage in this domain to protect workers' private data and shield them against surveillance. This toolbox provides practical guidance to our members to understand GDPR and to incorporate it into collective bargaining.

IndustriAll Europe has closely followed the process leading to the adoption of an [EU Directive on Platform Work](#) alongside the ETUC. This is a piece of pioneering work in EU labour law as it aims to reclassify bogus self-employed as workers and regulate algorithmic management. Although **platform work** has not yet played a big role in our sectors, it is vital to avoid the creation of a third category between employees and self-employed.



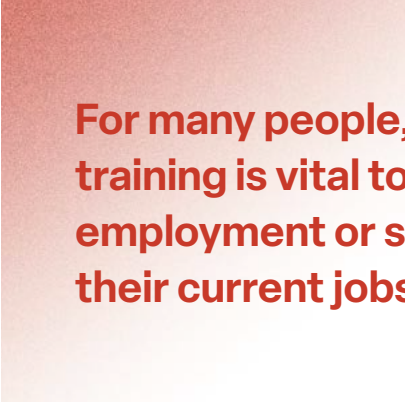
We have argued that the Directive's regulation of algorithmic management, which provides rights and protection for workers and their representatives, should be extended to all workers, not just those in platform work.

## Right to training

The official unemployment rate in the EU fell to 6-7% during the reporting period. The EU Commission refers to this situation as a “record tight European labour market”. However, we also need to consider unregistered youth unemployment, underemployment, discouraged people, as well as inactivity among marginalised groups. In other words, the picture is not as rosy as the Commission portrays it.

The dual green and digital transition is creating an unprecedented urgency for education and training. Securing a collectively guaranteed individual right to training during working hours at no cost to workers will be crucial for a fair and just digital transformation for all. One can safely assume that as many as

40% of industrial workers in Europe need to learn how to use new digital technologies to be able to do their jobs. IndustriAll Europe advocated for training during the European Year of Skills, pushing for the demands in our position paper.



**For many people,  
training is vital to finding  
employment or staying in  
their current jobs.**

In March 2024, some 60 trade union representatives came together at our workshop in Zagreb, ‘Making Training a Reality for Quality Jobs in European Industries’. It became evident that trade unions must make training a priority, especially in their collective bargaining rounds. The right to training is essential for quality jobs with high wages, based on workers’ recognised competences. The change in mindset has begun, but now we must make it happen collectively.



IndustriAll Europe has developed a [training guide](#) to better equip trade union officers and representatives, both at the sectoral and workplace levels, to make training a reality in our industries.

Lastly, industriAll Europe has presented its positions on shortages of labour and skills to the EU Commission and employers in various European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committees.


## Working time reductions

Working time reductions are currently being tested in national experiments, with recent examples of reduced hours found in collective agreements, for instance in Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, the UK, and Finland. The drive for shorter hours is intrinsically linked to the automation of industrial production. Moreover, it is also important in the context of a Just Transition. A better **work-life balance** is essential for fostering healthy workplaces. As the working day becomes more intense and stressful, reducing hours allows workers to regain more control over their lives.

We have produced articles, factsheets, and a brochure on [reduced working time](#) and the benefits of shorter hours. These articles and factsheets have been compiled into a booklet.

The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) was commissioned by industriAll Europe to carry out a study on working time reduction in the manufacturing industries, entitled '[Friday on our Minds](#)'.

This study documented the effects of the dual digital and green transition in the labour market and initiatives to reduce working time, including a shift to a four-day week.



**Working time reduction, including a 4-day week, is gaining traction in most parts of Europe.**



## Information, consultation and cross-border coordination

The scale of **restructuring** involving closures, dismantling of production lines, and relocations in our sectors is massive, leading to tens of thousands of job losses. IndustriAll Europe has started to collect more detailed information in a [shared document](#), which gives us a clear indication of the gravity of the situation. The backdrop of this wave of restructuring is high energy prices, falling demand, and intense competition with imports from low-cost countries. The drives for short-term profits and ever-increasing shareholder value certainly plays a significant role as well.

Restructuring presents substantial challenges for worker representatives and trade unions at both local and European levels. To help them navigate through the complex landscape of rules, rights and obligations, and to provide them with practical advice based on our trade union principles and priorities, an online interactive tool called the [Transnational Restructuring Navigator](#) (TRN) was developed in cooperation with sister ETUFs, the ETUC and the ETUI. The TRN provides information on 11 different types of restructuring, covering every phase, from early rumours to the roll-out, and clarifying the role of the different stakeholders, in particular the EWC and the trade unions, but also the responsibility of the company management.


We continue to organise ad hoc **trade union coordination meetings** aimed at formulating common strategies for transnational restructuring plans, often in cooperation with IndustriALL Global Union. During the reporting period, this concerned, among others, ArcelorMittal, Stellantis, TotalEnergies SE, Schneider Electric SE and [Liberty Steel](#).

Our cooperation with IndustriALL Global Union (IAG) has been further strengthened through mutual participation in our respective company policy committees and a joint project on responsible business conduct (RBC), “the ABC of RBC”, which includes sectoral workshops for the automotive, basic metals, textile, and extractive industries sectors, aiming to produce a list of practical recommendations for trade unions.



During this reporting period, the revision of the [Directive on European Works Councils \(EWCs\)](#) eventually commenced. In response to the [report of the European Parliament](#) calling for EWC rights to be strengthened, the European Commission published a [draft new Directive](#) in January 2024, incorporating many trade union priorities. This was soon followed by positions from [the EU Council](#) and [the European Parliament](#), paving the way for trilogue negotiations to begin in early 2025. As industriAll Europe assists more than 650 EWCs in our sectors, we remain deeply involved in the discussions with the ETUC and exchanges with the European institutions. We have served as an adviser to the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) Group II (Workers) in the preparation of the EESC opinion on the proposal for a new revised Directive.

A thorough update of the industriAll Europe [binding guidelines for procedures and content for negotiating EWC agreements](#) was made and approved by the Executive Committee in November 2024.



**Restructurings continue to cause massive concerns, but new EU directives should provide additional tools to confront this situation.**

At the European level, significant progress was achieved with the adoption of the [Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive](#) in May 2024, alongside the entry into force of the [Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive](#). These Directives mandate thousands of companies to publish accurate and up-to-date information on environmental, social and governance matters. They require companies to address potential adverse human rights and environmental impacts in their own operations as well as throughout their global supply chains. With these Directives, running a business responsibly is no longer an option, it is obligatory; however, we must remain vigilant.

Our policies in this field are elaborated in our [position paper on responsible business conduct](#).




As this offers a great opportunity for worker representatives, we also published some practical recommendations for trade union action in multinational companies.

In November 2024, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced an Omnibus Law, to be published in February 2025. This initiative might roll back some of the achievements in responsible business conduct under the pretext of reducing the administrative burden on companies and enhancing their competitiveness.

The adoption of the [EU Regulation on Forced Labour](#) was welcomed by trade unions as a step towards ending forced labour. Following its adoption, action is needed to prepare for its full implementation by 2027, including strong monitoring systems and swift measures to ensure its success.





A woman with short blonde hair, wearing a dark top, stands in the center of the frame, speaking into a microphone. She is holding a small piece of paper in her left hand. Behind her, several red flags with white symbols are visible, along with one orange flag on the right. In the background, a large, modern building with a curved glass facade and a yellow construction crane are visible under a clear blue sky. Other people are partially visible behind the speaker, some holding flags. A large white banner with bold black and red text is in the foreground.

**METTRE FIN À LA CRISE  
DU COÛT DE LA VIE :  
AUGMENTER LES SALAIRES  
TAXER LES PROFITS!**







# Building trade union power for European solidarity and peace

Russia's invasion of Ukraine compromises the security of an entire continent. IndustriAll Europe has, since the onset of the aggression, unequivocally condemned it as illegal, and has stood firmly with Ukraine. The invasion has resulted in widespread human suffering, emigration, and a need for reconstruction that we have not seen in Europe since World War II. We have, together with the rest of the European trade union movement, supported a demand for an immediate cessation of the Russian hostilities. Our federation, in conjunction with IndustriALL Global Union, has urged the international community to guarantee political support for a swift peace in Ukraine.

Ukraine's unions in the manufacturing sectors have been welcomed as members of our federation, and they are actively taking part in our meetings. Given the unique circumstances in Ukraine, we have organised activities together with

**industriAll Europe and  
our sister federation,  
IndustriALL Global, stand  
firmly with Ukraine.**

i n

IndustriALL Global Union, focusing on developing specific suggestions for a post-war industrial policy. We have also attended several events to listen to the specific concerns of Ukrainian unions. In April 2024, industriAll Europe and many affiliates expressed their solidarity with Ukraine at a trade union summit for Ukraine organised by the ETUC in Lublin, Poland, which attracted over 110 participants.



A [tripartite meeting](#) in July 2023 brought together 13 trade unions in Ukraine affiliated to IndustriALL Global Union and industriAll Europe, along with representatives from the ILO, the United Nations, and Ukraine's government and employers.

Even during these difficult times for Ukraine, the country must [uphold the fundamental trade union rights](#) as defined by the Conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and ratified by Ukraine. Furthermore, Ukraine must adapt its labour laws while negotiating its path towards EU accession.

Furthermore, when meeting on 13-14 December 2023, industriAll Europe's Executive Committee reflected affiliates' concerns about the situation in the Middle East, [adopting a position](#) calling on the European Union and European governments to intensify their work to stop the war, ensure the release of all hostages and facilitate a path towards a just peace and two-State solution.

## **Fight against the far right**

Far-right parties that disrespect trade unions and the values we represent are on the rise all over Europe. Populist and extreme policies are gaining more and more traction. Recent election results show that the far right has been surging at the expense of mainstream parties, having tripled in support over the last decade. Austerity imposed after the 2008-2009 financial crisis contributed to this worrying trend.

We are witnessing a worrying normalisation of the far right, bringing it to a position where it can enact legislation. Trade unions and workers' rights are often the targets of these restrictive laws, as we have seen in Finland and Hungary. As soon as the far right rises to power, its aim is to drastically limit the right to strike, to decentralise collective bargaining and question the role of trade unions as legitimate social partners. Workers' representatives are persecuted for the values they champion. IndustriAll Europe has adapted its political agenda and devoted considerable attention to this growing threat to our role in society.



In March 2024, ahead of the European Parliament elections, more than 80 trade unionists from across Europe participated in a [webinar](#) to exchange best practices in countering the far right's attempts to deceive workers with false promises.

Other seminars have shown that the key to tackling far-right parties lies in working together, in solidarity, to strengthen our capacities and our bargaining power.

The first youth [workshop](#) on the far right took place in February 2024 in Malaga, Spain, followed by a [second one](#) in July 2024 in Budapest, Hungary. More and more people feel left behind by mainstream political parties. Fewer young people are turning out to vote, and there are those who fall into the trap of far-right narratives. During our trainings, young members learned to identify far-right discourse and to counter it with our own values.

IndustriAll European Trade Union launched a [pledge](#) against racism, xenophobia, antisemitism, and Islamophobia, on the Norwegian island of Utøya, where 69 participants of a Workers' Youth League (AUF) camp were murdered by a right-wing extremist in 2011.

Finally, in November 2024, industriAll Europe's Executive Committee discussed its first ever position paper on this urgent topic: 'Action Plan: Protecting our Democracy against far-right Ideas and Values!' A mandate was given to the Secretariat to amend the paper for later approval.

**More and more far-right parties are entering governments. Trade unions and workers' rights are often the targets of their policies.**



# Labour shortages and immigration

The EU Commission has rightfully put the spotlight on the urgent need to tackle Europe's labour and skills shortages. However, the measures proposed by the Commission meet the employers' 'easy fix' demand on migration and lack measures to improve job quality or a right to training for workers.

One of the EU initiatives is an online platform called the [EU Talent Pool](#). It has been set up to expedite visa and work permit procedures for participating countries. Instead of putting an adequate regulatory framework in place to ensure equal treatment of all workers, the EU is facilitating employers' cost-reduction strategies with this tool. It primarily seeks to match job seekers from non-EU countries with European employers. We have worked closely with the ETUC and other European Trade Union Federations (ETUFs) to try and mitigate its weaknesses. In June 2024, we sent a [joint letter](#) to the EU Commission pointing out the deficiencies of the Talent Pool.

Freedom of movement should be celebrated, but Europe also needs a 'freedom to stay'. Intra-EU mobility is causing a massive brain drain in Southern and Eastern Europe, which will further widen the existing gap between Member States. 'Freedom to stay' means that everyone should have access to good-quality jobs and social services in their home country without being compelled to move abroad. **Migration must be a choice, not a necessity.** The same logic applies to third-country migration.

Our Executive Committee adopted a position paper in May 2023 on the [urgency of investing in workers](#), and another in May 2024 on [labour and skills shortages](#), which listed a comprehensive array of demands directed at policymakers and employers. Both papers call for equal treatment and denounce social dumping and exploitation of migrant workers as cheap labour.

Our project titled '[Building trade union capacities in Central and Eastern Europe](#)' focused on key industrial sectors, strengthening organising and capacity building with innovative strategies and tools.



It gave direct support to affiliates for organising and recruitment efforts on the ground. A conference in Prague in July 2024 gathered over 65 participants from 13 countries to take stock of the situation and discuss actions.

Twenty years after the first EU enlargement eastwards, we drafted a statement calling for good industrial jobs in Central and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, we adopted a policy position with 13 demands for a future enlargement of the EU, one of which called for better involvement of trade unions and civil society in the candidate countries.

Twenty-five young organisers from Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Bosnia took part in the first training event of industriAll Europe's new series of regional workshops for young trade unionists on organising for Building Trade Union Power. In Timișoara, Romania, young trade unionists learned how to use new tools, such as surveys and flyers, to improve their communication with existing members and reach out to new, potential members. They exchanged best practices on trade union communication strategies and campaigns and developed their own action plans on how to use the new tools in their own company or sector.



**Freedom of movement is a right in the EU, but Europe also needs a freedom to stay to avoid brain drain. Exploitation of migrant workers is intolerable.**

## **Building trade union power through youth involvement: Youth in Action!**

Ahead of industriAll Europe's Mid-Term Conference in Thessaloniki in the spring of 2023, 40 young trade unionists convened in a youth workshop in Zagreb to prepare their political action at the workshop 'Making our voices heard!'. Our Youth Group presented clear demands, emphasising the need for a voice at the table. The Group has continued to work on making these demands become a reality at the next Congress in 2025.



As many as 60 young trade unionists gathered at the [industriAll Europe youth fringe event](#) in Thessaloniki. This event marked a milestone for industriAll Europe's Youth Working Group, exactly one year after the adoption of the [European Youth Action Plan](#) by the Executive Committee. The Plan commits industriAll Europe and its affiliates to involve more young workers in the labour movement.

Since then, huge progress has been made, with our young activists diligently working to implement the Plan at national level. They have managed to secure 25 national action plans across 12 countries, resulting in increases in youth membership by up to 10%.

In November 2023, young activists gathered to discuss key issues for [young industrial workers](#) in their countries and developed their demands for the EU elections. This event was followed by the aforementioned [in-person seminars](#) in Malaga and Budapest throughout 2024. Yet another workshop took place on 6-7 December 2023 in Rome.

In June 2024, industriAll Europe launched its [EU-funded project](#) 'Young Social Dialogue Champions' Academy', to equip its young members with the knowledge, skills and tools necessary to tackle the greatest challenges that young workers and apprentices meet in the evolving world of work. The two-year project is carried out in cooperation with the ILO Centre in Turin. This project is based on an innovative learning method that combines regional meetings with online masterclass modules. This empowers young participants to actively contribute to making trade unions and social dialogue more inclusive for youth.

35 participants from Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Serbia, Romania and Ukraine participated in the first workshop of this project in [Sarajevo](#). The training taught participants how to use the latest available digital communication and artificial intelligence tools to develop digital strategies and ensure decent work and good quality jobs for young industrial workers.



25 young unionists from Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Serbia and Romania joined the second workshop in Turin, Italy. The event engaged participants in a foresight exercise that enabled them to envisage the effects of the twin green and digital transition on the ground in their countries, sectors and companies. The project will continue throughout 2025.

At its meeting in Porto on 28-29 November 2024, industriAll Europe's Executive Committee discussed the Youth Working Group's demand to grant voting rights for its Chair in the Executive Committee at the 2025 Congress.









# Annex



## Published Documents

Position paper: [Taming artificial intelligence - A trade union strategy](#)

Campaign ahead of EU elections 2024: [Good industrial jobs](#)

Policy position: [Future enlargement of the EU towards the East](#)

Statement: [20 years after the first EU enlargement to the East - Need for good industrial jobs](#)

Joint statement: [industriAll Europe and IndustriALL Global Union - Deepening cooperation](#)

## Industrial Policy

Policy brief: [AI in the IndustriAll Europe world of work](#)

Position paper: [A European investment plan for good industrial jobs](#)

Position paper: [Industry 5.0: Why should workers care?](#)

Position paper: [Green Deal Industrial Plan](#)

Position paper: [Industrial strategy for the European rail industry](#)

Policy brief: [The semiconductor industry in Europe](#)

Policy brief: [From Industry 4.0 to Industry 5.0](#)

Manifesto: [Just Transition Manifesto](#)

Position paper: [Competition rules and practices: an industrial trade union approach](#)



# Collective Bargaining and Social Policy

Guidelines: [Transposition of the Minimum Wage Directive](#)

Policy brief: [Good quality jobs - A compass for the next legislative period](#)

Position paper: [Misusing labour shortages to exploit migrant workers](#)

Position paper: [Urgency to invest in workers, training, and meet the shortages](#)

Fact sheets: [Working time 1](#) and [Working time 2](#)

## Company Policy

Position paper: [Responsible business conduct](#)

Guidelines: [Negotiating European Works Council agreements](#)

## Aerospace

Position paper: [Sustainable Aviation](#)

## Automotive

Action Plan: [Automotive Action Plan 2024-2026](#)

Position paper: [Workers in the automotive sector and its supply chain's wake-up call for Europe](#)

Position paper: [CO<sub>2</sub> standards and Euro 7: automotive workers need to be on board](#)



## Basic Materials

Policy brief: [Regulation on packaging and packaging waste](#)

## Basic Metals

Joint demand: [Call for a Steel Action Plan with EUROFER](#) (the Steel Sector Employers)

Flyer: [European Steel Action Day](#)

## Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals

Position paper: [Access to affordable pharmaceuticals](#)

## Defence

Warsaw Declaration: [Good industrial jobs in the European defence industry](#)

## Energy

Position paper: [Electricity regulation - For a Just Transition](#)

Statement: [Response to public consultation on 2040 climate and energy targets](#)

## Extractive Industries

Joint statement: [Joint Statement with employers on the Critical Raw Materials Act](#)



## Gas

Study report: [Study report on a Just Transition for workers in the Gas Sector](#)

## Paper

Joint statement: [Joint statement with CEPI \(the Paper Sector Employers\)](#)

## Shipbuilding

Joint project: [LeaderSHIP - Empowering skills in the maritime sector](#)

Joint position: [Joint position with SEA Europe \(the Shipyards and Maritime Equipment Employers\)](#)

Joint declaration: [For a resilient, competitive and sustainable future](#)

## Equal Opportunities

Statement: [For solidarity and against racism](#)

## White-collar workers

Toolbox: [Union toolbox for organising white-collar workers in industry](#)

## Youth

Document: [Building trade union power - Why not include youth?](#)

Study: [Youth study](#)

Demands ahead of the 2024 European elections: [EP election demands](#)



## **Health and Safety**

Charter: [Health and safety in battery production](#)

## **Education and Training**

Guide: [Making training a reality for quality jobs](#)









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