

Final Declaration – 6th Permanent Conference of Metalworkers' Unions of the Mediterranean Region

'Global challenges, shared responses: trade unions for a fairer Euro-Mediterranean region'

Seville, 15–16 September 2026

Preamble

Trade union delegates and representatives gathered in Seville for the 6th Permanent Conference of Metalworkers' Unions of the Euro-Mediterranean Region reaffirm the need to develop common responses to global challenges. Our shared vision is the construction of a fairer Euro-Mediterranean Europe, founded on the central role of work, human dignity and transnational solidarity. In a global context marked by profound uncertainties and sudden transformations, the trade union organisations of the Mediterranean region reaffirm the urgency of coordinated action, fully in line with the principles upheld by IndustriAll Europe and by the participating trade union organisations, in order to ensure that industrial progress never results in new social inequalities.

1. Macroeconomic and geopolitical dynamics and industrial autonomy The current complex macroeconomic and geopolitical dynamics necessitate a radical redefinition of production strategies. It is now imperative to forge strong strategic alliances within the new world order in order to develop and strengthen genuine industrial autonomy in the Mediterranean region. Europe cannot and must not limit itself to being a consumer market dependent on external suppliers for key technologies. We strongly call for proactive industrial policies at both European and national levels, capable of attracting investment, shortening and safeguarding strategic supply chains by forging stronger alliances with the countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean – starting with Turkey – and countering any trend towards deindustrialisation. Strategic autonomy must necessarily go hand in hand with the creation of stable, high-quality jobs.

Despite a rigid approach that limits the concept of Europe exclusively to EU Member States, it is necessary, with the full support of the European trade union movement, to review the 'Made in Europe' strategy so as to include the whole of the European continent. We wish to draw your attention to the initiatives promoted by the European Commission from 2025 onwards, namely the OMNIBUS package, the Industrial Acceleration Act and the 28th regime. As things stand, many of the provisions set out in these texts do not benefit European workers. We must work together to define binding measures, particularly regarding social conditions, in order to guarantee quality jobs in the industrial sector for a strong and more sovereign Europe.

2. Automotive and steel: the 'just transition' as an essential pillar Key sectors of our manufacturing industry are currently undergoing major changes. The profound transformation of the automotive sector in the Mediterranean basin and the implementation of the 'Made in Europe' strategy in the steel industry are processes that will shape our future. We firmly reaffirm, however, that these transitions must retain a human dimension and take place exclusively within the framework of a 'just transition'. In line with the demands of IndustriALL Europe, we insist that the ecological and digital transition must leave no worker behind. We call for:

- Shared and proactive management of industrial change, through the full and proactive involvement of trade unions and European works councils.
- The maintenance and protection of employment levels, as well as compliance with collective agreements, as priority conditions for the allocation of public funds to businesses.
- A massive public and private investment plan for the reskilling and upskilling of workers, providing them with the tools needed to meet new technological challenges, culminating in the enshrinement of every worker's individual right to training.

3. 'The Human Chain': human rights and human rights due diligence Respect for dignity and safety at work does not stop at national borders. We reaffirm our firm commitment to building a genuine 'human chain' by establishing rigorous trade union monitoring based on the application of human rights due diligence throughout the Mediterranean region. We will accept no backtracking or compromise: multinational companies must be held to account for working conditions throughout their supply and subcontracting chains. We categorically reject all forms of exploitation and demand binding standards on health, safety and fundamental trade union rights.

4. Collective bargaining and fair wages: across borders. Across borders, the trade union confederations of the Mediterranean are committed to working together to bring about tangible improvements in workers' conditions. Strong collective bargaining and the achievement of fair wages are emerging as the main drivers for shaping the future of work. As demonstrated by the day-to-day work of the participating trade unions, collective bargaining must be strengthened across all sectors to ensure the redistribution of wealth, promote genuine gender equality and restore purchasing power eroded by recent inflationary crises. The defence and revitalisation of the European social model can only be achieved by expanding and consolidating the bargaining power of trade union organisations.

5. Labour mobility: rights, integration and migration challenges Labour mobility and labour flows are a structural and vital reality for Mediterranean industry, presenting us with unavoidable challenges in terms of rights, integration and the management of migration flows. The European trade union movement rejects all divisive rhetoric. Migrant workers are an essential resource for our productive fabric. We demand policies that promote inclusion, safe entry routes and, above all, the guarantee of full economic and contractual equality, by tackling at the root the emergence of parallel labour markets based on precariousness, social dumping and blackmail.

Conclusion and commitments for the future

The Sixth Permanent Conference concludes its proceedings with an unequivocal certainty: it is only through unity of purpose and a strong transnational alliance that we can manage transitions rather than simply endure them. We commit to bringing the content of this Declaration before all institutional bodies, in workplaces and within global trade union coordination bodies. Mediterranean Europe must be built on sustainable industry, universal rights, worker participation and free and dignified work for all.