



Contemporary Challenges of Employee Participation

Final report of the project

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employee participation – opposing
the negative results of COVID-19

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Introduction

The project's reason was the project partners' conviction of the need to strengthen worker participation in enterprises in connection with the adoption by the European Union of an economic strategy called the European Green Deal. In their view, an instrument such as worker participation in business management can effectively support companies and their employees in implementing climate transformation - necessary to achieve the goals of this EU initiative. Therefore, the project's main objective was to increase company employee involvement in connection with the implementation of the European Green Deal. Given the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 (and its persistence during the project period), the implications of this had to be taken into account. The project created a space for an in-depth dialogue on the level of worker participation in the governance of companies in the countries they represent and how it could be strengthened in implementing the European Green Deal. Given the current level of worker participation, national circumstances and, above all, the complexity of the climate transition process, the above topic was treated broadly, i.e., including an analysis of other forms of participation by the worker and business representatives in the climate transition decision-making process. Indeed, strengthening all forms of dialogue can create a favourable environment for increasing the role of employee participation in business management. The participation in the project of both trade unions representing the interests of employees and employers' organisations presenting the point of view of entrepreneurs served to fulfil the project's objectives.

The project's specific aim was to exchange views on how to increase employment and new skills for workers in the framework of the climate transition. The project also aimed to raise employees' awareness of the European Green Deal and thus strengthen their resilience to its implementation challenges. Taking this into account, the priority was to raise awareness of just transition. Furthermore, the project's mission was to promote international cooperation in implementing the European Green Deal, including the interaction of trade unions and employers' organisations. Therefore, the project included creating and developing a discussion platform for exchanging knowledge between the project partners. An adequately formulated working methodology matched the above-defined project objectives. The final report, which was prepared as a result of the project activities, reflects the results of the dialogue carried out by the project partners. It is worth noting that most of the activities were carried out online due to the COVID-19 pandemic counterproliferation regulations in force during the project period. The organisational meeting was hybrid, while the project partners' discussions took place in virtual workshops.

Project partners

1. Ogólnopolskie Porozumienie Związków Zawodowych (OPZZ), the trade union from Poland (Project Leader),
2. Association of Construction Entrepreneurs in the Czech Republic (ABE), the organisation of employers from the Czech Republic,
3. Association of Industry, Commerce and Technology (ASITECO), the employers' organisation in Spain,
4. Confederation of Industrial Workers' Unions (CCOO), the trade union from Spain,
5. Union of Lithuanian Metalworkers' Trade Unions (LMPSS), the trade union from Lithuania,
6. National Trade Union Confederation ALFA (Cartel ALFA), the trade union from Romania,
7. The Independent Union of Miners and Energy Workers (KESA), the trade union from Estonia.

Project methodology

During the kick-off meeting, the project partners agreed that the project's methodology would be based, among other things, on a comparative analysis which, in addition to the area of worker participation in business management, will also consider the economic, social and political factors of implementing the European Green Deal. This is because these factors determine how the climate transition is carried out and the measures to ensure its justness.

During the research and analysis phase of the project, the current level of worker participation in business management in the project partners' countries was analysed and compared, among other things, with that of the European Union, the impact of social dialogue on the implemented state policies, the positions and demands of the social partners vis-à-vis the European Green Deal. However, the acquisition and analysis of information continued throughout the project. This was important given the changing circumstances of the implementation of the European Green Deal by the states, e.g. the successive waves of COVID-19 cases and the related policies implemented to counter the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, as well as rising energy prices, deepening disruptions to supply chains and, finally, the Russian attack on Ukraine. Information from existing sources (desk research and secondary research) was analysed. Information was also gathered through exchanging information, know-how and good practices

between project partners. For this purpose, the project used interactive methods of cooperation between representatives of trade unions and employers' organisations during thematic workshops. The thematic workshops were a key activity for achieving the project objectives, so to use this phase of the project effectively, priority was given to the preparation phase of the project. The project partners developed country reports (case studies) in the area covered by the project goals, which they then presented during the workshops. Through this, the project partners had a solid basis for thorough benchmarking and discussion in the workshops, and their cooperation was methodical. The project partners drew conclusions from the analysis carried out using the SWOT method, which consisted of defining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the implementation of the European Green Deal objectives in the individual countries, taking into account the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, each workshop included mutual learning and exchange of experiences under one of the three themes identified in the project, i.e. the link between the European Green Deal area and the COVID-19 pandemic themes, just transition and smart economy specialisations. The workshop allowed for information collection, good practices and recommendations for strengthening labour participation in implementing the European Green Deal. The workshop implementation phase also strengthened the project partners' network. The exchange of information by project partners at all project stages made it possible to prepare the final project report.

Activities carried out under the project.

1. Project partners meeting to launch the project, during which the methodology and timetable of activities were agreed upon, and a contact network was established.
2. Workshops in thematic areas:
 - » the European Green Deal and the COVID-19 pandemic,
 - » the European Green Deal and a just transition,
 - » the European Green Deal and the Smart Specialisations of the Economy.
3. A wrap-up meeting of the workshop phase to identify lessons learned by the project partners and discuss the scope of the final report.
4. Final project conference to present the final report and discuss the project evaluation questionnaires.

The above activities were complemented by the preparation of a project website containing, among other things, information on the ongoing implementation of the project.

This final report of the project entitled *Contemporary challenges of employee participation – opposing the negative results of COVID-19* is intended to support workers and business representatives in their advocacy activities through the information, recommendations and good practices contained in it. The report in the first chapter presents the aims and implementation of the project activities. In the second chapter, key findings from the project partners' cooperation and current arrangements for worker participation and social dialogue are included, which can support the implementation of activities to disseminate social dialogue and worker participation in business management during the implementation of the European Green Deal. Chapter three includes a compilation of recommendations and good practices.

Chapter I

The European Green Deal¹ is the European Union's economic development strategy adopted by the European Commission in 2019. Its implementation, through climate transformation, is intended to make the European Union's economy low-carbon. At the same time, the strategy is supposed to revitalise Europe's economy after the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure energy security in the wake of Russia's attack on Ukraine.

Shortly after the announcement of the European Green Deal strategy, EU countries experienced the COVID-19 pandemic and took measures against its spread, which affected, among other things, the employment conditions of workers. To a large extent, national governments self-determined anti-crisis measures, although the social partners were sometimes also involved in determining anti-crisis measures. It was not uncommon for the pandemic period to be used to introduce measures disadvantageous to workers. Many workers were affected by abuses of their rights, including health and safety at work. Tackling the impact of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic absorbs the strength and resources of trade unions and the state, limiting the possibility of engaging in the climate transition process fully. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted state deficits in public services, including education and health care, and insufficient digitalisation. The proliferation of remote working, in turn, makes it more difficult for social partners to engage with workers, conduct social dialogue and bring new members together.

Public support for measures to improve environmental quality is spreading. Companies, aware of the challenges of their operations, are increasingly taking environmental aspects into account. Environmentally friendly production methods increasingly

determine the purchase of goods and participation in supply chains. Access to clean energy is a factor in foreign direct investment or venture financing *decisions*. Given the level of energy prices, the cost of energy is also increasingly important in business decisions and influences the living conditions of societies. However, greater awareness of climate change does not always go hand in hand with understanding the nature of the changes needed to protect the climate, the costs and risks, and the willingness to bear them individually by changing how we live. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's aggression against Ukraine significantly complicate the implementation of climate policy.

The climate transformation resulting from adopting the European Green Deal will involve a profound transformation of EU economies. It is a complex process through which energy sources, and the functioning of businesses, especially industrial businesses, will change. In the discussion on climate transformation, the focus is on the raw materials and energy sectors, but the European Green Deal also requires changes in, for example, transport, automotive, construction, agriculture, forestry, and waste management. All this is to create a circular economy, i.e. a resource-efficient economy. The transformation process involves significant social changes, an adaptation of labour markets, education, home heating and transport. The process is expected to have a rapid pace, given the complexity of the climate transition. The changes will strongly affect regions where energy extraction, production, and industrial companies are concentrated. The challenge of climate transformation will also affect micro and small businesses. The costs of the climate transition also include a significant loss of revenue for the state (including the regions) resulting from the closure or reduction of the activities of some enterprises, which may negatively affect their development potential.

Despite adopting the European Green Deal, companies still have limits on adopted climate strategies. Typically, these are public companies with international capital or foreign connections (sales markets) that are more aware of the need for environmental action. There is also increased pressure from the company's stakeholders to take such action or to remain competitive. In addition, there is no widespread, in-depth, factual discussion about how climate policy should be implemented, which does not broadly foster a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for climate policy implementation among employees and society. This increases the risk that the climate transition will not be implemented in a socially just way.

Climate transformation is an opportunity, a challenge and a threat. It is an opportunity to overcome barriers to development (by investing in rebuilding public and private infrastructure on a massive scale), increase business and state innovation and improve citizens' health. The challenge is the transition period and the costs of the climate transition (private and public), as well as the uncertainty of the outcome of this complex process. A threat to the implementation of the European Deal is the risk of job losses, increased poverty and social exclusion, and the degradation of regions, especially those with concentrations of industry and associated with the extraction of raw materials and energy production. The issue of energy security of the EU countries and maintaining their international competitiveness is also a significant factor.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_pl

Despite the apparent diversity of the EU countries' cases, there are similarities in the challenges workers and businesses face in the upcoming climate transition processes. Many workers fear losing their jobs if the climate transition is not addressed, and the new jobs created to compensate for lost jobs will not be at an equivalent level. Pessimism about the effects of the climate transition stands out. Although men are the most likely to work in industries requiring climate adaptation, women will also lose a source of income, and their employment opportunities already face barriers related to working conditions, wage gaps and inefficient public care services. In addition, women may be forced to enter the labour market due to the increased cost of living, especially energy costs caused by decarbonisation and the failure to develop new energy sources. It would be to their detriment and the detriment of the economy if these were low-paid jobs, given industries' transformation (and downsizing) or the inefficiency of addressing the skills gap.

Trade unions emphasise that the negative impacts of the climate transition will affect more employees and businesses than forecast and will have higher costs than previously estimated. It should be noted that the companies cooperating with those in the sectors undergoing transformation are located not only in the regions where production is concentrated but all over the country. In practice, the activities of each enterprise will be subject to adaptation to a low-carbon economy to a greater or lesser extent. Businesses point to barriers associated with investing in new technologies. The concerns expressed above materialise faster than the European Green Deal's target effects of climate transformation (an innovative, low-carbon economy with green jobs and increased quality of life resulting from improved environmental quality). This increases the risk of the public rejecting the ideas of the European Green Deal and the impossibility of implementing the transformation due to the impoverishment of society and the difficulty for companies to transform their business in the context of high energy costs. The logic of the climate transition in the face of different policies implemented outside the European Union is still not understood by the public. There is also opposition regarding the unfair distribution of the costs and benefits of the climate transition between EU countries and social groups. The low climate ambitions of non-EU countries are also pointed out.

How we achieve the objectives of the European Green Deal will be crucial. First and foremost, the climate transition must be just so that no one is actually left behind and the benefits of this economic strategy as envisaged by the European Commission materialise. The starting point should be a reliable assessment of the costs and benefits of the planned measures to fairly distribute the burdens and benefits of the climate transformation process. Citizens must contribute to the costs of climate transformation in line with their financial possibilities and benefit from it proportionately.

A poorly designed climate transition process puts jobs, living conditions and businesses at risk. Changes must be planned and spread over time. This approach has too often escaped economic transformation in the past, resulting in regional degradation and social exclusion. Up to now, the state and entrepreneurs have too often shifted the costs and responsibility of adjusting to change onto citizens and have not allocated sufficient resources to skills training and social protection. The failures of economic transformation processes have also been due to a lack of consideration for the positions

of the social partners and their role in the process. Given these experiences, it is important to ensure that citizens are involved in the decision-making process on how to make the climate transition. A just climate transition needs the inclusion of workers in deciding how to implement it at the level of the company where they are employed, as well as high-quality social dialogue at the national level. These adequate instruments will increase the chances of a non-exclusive (inclusive) and equitable climate transition. Hence, it made sense to implement the project *Contemporary challenges of employee participation – opposing the negative results of COVID-19*, which, among other things, aims to strengthen employee participation in enterprise management.

An effective state policy in the area of climate transformation must take into account the need for the country's sustainable development, and investment in innovation and advanced technologies, while at the same time ensuring high-quality jobs. Particular attention is required for the transformation of industry, which is a source of economic growth, innovation and employment requiring specialised skills. The good condition of industry determines the activity of other industries, the education sector or research and development. Therefore, industrial policy should be adapted to climate objectives while making conditions for the creation of quality jobs. An increase in wages and decent employee remuneration should be the foundation of a just climate policy. The European Green Deal should be used as an instrument to achieve the goals mentioned above and not as a barrier.

A key condition for implementing the climate transition is the participation of workers and their representatives in the planning and management of change as part of the transition. Trade unions and employers' organisations are natural and obligatory dialogue partners for the climate transition. A strong role for collective bargaining and social dialogue is a prerequisite for a just transition, as they enable solutions to mitigate negative impacts on employment to be discussed and negotiated in a tripartite framework and guarantee high-quality jobs. The transformation will be implemented at the enterprise level; therefore, social dialogue must function effectively at the workplace level. The participation of workers' representatives in company bodies and thus in their governance can help to carry out the restructuring processes resulting from climate transformation in a sustainable and socially just way. A cooperative and dialogue-based approach to implementing climate transformation requires the willingness and commitment of government and employers based on realising the benefits of this process management. A just transition must involve building multi-stakeholder partnerships. The responsibility for including social dialogue in the implementation of the transition lies with public authorities and at the company level with the employer. In addition, there is a role for enterprise-level trade union organisations, which are closest to the employees and directly involved in the life of the enterprise, to play in initiatives for employee involvement and building public support for employee participation, cooperation with stakeholders outside the enterprise - public administration or NGOs. Employers' organisations should become the same vehicle for the spread of employee participation in enterprise management. The social partners should be given essential substantive and logistical support to interact in the local environment to build the right conditions for forming and functioning partnerships and employee participation.

The condition of social dialogue will play a key role in shaping the social partners' strategies in implementing the climate transition. Meanwhile, the current lack of systemic social dialogue on the issue does not foster a sense of co-ownership and co-responsibility in implementing climate policy. Despite good practices, social partners often do not have correct knowledge of the government's and companies' plans for the transition process and their stages. As a result, decisions in the area of energy policy are impermanent, and agreements are implemented. This makes it difficult to shape the process in a socially just way and to gain acceptance and support for the climate transition.

A just climate transition must mean transforming the economy in an inclusive way, which also means supporting people in the process. A just transition requires social policies that are as ambitious as climate policies. The narrow scope of the developed just climate transformation policy and insufficient funding will make meeting the challenges more difficult. Implementing the European Green Deal must not increase regional and social inequalities within the European Union and within countries. It is, therefore, necessary to ensure adequate investment in social policy, including benefits for employees at an appropriate level, e.g. severance pay, mining leave, pensions, unemployment benefits and the financing of instruments to support employment and the training of employees. It is also necessary to prepare the education system for the changes resulting from the climate transition and to develop, through public expenditure, the research and development sector.

The European Green Deal should be implemented based on a social contract that has workers at its heart. A comprehensive framework for the process should be created in a systemic and ongoing social dialogue and with worker participation in business management. Climate transformation should be predictable, sustainable and negotiated with workers in every aspect that affects them. A framework for a just transition must ensure that adequate resources are guaranteed, that labour rights are effectively planned, promoted and strengthened, and that social partners are involved in the economy through intensive social dialogue. The framework must also consider the legal, institutional and financial environment for a just climate transition both at the level of EU countries and regions and including businesses and households. The climate transition should be based on sound ex-ante and ex-post analyses and cyclically monitored indicators in order to achieve its justness. The social aspect should be taken into account at every stage, including time for transforming labour markets, adapting the education and skills of workers and implementing support instruments for workers and households. A safety net in the form of social safety nets must be built into the transition process to protect citizens from the negative effects of change, especially the most vulnerable groups.

Action to ensure an affordable energy supply for citizens must effectively protect societies from energy poverty. Indeed, according to the European Pillar of Social Rights, everyone has the right to access basic services of good quality, including water, sanitation, energy, transport, financial services and digital communications services. People in need should be supported in accessing these services. Therefore, instruments are needed to support households to cope with rising energy prices and invest in

energy-efficient green housing and transport solutions. Some countries are already implementing shielding measures, but the equity dimension of the climate transition requires that these become systemic and are targeted strictly at those in need of support.

The implementation of the European Green Deal is currently taking place in a complex economic, social and political context. The European Union is experiencing a significant increase in energy prices, initially driven largely by a rise in global commodity prices as economies recovered from their downturn in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Russia's attack on Ukraine has further increased energy prices to a difficult level for workers and businesses to bear. The price increase drastically weakens workers' purchasing power, creating increased poverty risk. Energy prices are also one of the main drivers of high inflation and rising production costs, which may further endanger jobs. The situation varies across the European Union in this respect but is of widespread public concern.

The changing conditions for implementing the European Green Deal make it necessary to update the European Union's climate policy strategy concerning, among other things, the structure and nature of the energy mix in the coming years and the resources required to make the climate transition just and equitable. The European Union and all EU countries must secure energy supplies at affordable prices in the short and long term. EU and national actions in this process should be coherent and complementary to each other, and solidarity of action within EU countries should be ensured. Diversification of energy supply routes and sources and investment in technology while ensuring energy security and independence are urgent measures requiring flexibility within the implementation of the European Green Deal. How the energy mix is shaped in the individual EU Member States and the decisions taken at the EU level regarding EU energy policy will determine the decisions of companies and thus impact employment and the living conditions of workers, especially in regions where raw material extraction and energy production activities are concentrated. This will therefore determine the structure of public support for the above processes.

Protecting jobs and employees' quality of life must be prioritised in the climate transition process. It is necessary to plan how to preserve and create jobs for a low-carbon economy and to restructure existing economic activities while preserving employee potential. Achieving climate goals requires effective instruments to support workers and businesses in the climate transition process to reduce the risk of job losses, social exclusion and reduced business competitiveness. Employees and their families must be helped to adapt to operating in a low-carbon economy by safeguarding their needs and interests as much as possible. Employees must be provided with the knowledge and financial support to adapt to change, including in their private lives. Great attention must be paid to education and to effectively increasing the skills of workers needed for the labour market in a low-carbon economy. The most vulnerable in society must be protected in the climate transition process through effective social support systems.

It is important to emphasise that climate transformation is not the only process currently occurring. Changes in the labour market due to digitalisation, automation, and new work provision forms affect workers' working conditions and social dialogue. The social partners must be involved in shaping these changes and be able to represent their members to guarantee the benefits of these processes by continuously building their capacities. This requires investment in the knowledge and skills of the employee and business representatives and strong networks between organisational levels and stakeholders. To be effective, social partners and employee representatives on company boards need to engage their members and gain public support for the demands they formulate (at the plant, regional and national level), including employees and nonunionised enterprises, including those in emerging industries. Trade unions are, therefore, in a difficult position in the context of the climate transition. On the one hand, they have to ensure that workers' rights are protected; on the other hand, the transformation of industries may lead to the closure of workplaces and, thus, a reduction in the number of their members. Therefore, trade unions need to develop strategies that will allow them to maintain their numbers by uniting employees of newly established companies. The climate transition can be seen as an opportunity for trade unions to increase their membership base and change their structure. However, this requires knowledge capital and resources dedicated to associational activities, and the outcome is characterised by uncertainty.

Chapter II

Social dialogue and employee participation in business management are conducive to conducting business in a socially responsible manner. They increase the transparency of processes, the consistency of decisions taken, and thus their social acceptance. Experience shows that enterprise trade union activity is the most effective representation of workers' interests. Unfortunately, the state of social dialogue is relatively weak in many countries. The government often does not recognise trade unions and other forms of worker representation. Also, the government does not always have a trade union-friendly approach and does not fulfil its duty to conduct social dialogue, which translates into practices in the economy. In many cases, legal barriers or reluctance on the part of employers hinder the formation and activities of trade unions. The COVID-19 pandemic has created additional risk of arbitrary decisions by the state and companies, worsened the quality of social dialogue in many EU countries, reduced workers' and trade union rights and increased non-compliance with labour law.

Employee participation (understood as the inclusion of employees in the enterprise's decision-making process and their participation in its management) mainly takes the form of participation of employee representatives in dialogue with the employer and

tripartite social dialogue institutions. The right to information is an elementary and essential form of workers' participation in workplace management and contact between the workforce and the employer underlying workers' participation in management and all collective action taken by workers' representatives. Workers or their representatives must be effectively guaranteed information and consultation in good time, in the cases and under the conditions provided by Community law and national laws and practices. Workers and employers, or their respective organisations, have, in accordance with Union law and national laws and practices, the right to negotiate and conclude collective agreements at the appropriate levels and, in cases of conflicts of interest, to take collective action, including strike action, to defend their interests. Worker participation in enterprise management requires the consultation of workers in strategic decisions and tools to ensure an effective flow of information on the functioning of enterprises.

An effective form of employee participation in enterprise management is the participation of employee representatives on company bodies: the supervisory board and the management board. Employee participation in management means that employees can co-determine the company's activities through their representatives on company bodies. Employees elect or designate their representatives to the company's statutory bodies, such as the management board or supervisory board, who, by attending meetings of the statutory bodies, influence how the company is managed.

Employee participation is not a frequently used form of business management. There is a lack of knowledge of this business management mode among employees, entrepreneurs, and the public. The low use of employee participation is due to the complex legal and historical conditions according to which it can operate in enterprises with a certain form of ownership (e.g. those created in the process of privatisation of state-owned enterprises). Employee representatives on enterprise bodies are most often active in entities with state ownership, less often in private ones. There is difficulty in enforcing the regulations, as employers are reluctant to cooperate with employee representatives, not seeing them in a management role, and violate the regulations governing employee participation, including the right of employees to elect and dismiss members of the management and supervisory boards. They are also reluctant to organise elections of employee representatives to company bodies, limit the number of representatives and make their work more difficult, for example, by restricting access to information. On the other hand, employee representatives serving on company bodies have a difficult role, as they cannot always provide full information to the workforce. It is not always possible to consider all employees' needs in managing the company. This affects the assessment of the work of employee representatives on company bodies and their support among the workforce for this form of representation of their interests.

In private companies, worker participation in management is incidental, and trade unions are less frequent. This is influenced, among other things, by the shape of employer-employee relations with a dominant role for the employer and by the degree to which workers' rights are respected. For example, in Poland, employee participation in the management of enterprises is found in small enterprises that have undergone

ownership transformations in the past (from a state-owned to a public entity) and with foreign participation. In Spain, they are found among both state-owned enterprises and public institutions.

The small scale of application of employee participation and knowledge of this form of enterprise management makes it difficult even to build a contact network among those participating in this form of enterprise management to exchange knowledge and share good practices. This limits the pressure on the workers' side to increase the role of this form of representation of workers' interests in decision-making processes in the workplace and the understanding of its benefits on the business side. Information on the scale of the use of this form in the economy is also deficient. More often than not, it is the trade unions that champion the management of the company using employee participation and create a contact network of people who are employee representatives on company bodies in place of official data sets.

Employee participation is a form of workplace democracy and is, therefore, a useful instrument for implementing climate change equitably. This is because it builds employees' knowledge of the changes, allows them to influence how they are implemented and thus strengthens their acceptance. It increases the responsibility of employees for the success of the business and of the employer for the well-being of employees, thus building the social responsibility of the company and its sustainability. This allows for better quality decisions, more effective processes implementation and sustainability. The benefit of employee participation is a better flow of information and thus utilisation of the company's potential and a guarantee of continuity in management processes. Employee participation translates into functioning in the community in which the business is conducted so that systemic processes gain a human dimension. This form of business management provides an opportunity to consider the interests of all stakeholders in the climate transition, i.e. in practice leaving no one behind. Hence, it is worthwhile for entrepreneurs to see the benefits of using employee participation in business management to a greater extent, particularly in the context of adaptations to climate requirements arising from the European Green Deal.

Employee participation is a distinct form of employee representation at the company level from a trade union or works council. The forms are differentiated by legal regulations, including differentiation in roles and competences. Employee participation should be considered in the context of social dialogue to realise the social dimension of economic activity within the enterprise.

The activities of the social partners and workers' representatives on company boards are carried out in a country-specific institutional environment, but similarities between them are noticeable. While the institutional environment is important for all forms of social dialogue, good practices and the willingness to include social partners (and employee representatives in the case of employee participation) in the decision-making process are crucial. Given the scale of collective bargaining, it has to be recognised that there are major challenges to spreading social dialogue in the European Union in all its forms. The poor quality of dialogue is particularly evident in the Central and

Eastern European countries at national and company levels. The European Commission confirms this in the documents of the European Semester, the process of economic governance in the European Union. If good practices are already noted, they are in the framework of social dialogue rather than in the framework of employee participation (participation) in company management. One of the barriers to the social dialogue already mentioned is the non-recognition of trade unions and other forms of workers' representation by business and government and the reluctance to engage in Social Dialogue. A major problem is also the reluctance of entrepreneurs to set up employers' organisations and to associate with their structures so that trade unions face the lack of a representative partner for social dialogue on the employers' side. Changing this situation faces difficulties. Incentives, such as tax incentives, do not translate into an increase in the capacity of employers' organisations and their involvement in social dialogue. This makes it difficult to develop a social dialogue culture and increase its role in decision-making processes at both enterprise and economic levels. The role of the state and EU institutions should promote social dialogue through its exemplary implementation and expect it to be carried out in the economy, e.g. by giving preference to enterprises having a collective agreement, e.g. in public procurement or through a certification system, seems crucial in this respect.

The social partners have several potentials that they can use as part of the climate transition process. In the case of trade unions, strength comes from their capacity to organise workers, their legal empowerment and their potential to influence the shape of the public debate. The level of trade unionisation is important for assessing the potential of trade unions for social dialogue, but it does not determine it in practice. The impact of trade unions depends to a large extent on the culture and traditions of a country in the area of social dialogue, but also on the capacity to mobilise the public to support their demands. The smaller scale of unionisation faced by trade union organisations in some countries does not imply an inability to be effective. There are examples of trade union organisations showing that the ability to build public support with their credibility makes the implementation of demands effective. Public support is created first and foremost by addressing topics important for society and not only directly related to labour relations. Participation in the community's life makes it easier for trade unions to access knowledge about issues and opinions and to build community. Trade unions have the political power to influence government policy in many countries. This can be through statutory powers to participate in the decision-making process through, for example, public consultation or informal influence on decisions. Besides, in many countries, the number of members affiliated with a trade union or employers' organisation and the scale of coverage by collective bargaining agreements are an argument that reinforces the power of publicly expressed positions. The social partners also can shape public opinion by initiating discussions, presenting positions and expertise or media campaigns. In the case of trade unions, collective action such as demonstrations, pickets and strikes can also be their tool to influence the decision-making process.

Several international documents refer to social dialogue and worker participation, and appeals are strengthening in this regard. In addition to the output of the

International Labour Organisation, for example, the United Nations Agenda 2030², adopted in 2015, identifies economic growth and decent work as one of the Sustainable Development Goals (8.). In practice, decent work means high-quality jobs in a company that respects workers' rights, pays decent wages and does not discriminate in any respect, including wages. Economic growth, in turn, should be sustainable, which also means sharing the fruits of growth fairly. These elements are in the lens of trade union action. In addition, another of the Agenda's Goals (16.) is to promote a peaceful and inclusive society and to build effective and accountable inclusive institutions at all levels. In particular, it is about developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions and ensuring inclusive and participatory decision-making at all levels. This should be understood as the action of the social partners⁵. social partners in the social dialogue.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also emphasises the importance of social dialogue to overcome climate transition challenges.

The Silesian Declaration on Solidarity and Just Transition adopted at the UN Climate Change Conference in Katowice, Poland (COP 24 in 2018) by the Heads of State and Government indicates that "Reaffirming that Parties to the Paris Agreement on climate change are taking into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs". The Declaration also notes the importance of a participatory and representative social dialogue process involving all social partners to promote high employment rates, adequate social protection, labour standards and the well-being of workers and their communities when developing national-level climate policies.

Furthermore, the European Pillar of Social Rights³, a European Union document endorsed by the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission, refers to social dialogue. Section 8, *Social dialogue and the social involvement of workers*, indicates that the social partners should be consulted on developing and implementing economic and social policies. The document reaffirms that workers or their representatives have the right to be informed and to express their opinion on time on issues affecting them. According to the Pillar, the negotiation and conclusion of collective agreements concerning social partners should be encouraged. It is also important to support the capacity of the social partners and promote social dialogue. This is another EU document, in addition to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union⁴ and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union⁵, referring to social dialogue.

The above indicates that social dialogue should play a key role in the climate transition process. However, the weakening of social dialogue observed in many countries poses

a threat to the equitable dimension of the climate transition and the democratisation of the implementation of the European Green Deal. Labour participation in business management and institutional social dialogue is being used to a limited extent in the process of fulfilling the objectives of the European Green Deal. Employee participation in the climate transition process is generally low at the company level. It is mainly concentrated in large manufacturing companies. However, it should be noted that in the structure of EU economies, a large proportion is micro and small enterprises, in which trade unions are generally not active. In addition, a small number of enterprises on the scale of the EU economy have a climate transformation strategy; the protection of workers from the negative consequences of climate transformation must, in this case, take place through solutions developed in social dialogue at the national level. However, in countries where social dialogue is weak and formal obstacles to its activities persist, trade unions face difficulties in effectively influencing the decision-making process on the climate transition, including its principles and the content of strategic documents. Public consultations are often of a sham nature, are short and do not result in agreement on the content of the documents. It also happens that social partners are omitted from the consultation process, and documents are only addressed to NGOs.

The transformation to a low-carbon economy will result from economic processes, technological change, and, to a large extent, political decisions that create the legal framework and determine the direction of change. Hence, including social dialogue in this process is important from the point of view of those represented by the social partners. Currently, most of the initiatives taken by trade unions in the field of climate transformation are implemented at the national level. This is because they are systemic, although initiatives are already implementing transformation at the company level. In practice, over time, the effects of the transition will be felt more and more at the enterprise level; this is where the social partners' activities will be concentrated. It is clear from the observations that the social partners, despite the obstacles described above, are not only reacting to the existing challenges of the climate transformation but are also trying to influence the shape of this process actively, both at the level of the assumptions of the transformation and the manner of its implementation by postulating the inclusion of job security in this process. This takes the form of ongoing activities or structured strategies. To this end, the social partners seek to use their legal powers and ability to influence the public debate on the climate transition. This includes influencing the positions of experts and public opinion through, for example, organising or participating in media events and conferences, being active through traditional and electronic media (written or visual), creating campaigns to disseminate positions, and organising demonstrations. The above activity requires from social partners a pool of knowledge and experience and financial resources as well as organising cooperation with entities with practice in the above areas.

Social partners should continue mobilising their members to shape the climate transition. This can involve informing their members, raising awareness about the challenges of the climate transition process, and gathering feedback on the issue and their needs. Strong member engagement in shaping the transition increases the mandate of their

2 <https://www.un.org/pl/agenda-2030-rezolucja>

3 https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_pl

4 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012E%2FTXT>

5 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12012P%2FTXT>

representatives in social dialogue and labour participation in corporate governance. It can also influence the realisation of transformational justice.

There is a consensus among the social partners that communities in climate transition regions should be involved in preparing the transition plan. It is crucial that - before measures such as company closures or restructuring are implemented - investments are made to maintain and create new jobs, retraining options and a system of social protection (in advance). The legal, institutional and financial environment for a just climate transition needs to be prepared urgently at the state, regional, business and household levels. Social dialogue and labour participation in enterprise management are needed at each stage and level of the transition (national, regional and enterprise levels). Local stakeholders should be informed about the details of the process, and the framework should be essentially fixed to enable adaptation to changes in, for example, education and career choices.

As far as the trade unions' position on the European Green Deal is concerned, they point mainly to the social and economic risks of this strategy, the feasibility of the adopted pace of change in the context of the complexity of the climate transition and the challenges involved in this process. Despite the widespread acceptance of measures to protect the environment and thus improve workers' health and living conditions, trade unionists are convinced that climate policy's financial and social impact on people's living conditions and technical capacity has not been properly assessed. They expect a negative impact of the climate transformation process on the increase in the cost of living (prices of goods and services), high costs of the transformation process itself (personal investments of the citizens of the countries resulting from the need to adapt to the transformation: thermo-modernisation of the dwelling, its current heating, acquiring necessary qualifications for professional activity in a low-carbon economy). They point to the potentially negative impact of climate transformation on the labour market (unemployment levels, employment conditions, occupational health and safety status), the economic and social condition of regions most vulnerable to transformation (as well as poverty and social exclusion) and the competitiveness of countries (degradation of potential). According to them, the EU climate policy will result in a loss of competitiveness of EU products, especially in the transition phase, with a significant increase in the cost of living for EU citizens. In their view, the EU's climate policy will have negative consequences for the EU economy as a whole, although the more developed countries that climate policy favours will fare better. Labour representatives generally advocate the smoothest possible trajectory for the climate transition, with increased investment in mitigating the social impacts of the transition. They call for states' energy security to be taken care of and to prepare protective instruments for workers and companies. They signal that the dynamic path of implementing the climate transition will lead to increased social opposition to EU climate policy due to the rapid increase in the cost of living for citizens. They also demand changes to the European Union's energy policy and action at the EU level to protect the EU market from goods and services created without considering environmental costs and respect for human and labour rights.

On the other hand, employers' organisations focus their positions on the legal and organisational barriers to implementing the climate transition. They point to what they perceive as high business costs limiting their ability to invest in adaptation to a low-carbon economy, as well as complicated administrative procedures for using public funds. They also point to a shortage of workers. Like the trade unions, they call for EU energy policy changes to minimise business costs. Currently, the biggest challenge for entrepreneurs is the price of energy, goods and services and the difficulty accessing materials due to disrupted supply chains. These barriers limit the potential for, and simultaneously force, the climate transition to adapt business.

Examples of the roles that social partners can play in a dialogue on a just climate transition:

- » at company level - agreeing on specific, time-bound, company-wide plans to reduce emissions, through, e.g. investment, while creating decent jobs, retraining and retaining employees, training, providing a minimum wage for exiting employees and investing in local communities. Informing workers and enforcing employer information;
- » at the sectoral level, promoting ambitious policy goals on climate, employment and a just transition and investing in sectoral cooperation on the development and dissemination of green technologies and know-how; demanding social dialogue from national and regional government representatives;
- » at the regional and national level, an active role in formulating and implementing climate policies that consider a just transition, active labour market and social protection policies, and supportive public investment in training and education and sustainable infrastructure. Advocating for information and public debate on the climate transition process.

Selected elements of the SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of the climate transition performed by the project (for the countries represented):

Strengths:

- ✓ high-quality staff, well-educated and experienced,
- ✓ the relatively large role of industry in the project economies, with the potential for restructuring to adapt to a low-carbon economy and innovation,
- ✓ the EU's stated policy direction on climate policy and EU measures dedicated to the climate transition,
- ✓ existing social dialogue structures.

Weaknesses:

- ✓ the poor quality of social dialogue in many countries, both at the national, sectoral and company levels,
- ✓ a low number of employers applying worker participation in business management and conducting business in line with corporate social responsibility,
- ✓ inadequate investment in public services and the wages of public sector employees, a sensitive issue for the implementation of a just climate transition,
- ✓ sub-optimal participation of women in the labour market, persistent wage gap,
- ✓ impediments to labour mobility, both between industries and territorially,
- ✓ the low incomes of a large group of citizens, making it difficult to bear the necessary expenditures in adapting to a transforming, low-carbon economy,
- ✓ limited public debate on how and at what cost to implement the climate transition,
- ✓ knowledge of the European Green Deal is limited, i.e. limited to specialists and those involved in the climate transition framework.

Opportunities:

- ✓ Investment in technology provides an opportunity for companies to increase their technological sophistication, become more innovative, remain competitive and capture new markets,
- ✓ the development of new economic sectors and the modernisation of existing ones,
- ✓ improved environmental quality and, as a consequence, better health for citizens and reduced costs to the health system from the treatment of diseases resulting from environmental pollution,
- ✓ improving health and safety at work,
- ✓ the possibility of changing the size of trade unions due to the emergence of companies in new economic sectors.

Threats:

- ✓ the assumptions of European governance will prove to be inadequate in the face of changing social, economic and political circumstances,
- ✓ ineffective social dialogue on the climate transition (underutilisation of the social partners' knowledge base) will result in the lack of a social dimension to the process, a mismatch between support instruments and the needs of workers and businesses, increased social unrest and rejection of the idea of climate transition,

- ✓ the climate transition process will increase unemployment, poverty and social exclusion,
- ✓ ineffective use of workers' potential will result in its loss and a deterioration in the living conditions of workers and their families,
- ✓ a mismatch between the pace of the climate transition and the adaptability of workers and businesses will prevent its effective implementation, with the consequent threat to economic prosperity, jobs and the social justice dimension of the transition,
- ✓ new jobs will be of low quality,
- ✓ insufficient knowledge among entrepreneurs on how to carry out the process of adapting a company to operate in a low-carbon economy will make it difficult to continue in business and maintain employment,
- ✓ investment of forces and resources in the transformation process will be difficult to reconcile with maintaining the ongoing competitiveness of businesses and employment,
- ✓ uncertainty related to the international political situation and its development will make it more difficult to achieve energy security and access to affordable energy for businesses and workers,
- ✓ the costs of the climate transition will exceed the assumed level of EU funding and public and private capacity,
- ✓ industries currently responsible for economic growth will not be replaced effectively by new ones - providing competitive advantages and jobs, with the result that unemployment will rise, people will migrate, and regions will be degraded (ineffective implementation of just transition plans),
- ✓ the innovation potential of the current mining, energy, engineering and electrical machinery sectors and their employees will be lost as a result of their professional deactivation or taking up lower-skilled jobs at home or as labour migrants (impact on the country's international competitiveness),
- ✓ a reduction in unionisation due to the dismantling of workplaces and the impediment of workers' unionisation in newly established companies will worsen the quality of social dialogue.

Chapter III

Recommendations

The recommendations cover a wide range of issues, i.e. both the organisation of the climate transition and the strengthening of the role of social dialogue and worker participation in business management in this process. The recommendations are addressed to trade unions, entrepreneurs and their organisations, governments, and EU bodies. The recommendations need to be treated concerning national needs and circumstances due to differences in the formal organisation of Social Dialogue and its practices. In some countries, an important aspect will be the regulations shaping the legal basis for Social Dialogue and worker participation, without which it is impossible to expect them to be practised. In other countries, on the other hand, good practices need to be developed, as respect for the role of the social partners in the economy and the culture of dialogue is greater.

A framework for a just climate transition:

1. A social consensus needs to be built in the social dialogue on achieving a just climate transition, with the state's fundamental role and responsibility for its implementation. The climate transition is a complex process, and the conditions for its implementation are changing, so developing a social and political consensus on the principles of the transition would reduce uncertainty for workers and businesses about future policy decisions on the issue. A social contract between the social partners and the government on a just climate transition is good practice. Such a social contract with key principles and commitments would be the de facto foundation of the dialogue on transition implementation. There is no single transformation model suitable for all. Plans must be individual, and at their core must be job protection, decent employment conditions and training policies. There must also be an individualised approach for each company and employee.
2. It is good practice to set up an empowered decision-making unit at the government level (e.g. within the structures of a ministry) to deal with the issue of a just transition.
3. The role of social dialogue at the national, territorial, sectoral and company levels needs to be strengthened by increasing compliance with climate social dialogue legislation.
4. Effective use of social dialogue institutions should be made in managing economic processes implementing the European Green Deal. Where necessary, legal barriers to the formation and activity of trade unions and worker participation in business management should be removed. Compliance monitoring should also be strengthened. A well-functioning social dialogue and a strong social protection system can contribute to workers' perception of the climate transition as an opportunity instead of a threat. Governance of enterprises in the form of employee participation, when employee representatives are members of the company bodies, can facilitate the transition process through a better flow of information and alignment of actions and thus increase its effectiveness.
5. Social dialogue must develop labour market and social protection instruments that are consistently applied and their effectiveness monitored (democratically codesigned just climate transition plans). Anti-poverty measures must be embedded in the transition, including energy and in-work poverty. Initiatives must accompany these.
6. New specialisations of regions in which climate transformation will be concentrated should be prepared with the social partners to create their new development potential.
7. The quality of employment in the economy must be ensured, including reducing the wage gap and other manifestations of discrimination in the labour market. Quality jobs must become the framework for the transition of workers between economic sectors and the activation of the inactive as part of the implementation of the European Green Deal (labour market activation measures for a just transition).
8. Actions targeting women in the energy transition should be holistic and include education, labour market, infrastructure and measures to change social norms. Institutional challenges related to the weakness of public services must be overcome, and the scale of non-compliance with labour laws in the economy must be reduced.
9. The voice of women on the topic of climate transition must be taken into account by including them in decision-making processes and activating them to take action. Challenges and opportunities for women in the climate transition must be identified and ensured that it is just to them.
10. Achieving the climate transition just and inclusively requires increased public investment in public services, including budgets for a lifelong workforce, teaching staff education, and just remuneration. Employment conditions in public administration and public services need to be improved as key to the success of the climate transition.

11. The social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has placed a financial and health burden on societies, must not be lost sight of. Public policy must take into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through adequate investment in public services.
12. A just climate transition must include preparing an industrial strategy aligned with ambitious environmental goals and providing high-quality jobs.
13. Ensure that energy and products coming from outside the European Union have been made with respect for human, labour and environmental rights and, if necessary, eliminate their access to the EU market.
14. As part of a just climate transition, EU and national policies must ensure that businesses and workers have access to affordable energy.
15. Funds dedicated to the transformation must be at an adequate level (adequate resources). Incentives (e.g. facilitation of funding availability, clear administrative procedures) must be created to mobilise private investment to transform into a low-carbon economy.
16. Information on available support instruments dedicated to the climate transition must be clear (transparency of the support system, concentration in one place, meeting accessibility criteria).
17. Consultancy services should be made available to businesses and employees as part of the public support system.
18. Public funds (including EU funds) should be used as a lever to promote decent working conditions, social dialogue, and quality education. Funding for employment-related activities should be conditional, i.e. conditional on the entrepreneur's respect for workers' rights and respect for workers' right to form trade unions and their activities.
19. Companies should adopt and implement sustainability reporting (ESG), a recognised standard for corporate responsibility and sustainability. Currently, the scale of sustainability reporting is poorly applied, so there should be an effort to increase the scale of companies' compliance with human and labour rights by reviewing reporting activities. Companies should do more due diligence as the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights recommend. Business supply chains must consider respecting human and labour rights by all business entities.
20. The government and public administration should promote companies that respect workers' rights and trade union rights through the public procurement system and have a collective agreement in place.
21. Public consultations on climate transition issues should be mandatory, and participation costs should be neutral for the social partners (e.g. in terms of travelling to meetings) and implemented on time.
22. A requirement should be introduced and enforced that stakeholders receive timely feedback on the results of the public consultation and the outcomes of the public dialogue from the government side.
23. A cyclical assessment of the social and economic impacts of the climate transition, including on employment, and the health of industries and regions, should be implemented.
24. Since the priority of a just climate transition is to keep skilled and experienced workers in the labour market, any job losses should be linked to labour market activation instruments. A new job should be created before a job is eliminated (before its elimination). The retraining process must be 'tailor-made', i.e. adapted to the individual employee and its effectiveness monitored. Several support instruments should be used for one worker or enterprise if necessary. The measure of the effectiveness of support should be the quality of employment. An effective system of professional activation may consist of facilitation and support for employees in finding a job through public employment services, the organisation of so-called job fairs, preferences for transforming enterprises and their employees to participate in investments in newly created regional specialisations or the relocation of employees to another workplace to use their potential and maintain continuity of employment. Individual climate transformation strategies must be developed at the company level in cooperation with trade unions. Support instruments must be available for all employees affected by the climate transition.
25. Job activation should take place from private and public sources. At the EU level, temporary unemployment funding measures such as the SURE instrument should be extended for as long as necessary.
26. The development of national, regional and individual climate transformation plans should consider the workforce's diversity (including age and gender).
27. The conditions for training (financial, logistical, time) should be created for employees. The training goal should be for the employee to obtain a stable, high-quality job. The quality of education should be ensured (consider a certification system). Social partners should be involved in defining skills needs and retraining opportunities for employees as well as anticipating changes using the right to information and consultation, e.g., working groups and monitoring committees at all levels of social dialogue (national, sectoral and company). Employment support should consider the costs of further training, job equipment, relocation and commuting. The conditions for training can take the form of paid training leave options for those upgrading their professional skills. Learning can take place through knowledge sharing (e.g. in the form of mentoring) in enterprises (organised by employers) and in local communities (public institutions).
28. The range of support instruments under a just climate transition should include severance pay, leave or start-up measures for businesses. It should be borne in mind, however, that the amount of start-up support usually only allows for micro-enterprises,

and the survival rate of newly established businesses is relatively low. This instrument should, therefore, not exclude employment activation instruments in the form of employees. The regional dimension of transition management is important to avoid a loss of labour potential in the region and, thus, an increase in the risk of degradation.

29. The education system needs to be adapted to the needs of a transforming economy (curricula and further training) and the knowledge and skills of education professionals need to be improved.
30. Countries should effectively implement the recommendations of the Council of the European Union on key competences for lifelong learning; vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, equity and social resilience; and on a European framework for quality and efficiency in apprenticeships.
31. It should be easier for companies to invest in workers' qualifications and have policies promoting sustainable employment.
32. Climate transformation should be accompanied by investment in collective public transport to improve living conditions, worker mobility and business conditions.
33. The development of housing in various forms of ownership should be encouraged to increase the mobility of workers and improve their living conditions in the regions.
34. Public awareness of the climate transition needs to be increased to enable adaptation planning and the use of support instruments, building public trust and transparency in the transition process. Employers should conduct information campaigns at the company level and public administrations at the regional and national levels.

Strengthening the role of social dialogue

1. Where necessary, legislation should be amended, in cooperation with the social partners, to increase opportunities for effective collective bargaining in the area of climate transformation. Changes should include legislation blocking the creation and activities of trade unions and generalising the role of social dialogue (including worker participation) in business management. In addition, social dialogue should be strengthened by dedicating adequate public and private (enterprise) resources to it.
2. Existing social dialogue institutions should be used to organise cooperation between the government and social partners on the content and implementation of national and regional development strategies that take into account a just climate transition.
3. The level of employee co-determination in both the private and public sectors should be increased by introducing the possibility for employees to participate in the bodies of private companies.

4. The right of employees to be informed and consulted and to be involved in decision-making in the event of restructuring should be strengthened, including through a legal framework at the EU level dedicated to the climate transition.
5. The social partners and their structure can be used to communicate dedicated climate transition projects and instruments to businesses and employees (a relay and platform for communication and building public trust within the climate transition process).
6. It is worth disseminating knowledge on social dialogue and worker participation in business management to the public through the education system.
7. Workers and communities need to understand the climate transition process, so special efforts should be made to ensure that information is available and communicated to the social partners on an ongoing basis. Information about the climate transition, the timetable for the process and the progress of activities should be made available to the public and addressed directly to the social partners. Pursuing a factual information policy will build public awareness of the process, increase transparency, and enable stakeholders to plan their education, career paths, and how to heat their homes or businesses. Knowledge-based information should take place at all levels and in various forms appropriate to the content audience.
8. Sufficient time should be set aside to provide employees and their representatives with the necessary information on the just transition process, use appropriate forms of communication (e.g. written - on paper or electronically; in face-to-face or online meetings; webinars; Q&A sessions, newsletters) and enable preparation for dialogue on the issue.
9. It is worth setting up a forum with social partners (at the national and regional level, companies) to monitor the implementation of the climate transition and its equitable dimension.
10. Public institutions, employers and social partner organisations can organise expert training on a just climate transition to build the specialisation of specific social partner and employee representatives in company bodies, e.g., external institutions and experts.
11. Public and EU funds should be used to organise cooperation between the social partners to exchange knowledge and good practices in climate transformation (national and international levels).
12. The social partners should co-create and monitor the application of social protection instruments, professional activation, and the spending of public funds at the state, sector, regional and company levels.
13. Trade unions and employers' organisations should use their structure to increase the flow of information on the climate transition and use its potential to build

pressure to include, for example, labour issues. Communication and coordination of positions within and between organisations (alliance building) should be strengthened. The flow of knowledge needs to be two-way, between all levels of the organisational structure and between workers and their representatives in the corporate bodies. The advantage of good internal communication is the consistency of actions and their greater support.

14. The social partners should build knowledge on the climate transition to shape internal expertise and develop action strategies and thus better represent the interests of their members. Knowledge building can take the form of self-directed research, cooperation between social partners at the national and international level, use of external experts and expertise. This approach requires financial investment in people and networking.
15. The social partners can designate a person within their structure or create a group/team that will be responsible for gathering knowledge (building specialisation) on the climate transition process. Other representatives can use this resource in the social dialogue.
16. Negotiation and presentation skills need to be improved.
17. The social partners and employee representatives of company bodies should document their work in climate transformation to a greater extent and present it externally. This increases awareness of the positions presented, demonstrates a role in shaping the process and influences public awareness and decision-making processes. It also builds the credibility of employee representatives in the public sphere regarding climate transformation. Achievements to improve working conditions and increase the field of worker participation have a concrete face of the people who did it - they need to be shown in a modern form. Available forms of disseminating experiences are paper publications, thematic exhibitions, audiovisual recordings made available on the web, personal meetings, and participation in radio programmes or television recordings. Good practices in this area should be included in the implemented action strategy for improving the effectiveness of employee participation in enterprise management.
18. At the company level, two-way communication with employees and their representatives should be developed to define employee needs and expectations and create climate transformation solutions.
19. At the company level, ensure that employees have access to reliable and transparent information on the planned climate transition by, for example, organising expert meetings in the workplace and publishing content to raise awareness of the process among employees and their representatives. Diverse forms of communication should be used within the company, including attention to timely and constructive feedback from employees and their representatives. It is important to know how meetings are organised (scope of topics, time allocated to them, timing). They must not be infrequent, general and with too little time for discussion.

20. It is good practice for the company to set up a special committee at the company level dedicated to the climate transition process, delegating people to it who will be responsible for the flow of information on the issue (liaison officers).
21. Awareness of the benefits of employee participation through social dialogue and participation of employees in bodies, cannot be directed to groups already convinced but should be directed to society as a whole and the stakeholders of economic relations. The responsibility for the conduct and condition of social dialogue lies with national governments and European Union bodies.

Strengthening the capacity of the social partners

1. The capacity of the social partners should be invested in (public and EU funding (e.g. a separate envelope for organising social dialogue as part of a just climate transition)).
2. Knowledge needs to be disseminated, as members need to be familiar with climate policy issues to bring them into the collective bargaining process and ensure that the transformation processes are just. Increasing the involvement of affiliated members in discussions on the implementation of the European Green Deal will make them well informed, so their interests can be well represented in the climate transition process. Organising seminars, training, question-and-answer sessions and providing studies is a useful way to disseminate knowledge, demand and exchange information and thus raise awareness. It is good practice to involve scientific experts, local government representatives, local authorities and stakeholders in the climate transition process; a two-way exchange of information must occur at all levels (company, sector, national). Methods should be developed to coordinate cooperation between levels within an organisation (within its structure).
3. It is good practice to set up internal climate policy groups within the social partners' organisations or to appoint a person who specialised in climate policy so that the organisation's leaders can use the knowledge. Having regular meetings with those responsible for the climate transition is good practice.
4. Investment by the social partners in digital skills and tools to open up and widen the field of action, including communication, presentation of positions, networking, planning of joint actions, meetings, information campaigns and thus public support and coalitions of cooperation to influence decisions at company, sector, regional and national level. It is worth using traditional and electronic media to present positions on the climate transition. The right level of effort to shape media messages and skilful management of information distribution channels can determine the success of actions.
5. Organise so-called days of action to raise awareness of demands for a just climate transition and to increase the role of dialogue and worker participation in this process.

6. It is good practice for social partners to engage with local and national NGOs to exchange knowledge and positions and build joint activities.
7. It is useful to use the experience of organisational leaders who have finished their careers as social activists for mentoring. Such individuals can become guides in shaping social dialogue and employee participation, experts to advise during collective bargaining, and authors of expert reports incorporating acquired knowledge.
8. International cooperation is where trade unions should strengthen interaction and coordination of activities. Social dialogue structures at the European level are an important forum for cross-industry and sectoral discussions and negotiations between the social partners, as well as a place for exchanging knowledge and experience, initiating action and responding promptly to workers' needs. Cooperation is important, especially in a globalised world of transnational corporations and an increasingly integrated management of the business environment of companies at the level of EU institutions affecting the life of societies.

The role of EU policy

1. The conditions for climate transformation must be created by re-examining and revising the European Union's energy policy.
2. The European Commission should encourage good practice in social dialogue and worker participation in business management, including high-quality social consultation at the state level. The European Semester (an instrument of economic governance in the European Union), the European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Reconstruction Fund and the process of disbursement of Community funds should be used to enforce countries to conduct an effective social dialogue.
3. A separate and annually renewed EU resource should be dedicated to building capacity for social dialogue and increasing the role of collective bargaining in the EU economy during the climate transition.
4. At the EU level, recommendations for timely and high-quality public consultation and the participation of trade unions and workers' representatives at local, national and European levels in the policy-making of countries should be defined and enforced.
5. The European Commission should effectively review the actions of states in implementing and applying the Adequate Minimum Wage Directive in the European Union regarding the Action Plan for the Promotion of Collective Bargaining and Collective Agreements.
6. European Union directives on corporate sustainability reporting and due diligence should be shaped accordingly, including increasing the scope and specific requirements in this area for social (including employee) issues.

Summary

The challenges of climate protection and sustainable development remain among the most serious globally today. A condition for sustainable economic growth that meets the objectives of the European economy as set out in the strategic documents of the European Union, including the European Green Deal, is an effective partnership between the main stakeholders, including the social partners, through the social dialogue. Efforts must be made to make social dialogue effective at every level of the social dimension of the European Union is to be realised. This is particularly important in a corporate restructuring (resulting from adaptation to a low-carbon economy). Given the legal obligations, the responsibility for the conduct of social dialogue and the capacity of the social partners in this regard lies with national governments and EU bodies. Once again, the importance of education must be stressed, which must involve not only employees but especially those running businesses, especially in the area of the social responsibility of their activities. A just dimension of climate transformation can only be achieved by deciding on this process together.



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