



TOGETHER FOR A FAIR DEAL FOR WORKERS

LV/BL/ch
Brussels, 15 May 2024

To: Permanent Representatives to the European Union
[Letter sent by e-mail]

Subject: Urgent Call to Support Inclusion of Just Transition Elements in Council Conclusions

Dear Permanent Representatives,

I am writing to you as Confederal Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation to call on you to support the maintenance and inclusion of ambitious just transition elements in the ongoing Working Party on the Environment discussions taking place on May 21st.

The EU has achieved a lot in progressing just transition policies over the last number of years. Yet we cannot allow these positive developments to end after the elections in June. While other EU bodies are discussing the future role of industry in achieving climate neutrality, the Council Conclusions you are discussing are the main forum to set the direction of wider EU climate action for the next five years. These are the crucial years in which we must act in the interest of workers and future generations together.

When citizens were asked in a 2022 Eurobarometer survey if they thought the EU was doing enough to ensure a just and fair transition, only half of respondents agreed positively¹. More ambitious action is required. Public support for the just transition at the European level is at stake.

For our members, it is imperative that the previous calls for an EU Just Transition Policy Framework, bolstering social dialogue, conducting comprehensive impact assessments, and prioritizing social investments and proactive planning remain intact. Without these foundational pillars in every Member State, achieving a transition that safeguards the livelihoods of at-risk workers will be an even harder challenge.

The one element that has not been discussed in detail we would like to see included, however, is a direct call for a Just Transition Directive. Our endorsement of this Directive stems from the conviction that it embodies the most equitable approach to distributing the benefits of transition across Member States. Regrettably, the current climate transition disproportionately impacts certain regions, exacerbating inequities. The Council Conclusions you are deliberating upon possess the potential to rectify this imbalance.

We wish to stress that the Just Transition Directive is not merely another legislative addition but rather the missing link essential for the success of existing policies,

¹ [Fairness perceptions of the green transition - October 2022 - Eurobarometer \(survey\)](#)



particularly within the framework of the European Green Deal. It would establish a crucial social foundation to foster trust among citizens, workers, and communities, thereby facilitating the implementation of ambitious climate policies.

This call for a directive was passed by the representatives of 45 million European workers at the European Trade Union Confederation Congress in 2023². It has been further supported by the European Parliament's resolution from November on job creation³ and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) Opinion published in December at the request of the current Belgian Presidency⁴ of the Council of the EU. It is of also significance to the trade union movement that at least 21 EU-level civil society organisations are campaigning for the establishment of a just transition directive⁵. This highlights the widespread recognition of its importance and the publicly popular nature of its inclusion.

Thus, we urge you and your respective national representatives to advocate strongly for the inclusion of the phrase "Invites the Commission to present a legislative proposal for a Just Transition" in the Council Conclusions at the forthcoming meetings of the Working Party on Environment.

Climate challenges transcend national boundaries; they demand collaborative efforts to ensure a just transition for all workers and communities across the European Union. It is imperative that you and your national representatives participating in the Working Party discussions on **May 21st** vigorously defend the ambitious just transition elements outlined above and further enrich the Conclusions to encompass a Just Transition Directive.

We look forward to your positive response in relation to this matter and to discussing with you further how we can support a just transition now and after the EU elections in June.

Yours sincerely,

Ludovic Voet

ETUC Confederal Secretary

² [ETUC Action Programme Together for a Fair Deal for Workers.pdf](#)

³ [Texts adopted - Job creation – the just transition and impact investments - Thursday, 23 November 2023 \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁴ [Towards a just transition legislative proposal and EU policy tools that enable a more social European Green Deal](#)

⁵ [Letter to Ministers – EU Just Transition Alliance](#)