

CHAPTER 1: A FRAMEWORK ON ANTICIPATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE TRANSITION AT THE COMPANY LEVEL

1. The twin energy-digital transition towards Climate Neutrality is profoundly changing the European gas sector and will lead to massive transformation at the company and workforce level. The European Green Deal and specifically the Hydrogen and Decarbonised Gas Package are going to impact the sector's development with ~~a~~-widespread implications on the present and future workforce. At the same time, skills and labour shortages are already affecting the European gas sector. Organising job-to-job transitions for the current workforce is a priority in many companies, while in others attracting the future qualified workforce will be vital for the sector to transform. Broad, open and transparent dialogue is a prerequisite to addressing concerns of regional and local communities, and facilitating shared and accepted transition plans that address the wider communities' development.

To ensure a just transition, companies must anticipate the changes that will occur to protect workers and ensure the company's sustainability. For transition to be economically successful and socially responsible, it requires to be integrated in a long-term strategy.

2. For that to happen, there is a need to anticipate the development of both employment and working conditions, in particular where these may be under threat as well as in areas where new jobs will be created.
3. A Just Transition is facilitated, and the impact of industrial changes softened, if companies engage in comprehensive social dialogue with ~~their~~its workforce. That means timely and effective information sharing and consultation with the workforce, alongside effective collective bargaining to negotiate programmes that facilitate job-to-job transitions. Company level Just Transition Plans, based on continuous anticipation of change in social partnership with trade unions, enable the development of resilient strategies and programmes. Such planning increases the workforce's employability, internal and external mobility, and the success of job-to-job transitions that benefit workers and companies' competitiveness alike.
4. Companies in the gas sector provide significant employment at regional and local level. Therefore, adaptable companies and resilient workforces must develop, in comprehensive social dialogue with workers through their trade unions ~~and workers' representatives.~~ This should also involve regional and local authorities such as public employment services and VET providers, mechanisms for anticipation, and forward planning around employment and skills needs. ~~Additionally: broad, open and transparent dialogue with all stakeholders is a prerequisite to addressing concerns of regional and local communities, and facilitating shared and accepted transition plans that address the wider communities' development.~~
5. With the full involvement of workers through their trade unions ~~and workers' representatives~~, all companies shall adopt a Just Transition plan to ensure that their operations and supply chains are decarbonised in line with the EU Green Deal targets. Trade Unions and Works Councils at a local, national and European level shall be informed and consulted in a timely and effective way on adaptation ~~for to~~ the climate emergency and the requirements of EU and national legislation. In addition to emissions reduction objectives and investment plans in decarbonised technologies, the Just Transition plan shall map and clarify the employment and skills needs and the accompanying social measures aimed at promoting employment and quality jobs throughout the transition, including addressing strategic jobs and skills planning and related training policies.

6. In this just transition plan, companies will establish, in co-operation with workers through their trade unions and workers' representatives:
 - a. a long-term strategy of quantitative and qualitative employment and skills needs that are linked to transition's strategies. This strategy shall take into account the foreseeable evolution of the gas sector and its impact on employment, skills and working conditions,
 - b. a social impact assessment ~~that~~ will be carried out as far in advance as possible of any organisational development project in sufficient time and such a manner as to allow meaningful trade union involvement and in full respect of existing information and consultation procedures where applicable. It is a prerequisite for the implementation of the new organisation. The social impact assessment, which includes the reasons for the project of transition and transformation (economic context, competition, changing needs in terms of professions and skills, changing national, European or international legislative framework etc.) describes the consequences for the employees concerned. To carry out this social impact assessment, the companies concerned will set up a multi-disciplinary team made up in equal numbers of trade union representatives and members of the company with expertise in financial matters, human resources, occupational health & safety, labour relations, etc. ~~Employee representatives~~ Workers through their trade unions shall also have effective access to an external expert.
 - c. multiannual plans of employment, skills and working conditions development covering the most relevant areas, all parts of the operations and the value chain
7. To be able to effectively develop the Just Transition plans, the social impact assessments and the multiannual plans of employment, workers and their trade unions must be provided with sufficient means (expertise, training, meeting facilities) must be put in place by the company for companies and workers to understand the future employment needs on the company level.
8. ~~To mitigate the social consequences of the Just Transition plan,~~ companies should look for/prioritise all alternatives and exhaust all options before resorting to forced redundancies or plant closures, in constant consultation and dialogue with workers through their trade unions and worker representatives and in full respect of existing information and consultation procedures where applicable. Where ~~ren~~ unavoidable, binding social plans shall be negotiated with unions in all countries, prioritising reinstatement for dismissed workers in jobs with equal or better levels of employment standards and working conditions.

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CHAPTER 2: ENSURING A STRONG SOCIAL DIALOGUE FOR A JUST TRANSITION

9. Just Transition means transforming the economy in a fair and inclusive manner to ensure the maintenance and creation of good quality jobs. The participation of workers and their trade unions in the anticipation and social management of industrial change is a prerequisite.
10. ~~It is essential to provide all workers and through their representatives trade unions with the information needed to understand and be aware of ongoing and future changes, the challenges involved and their forecast impacts in terms of jobs and skills. In order to develop a Just Transition at the company level, workers through their representative and trade unions must be properly involved, informed and consulted about the decarbonisation plan of the company and must be provided with a strategic planning for changes to jobs and skills.~~

~~11.10.~~ Each company must respect the right of an employee-worker to join a trade union. Where not yet established, ~~trade unions and~~ employers in each company must engage in good faith social dialogue negotiations to form with a workers' representative trade union body in line with national legislation and full respect of trade union rights, including the right to organise.

~~12.11.~~ Companies shall endorse the creation of specific mandates for Just Transition shop stewards within companies, equivalent to occupational health and safety representatives, with the right to specific training ~~if needed~~ and involvement in corporate transition planning. These shop stewards must be appointed by a genuine workers' representative body.

~~13.12.~~ To ensure fair solutions for all workers ~~Call~~ companies and ~~their workers' representatives as well as trade unions~~ shall ~~negotiate~~ have in place collective agreements ~~that facilitate and prepare cover~~ the detailed aspects related to the job-to-job transition of ~~employees-workers~~ arising from the energy transition. These agreements should ensure the inclusive planning of the employment transition at the appropriate level and guarantee that newly created jobs are covered by collective agreements that ensure quality employment and attractive working conditions

~~14.13.~~ Companies will involve workers through trade unions and worker representatives in designing, implementing and monitoring Just Transition plans, from the earliest stage. ~~Design, implementation and monitoring of Just transition plans as defined in article 5 and decarbonisation plans~~ must be recognised as a topic for social dialogue at sectoral and company level.

~~15.14.~~ Before any major final company decision is taken, ~~workplace representatives and workers through~~ their trade unions must have:

- timely access to meaningful and comprehensive up-to-date information about the likely adaptation of the company strategy to decarbonisation and the consequence on the company's economic performance, jobs and working conditions;
- enough time and resources to run an in-depth assessment of the information provided with the support of economic/financial experts, to work on alternatives to measures which would negatively impact workers, including redundancies or plant closures;
- the genuine opportunity to discuss those alternatives with real decision-makers, including top management and board members (if any), who must provide a motivated response to the proposed alternatives and justification for the final decision which will be made;
- the guarantee that non-compliance with workers' rights warrants deterrent sanctions, in particular the suspension of any business plan or restructuring project, until proper information and consultation procedures have been completed. Moreover, clear procedures must be set for ~~worker representatives~~ workers through their trade unions to seek redress before the court.

~~16.15.~~ The social partners in the gas sector will promote engage in collective bargaining within their membership to ensure the inclusive planning of the employment transition at the appropriate level and guarantee that newly created jobs are covered by collective agreements, ensuring quality employment and an attractive working environment. They fully endorse fundamental worker's rights, in particular the freedom to organise and access to trade unions.

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