

A just transition framework for the gas workers

European Framework Agreement between Eurogas, industriAll European Trade Union and EPSU

Introduction

- While the twin energy-digital transition towards Climate Neutrality will profoundly change the European gas sector and will lead to transformation at the company and workforce level, it will also pave the way for a future proof gas industry. The European Green Deal and specifically the Hydrogen and Decarbonised Gas Package are going to impact the sector's development with widespread implications on the present and future workforce. Organising training, upskilling, professional development programmes, and job-to-job transitions where necessary 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.
- To ensure a just transition, companies must anticipate the changes that will occur to protect workers and ensure the company's sustainability. For the transition to be economically successful and socially responsible, considerations should be integrated into a long-term strategy. For that to happen, there is a need to anticipate developments in both, employment and working conditions, in particular where these may be changing, as well as in areas where new jobs will be created.
- A Just Transition is facilitated, and the impact of industrial changes softened, if companies engage in comprehensive social dialogue with their workforce. That means timely and effective information sharing and consultation with the workforce, alongside effective collective bargaining to negotiate programmes to facilitate training, upskilling and where necessary job-to-job transitions. Company level just transition plans, or any other equivalent existing documents, based on continuous anticipation of change in social partnership with workers representatives, enable the development of resilient strategies and programmes. Such planning increases the workforce's employability, internal and external mobility, and the success of career guidance that benefit workers and companies' competitiveness alike.

- Companies in the gas sector provide significant employment at regional and local level. Therefore, in order to be adaptable and resilient, companies and workforces must develop mechanisms for anticipation and forward planning around employment and skills needs. These mechanisms should be developed through comprehensive social dialogue with workers' representatives.

General considerations

Having regards that:

- There are ongoing efforts towards the decarbonisation of the gas sector, while the new Hydrogen and Decarbonised Gas Package and other legislative proposals linked to Fit for 55 and REPowerEU will impact the sector and labour markets.
- Both risks and opportunities are attached to the decarbonisation of companies: hundreds of thousands of new jobs will be created, while others will change or be replaced.
- There is a need to secure a socially Just Transition for the workers of the gas sector
- The gas sector employs a highly qualified workforce which will play a crucial role in the transition to net-zero. These skills are valuable both in the gas and in other energy sectors, like hydrogen and electricity.
- All workers must be equipped to face the changes, and must benefit from training, upskilling, career development programmes and job-to-job transitions where necessary, or other appropriate protection measures that ensure that no one is left behind.
- There are actions to be done in terms of diversity, equity and inclusion in the gas sector that must be dealt with through an intersectional approach.
- Workers' participation is key to increasing the attractiveness of the sector and ensuring a just transition.
- A broad, open, goodwill and transparent dialogue is a prerequisite for resolving the problems of regional and local communities and facilitating the development of joint and agreed transition plans that address the development of wider communities.

Whereas

- The Social Partners may, under Article 155(1) and Article 155(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (the TFEU), negotiate contractual agreements to be implemented in accordance with the procedures and practices specific to management and labour and the Member States.

- In a statement published in November 2020, the Social Partners in the EU Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for the Gas Sector, EPSU, IndustriAll Europe and Eurogas, shared their joint commitment to the transition to decarbonised and renewable gases and providing quality employment in Europe.
- From 2021-2022, the Social Partners carried out a project on challenges and opportunities for employment in the gas sector in the context of the European energy transition: Ensuring a Just Transition for Workers. The final report, published in January 2023, recommends, amongst other things, that “available social dialogue tools at EU level should be assessed and used where appropriate to ensure a just transition of the sector”.

HAVE AGREED ON THE FOLLOWING

Purpose

The agreement lays down minimum requirements for a just transition in the gas sector in order to :

- anticipate changes and provide appropriate solutions and trainings to enable the workforce to develop new skills and secure job-to-job transitions where necessary or other appropriate protection measures that ensure that no one is left behind
- equip and accompany the workers to face changes with the right skills to accelerate the transition in the gas sector
- improve diversity, equity and inclusion at the workplace in order to include everyone in the transformation of the sector.

Scope

This agreement applies to all workers and employers in the gas sector and national and multinational companies operating in the European Union and the European Economic Area.

The signatory parties of the present autonomous agreement are:

- the European Federation of gas employers (Eurogas) which represents wholesale and retail gas markets, the distribution of natural gas, biomethane and hydrogen and natural gas vehicle industries duly represented by its Secretary general James WATSON,
- the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) which represents public service workers across Europe duly represented by its general secretary Jan Willem GOUDRIAAN,
- the IndustriAll Europe Trade Union Federation which represent workers in the industry sector duly represented by its General Secretary Judith KIRTON DARLING and its Deputy General Secretary Isabelle BARTHES.

Other organisations and companies, including new entrants, in the sector not represented by Eurogas are invited to apply the provisions of the present agreement in order to ensure a just transition in the entire gas sector.

Definitions

- “Workers” means a worker as established according to national law, collective agreements or practices in each Member State with consideration to the case law of the European Court of Justice.
- “Workers’ representatives” means workers’ representatives as provided in national law, collective agreement and/or practice, and fully recognising and respecting the prerogatives of trade unions and their representatives. Where both trade union representatives and elected representatives exist in the same undertaking, such representation should not be used to undermine the positions of the trade unions concerned or of their representatives.
- “Information and consultation rights” are defined in line with the relevant European and national law in this field, and collective agreements.
- “Workers’ involvement” refers to information, consultation and participation of workers in line with national and European rules and practices.
- “Quality of work” / “quality jobs” refers to the European Union’s objective to promote ‘improved living and working conditions’ as laid down in Article 151 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The term covers such aspects as security, decent remuneration and working conditions, training and investment in skills.
- “Just Transition Plan” refers to any company policies, plans or programs aiming at anticipating and mitigating the impact of decarbonisation of the company on workers, customers, territories and suppliers.

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

1. Workers’ representatives at a local, national, and European level shall be informed and consulted where applicable in a timely and effective way on companies’ decarbonisation plans in keeping with the requirements of EU and national legislation and in compliance with the confidentiality provisions detailed in paragraph 59.

2. All companies shall adopt a Social Just Transition plan with the full involvement of workers' representatives. The Social 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.
3. Social Just Transition Plans are fundamentally linked to decarbonisation plans and must serve to protect workers, provide opportunities and minimise stress and uncertainty.
4. In the Social Just Transition Plan, companies will establish, in co-operation with workers' representatives:
 - a. As a prerequisite, a social impact assessment shall be carried out, as far in advance as possible, ahead of any organisational development project in sufficient time and such a manner as to allow meaningful involvement by workers' representative and in full respect of existing information and consultation procedures where applicable. The social impact assessment will describe the consequences for the workers concerned and to the greatest extent possible, the reasons for the project (economic context, competition, changing needs in terms of professions and skills, changing national, European or international legislative framework etc.). This social impact assessment shall be presented transparently and factor in financial matters, human resources, occupational health & safety, labour relations, etc. Workers' representatives shall also have effective access to an external expert in accordance with the national legal provisions in line with European Works Council (EWC)'s agreements where existing.
 - b. a mapping of quantitative and qualitative employment and skills needs that are linked to transition strategies. This mapping could be based on existing documents or sectoral analysis and shall take into account the foreseeable evolution of the gas sector and its impact on employment, skills and working conditions and should be accompanied by multiannual plans of employment, skills and training policies and working conditions' development, covering all parts of the operations. The multiannual employment plans will be developed in line with Clause 5 on strong diversity at the workplace.
5. To be able to effectively develop the Just Transition plans which will include social impact assessments and multi-annual plans of employment, workers' representatives must be provided with adequate and reasonable means (expertise, training meeting facilities) by the company.
6. Companies should consider all alternatives and exhaust all options before resorting to forced redundancies or plant closures, in constant consultation and dialogue with workers'

representatives and in full respect of existing information, consultation procedures, national laws and collective agreements where applicable. Where unavoidable, binding social plans shall be negotiated with unions in all countries, prioritising outplacement for dismissed workers should opportunities subsequently become available in jobs with equal or better levels of employment standards and working conditions.

7. The employers and workers' representatives shall commit to making themselves available to engage with public authorities such as public employment services and vocational, education and training providers.

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

8. Strong social dialogue helps workers and employers alike to meet decarbonisation and social goals. This agreement promotes social dialogue at all levels.
9. Companies should comply with their information and consultation obligations and requirements in keeping with EU and national legislation.
10. Each company must respect the right of a worker to join a trade union and social dialogue with trade unions. They must also afford full respect towards trade union rights.
11. Companies shall support the designation of just transition workers representative(s) preferably designated within workers' representatives' bodies, including EWC, and who should have the sufficient and reasonable dedication of time, training, and resources in accordance with national law and practices.
12. Social partners shall seek to negotiate and conclude collective agreements to ensure a fair and just transition for all workers.
13. Newly created jobs should be covered by collective agreements that ensure quality employment and attractive working conditions.

Clause 3: Ensuring a Job-to-Job transition

14. The shared objective of companies and trade unions is to guarantee quality jobs for workers who are changing or adapting their job as a result of the transition. This will be achieved through implementing clear programs to prepare workers for training, upskilling, career development programmes and job-to-job transitions where these are required. The

companies commit to ensure a transition towards new jobs that are at least of the same quality, as stated in the definition.

15. Job placements in companies or job outplacements and cooperation between companies will be strategic for managing any job-to-job transition in particular for job profiles that might disappear or reduce substantially. Companies commit to a strategic job transition and development discussion with workers' representatives (as defined in Clauses 1 and 2). Where job to job transitions are necessary, priority should be given to internal placements within the same company. If internal placements within the company cannot be secured, priority should be given to job transitions within the same company group. If placements in the same company group cannot be secured, cooperation agreements should be explored with undertakings from the same or different economic sectors to support a job-to-job transition. Companies commit to identify jointly with workers' representatives job placement opportunities as well as the options for outplacements.
16. Employers and workers' representatives recognise that career development interviews are a prerequisite to a correct anticipation of change and a successful transition. Employers commit to provide regularly career development interview to potentially impacted workers, regardless of their employment status. Such interviews will explore and outline individual career plans based on company-wide Social Just Transition plans and social impact assessments as outlined in Clause 1.
17. In the framework of these interviews, the employer and the worker will establish targets and outcomes for training and life-long learning to achieve the developed career plans set out.
18. Workers' representatives will be closely involved in developing these career development interviews to ensure that the quality and modalities are adequate. In order to advise the workers in relation to their career developments, the workers have the possibility to be accompanied in these interviews by a workers' representative. Employers also have the possibility to be accompanied. If a party wants to be accompanied, they will inform the other party in advance.

Clause 4: Quality Training as the key to employment security

19. Social partners recognise that training and lifelong learning are necessary to maintain workers' qualifications and skills and to ensure their employment security. Accordingly, workers will have access to suitable training.
20. In keeping with the career development interviews as defined in Clause 3, all workers shall have the right to suitable training to adapt their skills to their future jobs. Training

opportunities linked to the interview's targets/outcomes should be updated regularly and should be independent from the skills maintenance program.

21. The training on offer must be of sufficient quality to achieve these aims. In training policies as outlined in the social just transition plan and reflected in the outcomes and targets of the individual career development interviews, reference should be made to existing European and/or international VET frameworks. Employers will involve workers' representatives on a regular basis on the development of these training policies, including on the duration, completion rates, overall training budgets etc.
22. Social partners recognise the importance of in-person training.
23. The training will be accessible for vulnerable groups, promoting inclusion and diversity.
24. Employers acknowledge a social responsibility towards young people and the need to invest in their inclusion and their preparation for their future jobs in particular through good quality apprenticeships. In doing so, employers will also seek to promote diversity and gender equality in workplaces.
25. Training must be validated, recognised and lead to certified qualifications. These qualifications should be linked to opportunities for workers to remain in employment and acquire the necessary skills for their future job in line with the aforementioned established career paths.
26. The cost of training shall be borne by the employer in accordance with vocational training provisions at the Member State level. The time spent in preparation and postprocessing of the training as well as time spent at the training itself must be considered working time and must be paid accordingly, in line with national laws and collective agreements.
27. Companies facing financial difficulties should have access to dedicated funds to train workers impacted by the job transition.

Clause 5: Strong diversity at the workplace

28. Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) are fundamental EU values and objectives that shall be promoted, guaranteed and implemented in the Just Transition in the gas sector. DEI in the workplace shall follow the principle of non-discrimination, equal treatment and equal opportunities. Direct and indirect discrimination is not permitted. Both the workers' representatives and the companies will work together in order to prevent and eliminate them from the workplace, in accordance with national practices.

29. DEI concern, but are not limited to, the following categories: gender, physical appearance, family name, place of residence or birth, age, disability, political or religious beliefs, sexual orientation and gender identity, or membership of a trade union.
30. In order to promote an inclusive representation among the total workforce, across all occupational categories, companies together with workers' representatives should identify the main barriers and shall develop, implement and monitor, within the Social Just Transition Plans an equity and inclusion strategy to be defined in the workplace. This plan shall clarify the objectives, timeline, measures and best practices, assignment of responsibilities, monitoring, evaluation and reporting, aimed at promoting inclusion and respect of diversity, equity and inclusion at the workplace throughout the transition.
31. Companies shall aim to reach a diverse representation at all levels throughout the transition, namely by increasing the proportion of the under-represented groups when there is a strong imbalance. Diverse leadership can set the tone for the rest of the company.
32. The development and emergence of new professions related to the energy transition is an opportunity to promote diversity. Companies should promote DEI initiatives in all functions, especially in the technical areas, and at all levels including in leadership positions.
33. Companies and the workers representatives shall promote female dominated professions and make them as attractive for men as they are for women. At the same time, they shall promote male dominated professions and make them as attractive for women as they are for men.
34. Social partners recognise that attractiveness is a key element of a just transition and commit to acknowledge it in the social just transition plans. Attractiveness is firstly linked to good working conditions, good work life balance, including for those with care responsibilities, fair wages and continuous professional development.
35. In order to attract a diverse, young workforce, companies should, in cooperation with workers' representatives, design a number of further internal and external activities. External activities could include, but are not limited to, campaigns and initiatives with schools and universities to promote new energy professions, and in particular, technical professions for women. Internally, this should involve the implementation of awareness programs and other related policies.
36. In order to retain senior workers companies should, in cooperation with workers' representatives, promote upskilling trainings for new energy professions, develop mentorship programs aimed to foster knowledge sharing and transmission, provide career development opportunities and/or adapted working conditions where possible.

37. In accordance with national legislation and collective bargaining, companies shall review job descriptions to eliminate stereotype-based criteria and establish a procedure to ensure that new job profiles are inclusive and merit-based. Job descriptions shall not be based on stereotypes over the specificity of a job or their supposed features (availability, mobility).
38. Companies should identify and monitor the non-discriminatory character of the recruitment process and implement, if necessary, corrective measures. Recruitment shall be based on competences, qualifications, and professional experience. A person shall not be excluded from the recruitment process because of their characteristics including but not limiting to gender, physical appearance, family name, place of residence or birth, age, disability, political or religious beliefs, sexual orientation and gender identity, or membership of a trade union, as listed in paragraph 29.
39. Social Partners agree that training, upskilling and reskilling are vital for better employability and for career development that is attractive to all workers in an inclusive socially just transition. Training opportunities are important vectors towards a strong diversity at the workplace. Companies and workers representatives shall therefore ensure equal access to all development trainings and qualifications for all levels, including top positions, and especially in jobs affected by the transition. This applies also for those who are not in full-time employment. Companies and workers representatives shall ensure that flexible working arrangements do not have a negative impact on the development of vocational, work-related competences or promotion possibilities of the individual.
40. Companies shall make sure that no discrimination based on characteristics, including but not limited to gender, physical appearance, family name, place of residence or birth, age, disability, political or religious beliefs, sexual orientation and gender identity, or membership of a trade union, as listed in paragraph 29, happens when it comes to remuneration levels, salary increases and awarding of bonuses. Companies shall ensure that workers are not forced to reveal their characteristics which are not required by the employment contract if they do not want to.
41. Employers shall monitor the level of wages for men and women in comparable positions and provide for transparent comparable information about pay ranges. They should assess and compare the value of work on objective criteria to prevent or identify and tackle possible pay discrimination based on biased payment, such as: educational, professional and training requirements, skills, effort and responsibility, work undertaken and the nature of tasks. In order to close any identified gender pay gap, companies and workers representatives shall agree on specific indicators and a list of measures to close the gender pay gap and should

make available to workers the rules and criteria (e.g. national laws; collective agreements; sectoral or company rules) used to determine the variable components of remunerations, such as payments in kind and bonuses.

42. Companies shall make sure that maternity leave is not an element that will affect salary increases, promotions and awarding bonuses. Such consideration should be applied to parental and paternity leave as well, in accordance with EU and national laws and collective agreements.
43. A policy against sexual harassment, harassment/mobbing, sexism bias, and discrimination shall be put in place in all companies in cooperation with workers' representatives. Such a policy should:
 - Clearly state what is considered inappropriate behaviour in the workplace
 - Promote preventive and awareness raising measures
 - Explain that such behaviour may be unlawful
 - Discourage all forms of inappropriate behaviour, and state that this will be sanctioned in the workplace, notwithstanding any legal action
 - Contain clear, proportionate, progressive and properly enforced disciplinary procedures
 - Extend protection from harassment and violence to every person who could be affected from behaviours which are attributable to companies' workers and/or anyone who collaborates or works in the name of or on behalf of or in the interest of companies, such as customers, suppliers, contract-workers, commercial and industrial partners.
44. Privacy, confidentiality and safety will be guaranteed throughout and following a complaint procedure to protect the victim, witnesses, and alleged perpetrator until proven guilty. Companies shall promote awareness campaigns through training, communication, and e-learning.
45. Anyone reporting an incident must be granted privacy and confidentiality to avoid any discriminatory measures.

Clause 6: Implementation

46. This framework agreement is an autonomous initiative and the result of negotiations between the European social partners in the gas sector. In the context of article 155 of the Treaty, this autonomous European framework agreement commits the members of Eurogas, industriAll Europe and EPSU to jointly promote and implement tools and measures following

the implementation guidelines in paragraphs 53 to 57, at the appropriate level, whether national, sectoral and/or company level, in accordance with the relevant legislations, procedures and practices specific to management and labour in the Member States and in the countries of the European Economic Area. The signatory parties also invite their member organisations in candidate countries to implement this agreement.

47. Implementation of the provisions of this Agreement shall not constitute valid grounds for reducing the general level of protection afforded to workers in the field covered by this Agreement. Social partners and/or Member States cannot use the implementation of the agreement as a pretext for reducing the level of protection acquired prior to the implementation of the framework agreement.
48. The agreement will not prejudice the right of social partners to conclude, at the appropriate level, agreements implementing and/or complementing this agreement provided that the general level of protection of workers is ensured.
49. The signatory parties shall evaluate and review the application of the agreement every 3 years following the date of signature. The Monitoring Committee (as defined in paragraph 53) will establish criteria to assess the application of the agreement.
50. The agreement will remain in force unless the parties decide to renegotiate.
51. In case of questions on the content of this agreement, member organisations involved can jointly or separately refer to the signatory parties, who will jointly or separately reply based on a clarification elaborated jointly by the signatory parties. Questions related to the interpretation of the agreement should be dealt with as soon as possible.
52. Proportionality takes into account the size of the company in order to ensure that small and medium sized enterprises (SME) are not disproportionately impacted. The three relevant sized companies for consideration, as defined in the Annex to the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC (13), are micro, small, and medium. The Recommendation also sets out a proportionality approach that should be followed in the implementation of this agreement.

Implementation guidelines

Implementation and monitoring

53. To monitor progress and the implementation of the agreement at European level, the parties agree to set up a dedicated Monitoring Committee at European level composed jointly of employers and trade unions' representatives. The size of the Committee shall be such as to

be workable in practice and is fixed at a maximum of 21 (i.e. 7 per signatory party) including the secretariats. The Committee will meet once a year.

54. The main aim of this Committee is to monitor the implementation and interpretation of the agreement, identifying existing problems and to propose possible solutions.
55. Social partners at the appropriate level, whether European, national, sectoral, company and/or any relevant level foreseen by national practices and/or collective agreements, will report, preferably jointly, on the implementation of this agreement (new or existing measures or plans) to the Committee. This should be done once a year before the Monitoring Committee meeting takes place. Information will be shared and discussed with the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for the gas sector.
56. In case of no reporting and/or implementation after one year, joint actions together with the national social partners of the countries concerned will be taken to identify the best way forward in implementing this framework agreement in the national context.
57. The implementation report will cover every clause of this agreement and will look at key indicators such as:
 - a. Clause 1: Social Just Transition Plans
 - Social impact assessments (both in terms of quantity and quality)
 - Mapping of quantitative and qualitative employment and skills needs linked to transition strategies
 - Multiannual plans of employment, upskilling, reskilling and working conditions (including job to job transition)
 - b. Clause 2: Social Dialogue for a Just Transition
 - Proportion of workers covered by collective agreements
 - Workers' involvement (workers' representative body, at which level of the company, number of meetings)
 - Just transition worker representative (and at which level)
 - Collective agreements on Just Transition (and at which level)
 - New jobs and activities covered by collective agreements
 - c. Clause 3: Job-to-job transitions
 - Programs to prepare job to job transitions for which type of jobs
 - Number of posts filled through internal mobility
 - Number of workers using outplacement

- Number of development interviews and percentage of interviews relative to total workforce
- d. Clause 4: Quality training
- Suitable training plans/offers to adapt skills for future jobs
 - Percentage and number of workerd trained (divided by characteristics such as gender identity and person with disabilities)
 - Number of in person / e-learning courses made available
 - Number of apprenticeships
 - Validation, recognition and/or certification linked to trainings
 - Funding source of trainings
- e. Clause 5: Diversity
- Number of diversity and inclusion action plans carried out
 - Distribution of data in the workforce in terms of:
 1. Number and ratios (%) by gender identity
 2. Number and ratios (%) of workers with disabilities
 3. Age pyramid (number and ratios)
 4. Socio-professional categories according to national classification (such as blue collar worker, employee, technician, senior technician, manager)
 - On issue such as :
 1. General Employment Conditions
 - Workforce
 - Permanent and temporary contracts
 - Working time and work organisation
 - Full or part-time work
 - Parental leave (non-gender specific)
 - Recruitment
 2. Remuneration
 - Gross annual salaries
 3. Training
 - Number of training hours

Funding

58. The social partners will jointly examine the funding opportunities from the European Commission to support the implementation and assessment of the agreement.

Confidentiality clause

59. With respect to the provision of information, the company may impose a requirement of confidentiality if there are reasonable grounds to do so. Where possible, the grounds for imposing an obligation of confidentiality, the duration of the confidentiality, the information subject to such obligation (“confidential information”) shall be stated, in line with national confidentiality legislations where they exist.

Translation

This Agreement will be translated into all official EU languages. The English version is binding for interpretation.

Entry into Effect

This Agreement will enter into effect six months after signature by the Parties.

Annex: Relevant European references:

- The International Labour Organization defines the Just Transition as greening the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned and creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind.
- In December 2023, the European Economic and Social Committee published an exploratory opinion setting out six key elements of a Just Transition Policy Framework. The opinion finds that a just transition should be high on the political agenda of the next legislature and should be developed and implemented through meaningful social dialogue and collective bargaining, civil dialogue and the engagement of regional and local authorities.
- The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union enshrines the principles of non-discrimination, diversity and equality, and workers’ rights to information and consultation, collective bargaining and action, and fair and just working conditions.
- The 1996 Revised Social Charter of the Council of Europe contains similar rights, including the right to just conditions of work, safe and healthy working conditions, fair remuneration, collective bargaining, information and consultation, and equal opportunities.
- The European Pillar of Social Rights sets out 20 principles to support well-functioning and fair labour markets and welfare systems. Principle 1 provides for the right to education, training and life-long learning, in order to manage labour transitions. Principle 2 and Principle 3 reinforce the fundamental EU Principles of gender equality and equality of opportunity in the

labour market. Principle 5 enshrines the right to secure and adaptable employment. Principle 7 and Principle 8 reinforce workers' rights to information and social dialogue.

- The Race and Ethnicity Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) implements the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.
- The Equal Treatment Directive (2006/54/EC) implements the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation.
- In April 2023, The European Parliament and the Council of the EU adopted the Pay Transparency Directive to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms. Member States have three years to transpose the Directive into national law.
- The November 2017 Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships sets out 14 criteria to define quality and effective apprenticeships, including pay and/or compensation, health and safety, the involvement of social partners, and flexible pathways and mobility.
- In January 2023, the European Economic and Social Committee published an opinion welcoming the proposed Council Recommendation on Strengthening Social Dialogue and stressing that social dialogue plays a key role in shaping economic, labour and social policies that promote the upward convergence of living and working conditions.
- The June 2023 Council Recommendation on Strengthening Social Dialogue in the European Union recognises that social dialogue is a key driver for economic and social resilience, competitiveness, fairness and sustainable growth. Amongst other things, it recommends that Member States involve social partners in a systematic, meaningful and timely manner, in the design and implementation of employment and social policies and, where relevant, economic and other public policies.
- The Recast European Works Council Directive (2009/38/EC) recognises the need to ensure that the employees of Union-scale undertakings or Union-scale groups of undertakings are properly informed and consulted when decisions which affect them are taken in a Member State other than that in which they are employed.
- The November 2022 of Council Decision (EU) 2022/2296 sets out guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States. Guideline 7 calls upon Member States to, among other things, work together with the social partners on fair, transparent and predictable working conditions, balancing rights and obligations, and to ensure the timely and meaningful involvement of the social partners in the design and implementation of employment, social and, where relevant, economic reforms and policies, including by supporting increased capacity of the social partners.
- In January 2013, the European Parliament adopted a resolution with recommendations to the Commission on information and consultation of workers, anticipation and management of restructuring (the Cercas report).
- In response to the Cercas report, in December 2013, the Commission published its Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on an EU Quality Framework for anticipation of change and restructuring (QFR). The QFR requires certain principles and good practices of anticipation of change and management of restructuring activities within companies, as well as by public authorities, to be better identified and monitored.
- In September 2021, the European Economic and Social Committee published an opinion highlighting that social dialogue is instrumental in anticipating and managing change in the world of work brought about by the green, digital and demographic transitions; improving prevention of workplace accidents and work-related illnesses; and being prepared for any potential future health crises.

- Directive (EU) 2022/2464, amending Regulation (EU) No 537/2014, Directive 2004/109/EC, Directive 2006/43/EC and Directive 2013/34/EU as regards corporate sustainability reporting, provides that sustainability reporting standards shall specify the information that undertakings are to disclose on working conditions, including secure employment, working time, adequate wages, social dialogue, freedom of association, existence of works councils, collective bargaining, including the proportion of workers covered by collective agreements, the information, consultation and participation rights of workers, work-life balance, and health and safety.
- In December 2023, the European Parliament and the Council reached agreement on the Directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence which aims to secure decent and safe working conditions around the world, and hold businesses accountable for standards in their supply chains, both inside and outside the EU, and for the impact of their operations on human rights and the environment. The Directive gives an important role to trade unions and workers representatives in the development of due diligence strategies and business plans.

Annex: List of members of the signatory parties

List of members of Eurogas is available here: <https://www.eurogas.org/purpose-and-values/members/>

List of members of industriAll European Trade Union is available here: <https://news.industrial-europe.eu/p/affiliates>

List of members of EPSU is available here: <https://www.epsu.org/affiliated-unions>