

Next Step: TRANSITION

New competences for
workers' representatives
in a Sustainable Energy Transition



Guidelines for action on sustainability in the energy sector

Deliverable D3.4

Project partners:



Associated organisations:



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1. Introduction: the “Next Step: Transition” project

Focusing on the energy sector, which is at the forefront of the process towards a carbon-neutral economy, the "Next Step: Transition" project aims to equip workers' organisations with the right knowledge and skills to address the challenge of the green transition in the industry, in particular by designing and implementing innovative actions to avoid exacerbation of vulnerabilities during the process and ensure equity, inclusion and promotion of workers' rights and human rights, both within of the workplace and in local communities. To achieve the project's objectives, the **"Report on the institutional framework for a just energy transition and the role of industrial relations in Europe"** and the **"Literature review"** on the project themes have been realised. In addition, it was implemented a **glossary** comprising the most significant terms associated with sustainability in the energy sector. The key highlights gathered in this initial research phase, along with the results of the questionnaire submitted to trade unions and workers' representatives in the project partner countries, were presented during the **first transnational training session**. A second research phase focused on gathering **best practices in social dialogue**. The compendium on examples of industrial relations practices related to sustainability in the energy sector was presented during the **second transnational training session**. Furthermore, **two study trips** were organised, one to Venice Porto Marghera (Venice) in Italy and the other to the Bochum area in Germany, with the aim of closely examining some of the realities that have faced the challenges and difficulties of the energy transition, transitioning from coal to more sustainable energy sources.

2. The framework: the role of social dialogue and unions in the energy transition

Decarbonisation has and will have positive and negative consequences on countries, regions, sectors and workers, and affect them unevenly. Therefore, the energy transition is an important working field for trade unions since the majority of affected jobs in older and larger workplaces with large CO₂ emissions are in well-unionised sectors with advantageous collective agreements.

Trade unions' primary motivation for fostering a just and green energy transition is the protection of workers and local communities from the negative impacts of the transition process.

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A **just transition** offers a constructive approach to the transition process, **prioritising employment, retraining, and regional development**. This allows for shaping the transition and its impacts on all workers. Therefore, garnering support from various organisations and stakeholders is essential, necessitating an understanding of social dialogue practices.

Definition of social dialogue:

The International Labour Organisation defines social dialogue as “all types of negotiation, consultation or information sharing among representatives of governments, employers and workers, or between those of employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy”.

Social dialogue plays a particular role in promoting a just energy transition. Social partners must build new expertise to add demands to their activities and negotiation agenda. Therefore, the discussions can be revitalised and lead to innovative win-win solutions and new policies.

Social dialogue offers different important functions:

- ❖ **Solution-oriented:** a key governance tool to find solutions and share the burden and benefits of the energy transition between workers and employers, with the support of governments;
- ❖ **Administration-oriented:** a priority instrument to deliver policies and one of the pillars for good management of transitions towards environmentally and socially sustainable economies and societies;
- ❖ **Consequence-oriented:** an opportunity to confront the challenges caused by the transition and identify the consequences and risks in terms of employment, occupational health and safety, inequality, social exclusion, energy security, and the impact of redevelopment, among others;
- ❖ **Democratisation function:** the promotion of consensus building and democratic involvement among the main stakeholders in the world of work and the potential to resolve important economic and social issues, encourage good governance, advance social and industrial peace and stability, and boost economic progress.

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To tackle all the challenges of the green energy transition, it is crucial to **invite stakeholders and social partners, such as representatives of the world of work, employers, public institutions, environmental organisations, and civil society, and to initiate more multi-stakeholder social dialogue occasions.**

In this context, it is vital that social dialogue is performed on all possible levels. On the one side, social dialogue is necessary on the national and European level in order to influence social policies and decarbonisation target-setting as well as develop new and sustainable industrial models and industrial policies. On the other side, on the regional and company level, trade unionists and workers' representatives can directly improve the working conditions for the workers on site by implementing specific company policies and decarbonisation initiatives, and by negotiating collective bargaining agreements.

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3. Relevance of the Guidelines

The results of the research, the survey and the study trips conducted as part of this project give insights into the level of knowledge, awareness and participation of trade unionists and workers' representatives regarding the green energy transition in Spain, Belgium, Bulgaria, Italy and Germany.

One of the main conclusions is that the **green energy transition is an important topic for the future work of trade unions**, even though there are differences in the attitude towards the green energy transition among the five countries. However, since trade unionists and workers' representatives fear that they do not have enough knowledge to deal with the transition's repercussions and to provide decent support for workers in that regard, the need for training and further information is present.

The survey's main results:

- ❖ There is a **high disparity between the countries** regarding their approach to a just transition ranging from a proactive stance supporting the issue to no promotion at all, which shows the difficulty of establishing a common position to be able to deal with the topic.
- ❖ Trade unionists either prioritise just transition measures or only support them to a small extent (reactive/passive approach).
- ❖ The terms **social-ecological transformation or just transition are known but not yet used regularly** by many trade unionists (some are not familiar with the term at all).
- ❖ **The majority of workers' representatives are only a little involved in the design, regulation and management of the green energy transition** in their companies, yet they are not fully involved in the process and limited in their influence on decision-making.
- ❖ Both **trade unionists and workers' representatives show a high interest in receiving general information as well as information about policies and legal conditions** on a national and European level to better support workers and wish for higher institutional support at the company level. This is emphasised due to the topic's importance for their work.
- ❖ A **high number of workers' representatives show a low awareness of legal or collective bargaining provisions**.
- ❖ The rate of the green energy transition being discussed in social dialogue settings is rather low in most countries (sometimes, there

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is also a lack of participation from the company's management).

- ❖ Both **trade unionists and workers' representatives lack experts in the field of decarbonisation to ask for advice** (e.g. no specific department).
- ❖ Most trade unionists and workers' representatives did not attend any kind of training sessions about the green energy transition.

These results indicate a **need for qualification**. The survey's participants also confirmed their **interest in qualifications in different topics**, such as legal knowledge of national policies, the management of the transition's social consequences, national regulations on trade union rights, skill requirements for workers, and general arguments about the advantages of the energy transition.

The **guidelines aim to provide insights and guidance on the work of trade unionists and workers' representatives, as well as their opportunities within the framework of social dialogue practices**. These guidelines are designed to offer ideas and direction, and highlight important considerations at the European, national, and company levels. The guidelines aim, also, to motivate trade unionists and workers' representatives to take on an anticipatory and proactive approach to the green energy transition on all levels. Examples and info boxes will provide further insights.

At the **European level**, trade unions can play a critical role in shaping policies and initiatives that drive the transition towards renewable energy sources and low-carbon technologies. This includes advocating for ambitious climate targets, supporting the development of renewable energy infrastructure, and promoting investment in green jobs and training programs.

On a **national level**, trade unions can engage with government agencies, policymakers, and industry stakeholders to develop and implement policies that prioritise the needs of workers and communities affected by the transition. This may involve negotiating just transition agreements, securing financial support for impacted workers, and advocating for robust labour standards and worker protections.

At the **company level**, trade unions can collaborate with employers to ensure that the transition to clean energy is managed in a way that minimises disruption and maximises opportunities for workers. This could include negotiating labour agreements that prioritise job retention and retraining, advocating for workplace

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safety measures in emerging industries, and promoting inclusive hiring practices that prioritise workers from marginalised communities.

The content of these guidelines is structured around key principles and best practices for achieving a just energy transition. This includes:

- ❖ **Worker Rights and Protections**
- ❖ **Community Engagement and Empowerment**
- ❖ **Equity and Inclusion**
- ❖ **Education and Training**
- ❖ **Environmental Sustainability**

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4. GUIDELINES FOR ACTION

4.1. Guidelines for trade unionists and workers' representatives at the European level

As the landscape of labour relations continues to evolve, trade unionists and workers' representatives play a crucial role in advocating for the rights and interests of workers. At the European level, where policies and regulations often have far-reaching implications, understanding the dynamics of social dialogue practices becomes increasingly important. By highlighting key aspects to consider and offering practical advice, these guidelines seek to empower workers' representatives to effectively engage in the dialogue processes shaping the future of labour relations in Europe.

Involvement and Consultation

- ❖ Trade unions and workers' representatives at the EU level are encouraged to engage in advocacy and lobbying efforts regarding the issue of a just energy transition, collaborating with EU institutions and other unions and stakeholders.
- ❖ They should request and ensure the presence of union and workers' representatives in all decision-making forums concerning the energy transition, both at the corporate and governmental/European levels. This ensures that all stakeholders' interests are considered in the construction and implementation of transition processes.
- ❖ They should leverage European platforms to articulate and disseminate the needs of national unions and other stakeholders.
- ❖ Trade unions and workers' representatives at the EU level should actively encourage and facilitate workers and unions' participation across all EU Member States. This can be achieved through various means such as offering incentives, acknowledging contributions, and providing logistical support.
- ❖ They should facilitate and promote the exchange of best practices among various national trade unions and workers' representatives.
- ❖ They should establish joint working groups comprising unions, employers, and public institutions to address specific issues related to the energy transition, ensuring a collaborative and inclusive approach.

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- ❖ They should ensure that relevant information regarding the energy transition is accessible to workers and unions at national, regional, and corporate levels promptly and comprehensibly, promoting transparency and knowledge sharing.
- ❖ Trade unions and workers' representatives at the EU level should establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that actively involve unions in assessing the impact of energy transition policies and programs on workers and their working conditions, on territories and communities, to ensure that energy transition initiatives effectively address the diverse needs and challenges faced by different regions, sectors and industries within the European Union.

Social Dialogue

- ❖ Trade unions and workers' representatives at the EU level should facilitate the participation of diverse stakeholders, including workers, territories, and communities, trade unions and workers' representatives to the formulation of inclusive and sustainable energy transition policies.
- ❖ They should actively promote effective social dialogue across European, national, regional, and corporate level to foster the development of just energy transition processes. This entails facilitating constructive discussions and collaboration among various stakeholders to ensure that the transition is fair and inclusive.
- ❖ They should advocate for collective bargaining practices for the energy transition at national/sectoral, regional, and corporate levels, enhancing collaboration and effectiveness in addressing the challenges of the energy transition.
- ❖ Trade unions and workers' representatives at the EU level should ensure and monitor that social dialogue remains inclusive and representative of all categories of workers, particularly of those who may face heightened vulnerability to economic and social challenges, including but not limited to women, elderly individuals, persons with disabilities, and young people. This commitment is essential for ensuring that the interests and perspectives of all workers are adequately represented and considered in decision-making processes related to the energy transition.

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Education and Awareness

- ❖ Trade unions and workers' representatives at the EU level should organise informative campaigns regarding the challenges and opportunities of the energy transition, utilising various communication channels such as events, webinars, printed materials, and online platforms.
- ❖ They should provide national trade unionists and workers' representatives with online and physical resources, such as guides, manuals, and databases, offering meticulously researched information on the energy transition and related career opportunities.
- ❖ They should engage with trade unions and workers' representatives through discussion forums, study groups, and online platforms, allowing them to share experiences, ask questions, and actively contribute to the debate on the energy transition. These forums and discussion moments could also serve as the basis for crafting policy proposals for European and national institutions.
- ❖ Trade unions and workers' representatives at the EU level should ensure the presence of targeted professional training programs for workers' representatives and workers, both for those currently employed in transitioning sectors to ensure their employment in evolving industries, and for newcomers by collaborating with educational institutions, universities, vocational schools, etc., to bridge the skills gap between required and possessed competencies. In this sense, they should also establish partnerships with educational institutions and universities to develop tailored training programs preparing workers for the challenges and opportunities of the energy transition.
- ❖ They should provide negotiation training programs for union and employer representatives. These programs aim to enhance their communication and conflict resolution skills, thereby facilitating the social dialogue process and promoting constructive negotiations.

Promotion of European Works Councils (EWC)

- ❖ Trade unions and workers' representatives at the EU level should offer assistance and resources to unions and interested companies to facilitate

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- ❖ the establishment of new European Works Councils (EWCs), ensuring their representation and functionality for overseeing the energy transition. In this regard, Trade unions and workers' representatives at the EU level should support the adoption of the revision of Directive n. 2009/38/EC on European Works Councils (EWCs).
- ❖ They should deliver targeted training and information sessions on the roles and responsibilities of EWCs to the participating union and company representatives. This initiative aims to optimise their effectiveness within the context of the energy transition.
- ❖ Trade unions and workers' representatives at the EU level should actively encourage the exchange of best practices among various EWCs and European-level unions. This exchange is pivotal for promoting consistent adherence to rules and principles concerning the just energy transition.

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4.2. Guidelines for trade unionists and workers' representatives at the national level

This section highlights the role that trade unions could and should play at the national level for just transition. Just transition stands for the greening of the economy in an as fair and inclusive way as possible, creating decent work opportunities. It involves maximising social and economic opportunities of climate action while managing its challenges through social dialogue among all impacted groups.

Trade unionists and workers' representatives at the national level can activate different actions in communication, training, collective bargaining and the implementation of strategic policies for environmental sustainability. Trade unions play also a pivotal role in advocating for health and safety standards in the workplace, a crucial aspect closely intertwined with the concept of a just transition. In addition, at the national level, trade unions can offer significant contributions to both raising awareness and implementing proactive measures. Also, trade unions and worker's representatives at the national level could and should initiate actions to support the just energy transition, a gradual and steady shift of energy use from fossil-based sources to a zero-carbon system.

Involvement and Consultation

- ❖ Using different media, trade unionists and workers' representatives could disseminate good practices at national level to other countries, not only at European level.
- ❖ They could enhance discussions with social partners at European level by creating opportunities for dialogue open to citizens. The organisation of such events would make it possible to raise workers' awareness on environmental sustainability issues.
- ❖ They must play a pivotal role in shaping decisions concerning health and safety at work on a national scale. This could be facilitated by advocating for governments to establish regular roundtable discussions specifically focused on occupational safety and health (OSH), that would serve as inclusive platforms for stakeholders, including trade unions, employers, government representatives, and experts, to address emerging challenges, share best practices, and formulate effective policies to enhance workplace safety.

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- ❖ They should advocate for a transition strategy that prioritises employment creation and the provision of re-employment opportunities. This entails a concerted effort to foster a work-oriented transition that not only safeguards existing jobs but also generates new, sustainable employment prospects. Trade unions and workers' representatives at the national level should also be sensitive to sectoral and territorial nuances within each country, recognising the varied socioeconomic landscapes and resource potentials.

Social dialogue

- ❖ At national level, trade unionists and workers' representatives should be responsible for disseminating good practices implemented at company level that could be replicated in other companies or at territorial level. Dissemination of these practices would allow good strategies adopted at the micro level to be transferred to the national level.
- ❖ They could develop national environmental sustainability guidelines in cooperation with various stakeholders at national level.
- ❖ By actively engaging in decision-making forums focused on environmental sustainability, workers' representatives are empowered to articulate their perspectives and advocate for measures that prioritise both ecological concerns and the well-being of local communities. Through constructive dialogue and collaborative decision-making, these forums could become instrumental in shaping policies and practices that foster environmental stewardship while ensuring the socio-economic resilience of local areas.

Example 1: Permanent table for economic, social and territorial partnership (Italy)

In Italy, there is provision for the creation of a Permanent Forum for Economic, Social, and Territorial Partnership. This forum consists of representatives from social partners, local authorities, regions, and universities. Its primary responsibility is to provide advisory support concerning the implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan. This plan encompasses a wide range of topics, including the green revolution and ecological transition, and the Permanent Forum plays a crucial role in advising on these matters.

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Example 2: Alliance for Transformation (Germany)

In Germany, the 'Alliance for Transformation' was established in 2022 as a pivotal platform for dialogue, engaging representatives from various sectors such as business, trade unions, academia, and civil society. Its core objective is to foster robust collaboration to bolster the transformation process within the country. This Alliance convenes regular high-level discussions on a spectrum of developmental agendas, encompassing themes such as climate neutrality and resource efficiency, digital innovation and technological sovereignty, as well as advancing a modern and resilient state alongside a society open to innovation.

- ❖ They also should proactively initiate social dialogue dedicated solely to addressing health and safety concerns. These dedicated forums would provide an opportunity for robust discussions, fostering dialogue between workers' representatives and employers to collectively identify and implement measures aimed at improving working conditions and mitigating risks.
- ❖ They could establish national observatories and committees tasked with monitoring, studying, and researching health and safety issues comprehensively. These observatories would serve as centralised hubs for gathering data, conducting analyses, generating insights into evolving workplace health and safety trends and contributing to evidence-based decision-making and the formulation of effective strategies to promote occupational health and safety nationwide.
- ❖ At national level, more emphasis should be placed on industrial relations to identify strategic solutions to address the needs and implications of the energy transition (in terms of income support measures and active labour market policies) to define measures that safeguard workers' interests and foster sustainable and equitable development.
- ❖ Furthermore, to facilitate the realisation of a just energy transition, trade unionists and workers' representatives must establish structured partnerships with educational institutions, research bodies, universities, and companies, to develop and implement a comprehensive national energy strategy, leveraging collective expertise and fostering the exchange of knowledge.

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Example 3: Manifesto “Work and Energy for a sustainable Transition” (Italy – national and sectoral level)

On November 30, 2021, the employers' association Confindustria Energia, together with the trade union federations FILCTEM-CGIL, FEMCA-CISL, and UILTEC-UIL, with the backing of the Ministry of Ecological Transition, unveiled the joint Manifesto on Work and Energy for a Sustainable Transition. This initiative aims to contribute to the attainment of the objectives outlined in the EU 'Fit for 55' Package. The Manifesto, in particular, comprises ten programmatic points designed to address the industrial and social transformations prompted by the energy transition, notably:

- ❖ Promoting a comprehensive range of solutions, tools, and approaches conducive to the decarbonisation process.
- ❖ Mitigating transition costs for consumers and businesses while combating energy poverty through economically and socially accessible solutions.
- ❖ Advocating for a labour-oriented transition that promotes job creation and re-employment opportunities.
- ❖ Recognising the value of industrial relations and bilateral bodies in identifying solutions to address the needs and effects of the energy transition, particularly regarding income support measures and active labour market policies.
- ❖ Fostering a structured model of cooperation among educational and research institutes, businesses, public authorities, and social partners to facilitate the formulation and implementation of a national energy strategy and knowledge-sharing.
- ❖ Streamlining bureaucratic procedures to enhance effectiveness and transparency.
- ❖ Supporting circular economy principles by promoting the production of sustainable energy vectors through resource reuse and recycling processes.
- ❖ Encouraging investments in research and development to accelerate decarbonisation efforts within Italian supply chains.
- ❖ Reviewing fiscal and industrial public policies to incentivise the adoption of new technologies.
- ❖ Enhancing government-business relationships to facilitate collaboration and information sharing.

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Collective bargaining

- ❖ Proactive involvement in collective bargaining with employer representatives to steer companies towards implementing environmental and social policies is essential. By contributing to the development of these agreements, stakeholders can ensure that environmental and social concerns are integrated into corporate strategies and operations effectively, therefore fostering a more sustainable and resilient business ecosystem.
- ❖ Collective bargaining should also prioritize the promotion of non-discrimination and the implementation of equality policies, particularly for vulnerable groups. This includes ensuring fair treatment and equal opportunities for all employees, regardless of their background or personal characteristics.
- ❖ Explicit references to environmental sustainability could be included in national collective agreements. References to the issue could be made in different ways: by organising training on the issue, by setting up committees, by setting up national observatories, etc.

Education and training

- ❖ Trade unions and workers' representatives at the national level could play a strategic role in promoting training and could themselves participate in targeted training to acquire skills and knowledge on environmental and social sustainability.
- ❖ Trade unions and employee representatives should participate in training courses on environmental sustainability aimed to deepen the issue across sectors, professions and companies. Training courses for trade unionists could be given by specialised lecturers with a strong theoretical background and expertise on the subject (engineers, researchers, industrial relations experts, university professors, etc.).
- ❖ National trade unions should organise training programmes for workers' representatives at other levels (sectoral, territorial and company). They could take the initiative to organise study trips to other national contexts, allowing for firsthand exposure to different approaches and methodologies. Additionally, they could actively

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- participate in study trips organised by other entities, fostering cross-border collaboration and the exchange of knowledge and experiences.
- ❖ They should prioritise the organisation of comprehensive training courses on health and safety topics for trade unionists at the national level to ensure the widespread dissemination of expertise and promote a culture of continuous learning within the trade union movement.
 - ❖ At the national level, trade unionists can take the initiative to coordinate and participate in training courses focused on the principles of a just energy transition, facilitated by experienced trainers, equipping themselves with the requisite knowledge and skills, to provide informed perspectives and support decision-makers in navigating the transition process effectively.

Raising Awareness

- ❖ At national level, trade unionists and workers' representatives should raise workers' awareness of health and safety issues by highlighting their rights and making employers' obligations clear.
- ❖ They should actively endorse a comprehensive notion of health that transcends the boundaries of the workplace, encompassing the holistic well-being of workers and focusing not only on occupational health and safety but also recognising the importance of lifestyle choices and habits outside of work. This could involve advocating for policies and initiatives that support healthy lifestyles, providing access to resources and information, and fostering a culture of well-being within both workplace and community settings.
- ❖ They ought to spearhead information campaigns, actively engaging in television or radio programs to shed light on this critical issue, with the aim to educate and empower workers but also to raise awareness among the broader public. These efforts recognise that the impact of health and safety extends beyond individual workplaces, affecting entire communities and societies.
- ❖ They could produce user-friendly guides summarising key health and safety concepts. These guides would serve as accessible resources for all workers, providing them with essential information to navigate potential risks and hazards in their respective workplaces, empowering

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workers to actively participate in safeguarding their own health and well-being.

Example 4: Position paper “Shaping the transformation: measures for a sustainable business location” (Germany – national and sectoral level)

In 2022, the Federal Association for Renewable Energy (BEE) and the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB) collaborated on a joint position paper outlining measures for Germany to maintain its status as a sustainable business hub during and after the transition to a carbon-neutral industry and society. Accelerating the energy transition stands as a pivotal initiative in achieving a climate-neutral economy and facilitating the ecological modernisation of Germany's industrial sector. Consequently, the two organisations called upon the next federal government to:

- Translate emission targets outlined in the Federal Climate Protection Act into actionable measures.
- Expand target thresholds within the Renewable Energy Sources Act.
- Initiate a comprehensive qualification campaign focusing on the energy transition.
- Foster the advancement of socio-ecological research and development to drive transformative innovations in renewable energy and sector coupling technologies.
- Implement supportive measures to enhance the appeal of collective agreements within the renewable energy sector, offering incentives for both companies and employees to engage with associations and trade unions.
- Lower electricity costs for businesses and households.
- Undertake a comprehensive reform of levies and charges in the electricity sector to incentivise consumer-side flexibility economically.

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4.3. Guidelines for trade unionists and workers' representatives at the territorial and company level

This section of the guidelines presents important aspects of how trade unionists and workers' representatives can foster the energy transition at the territorial and company level. The situation in companies has changed completely during the ongoing transformation process in the energy industry. Old business models are disappearing, and new business models often have significantly lower potential in terms of profit and jobs, and thus increase the pressure on jobs, working conditions and workers. Against this backdrop, trade unions, workers' representatives and works councils' competencies should be expanded so that they can observe developments at an early stage, anticipate them and take action. The aim is to shape the transformation together with the company's management.

Training and collaboration

- ❖ It is necessary to recognise the specific figure of the trade union environmental delegate in each company. Trained trade unionists, members of works councils in the field of energy transition - and especially members of works councils in companies with co-determined supervisory boards – must be recognised as environmental delegates in companies to influence company policy. It would also increase the expertise about necessary topics for the energy transition in the companies.

Example 5: Environmental delegates (Repsol Group – Spain)

Repsol included more environmental aspects in their collective agreement in 2022, signed by the company's management, their works council STR, and the sectoral trade union organisations UGT-FICA and CCOO Industria. Article 42 includes the entitlement of each trade union to appoint an environmental workers' delegate within each company of the Repsol Group. These environmental delegates are to be informed by management, at least once a year, of its environmental policies, programmes and data, as well as of the environmental effects potentially engendered by any new productive and organisational processes.

Furthermore, their competencies encompass the following: collaboration with management for the improvement of the initiatives in the environmental field; the promotion of workers' involvement in the

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application of environmental legislation; the monitoring of the implementation of environmental regulations and corporate policies and programmes; and the contribution to the organisation of training activities on issues related to the company's environmental obligations. The environmental delegates are also provided with a 20 hours-right to training.

- ❖ Companies and trade unions can develop agreements which include establishing information and consultation systems with periodic sessions and ad hoc joint labour-management committees as well as strategic committees to discuss different issues such as environmental protection, technological innovation, health and safety, circular economy and work organisation. Hence, trade unionists can monitor activities and assess the need and time to implement actions.
- ❖ Workers' representatives should participate in training sessions about topics such as ecological transition, energy transition and just transition as well as negotiation techniques for social dialogue, collective bargaining for the energy transition or the energy transition's impacts on organisations and workers in order to be better informed and prepared for negotiations with the company's management.

Information and training of workers

- ❖ Trade unions and workers' representatives at the company level and works councils can include the employees in the process of preparing the company for the green energy transition. For example, in workshops or training programmes, they can reflect on the consequences on work of the climate crisis, the energy transition, and digitalisation, especially the changes for teamwork, leadership, and organisation, on working hours, training and qualification, corporate culture, and occupational health and safety.
- ❖ Trade unions and workers' representatives at the company level and works councils could offer employees training sessions about the energy transition. The participating employees could then function as advocates and promoters for the workforce, fostering the energy transition on the

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ground and starting discussions with workers. They could also check, monitor, and assess which company actions and programmes work and which do not.

- ❖ Together with the company's management, trade unions at the company level, workers' representatives and works councils could produce informative material for their workers to inform them about the energy transition and the programmes the company has planned.
- ❖ A well-founded and sustainable communication strategy is necessary. The more fast-paced and serious operational change processes are, the more important intensive dialogue with all parts of the workforce becomes.

Networking

- ❖ Trade unions, workers' representatives and works councils can establish a technical platform to exchange information and best-practice examples, which could increase their networking. Moreover, due to the high complexity of the energy transition, it is also vital for them to attend sectoral or industry-specific conferences (e.g., organised by trade unions) to develop concepts together. Besides, local alliances are equally important to join or to establish in order to address workers', communities and territorial interests in the processes of transition.
- ❖ Trade unions, workers' representatives and works councils should establish joint working groups and meet regularly with consultants, experts and other stakeholders to discuss the consequences and the impact of the energy transition on the company and its workforce and, thus, guarantee a collaborative and inclusive process and decision-making. These joint working groups could also regularly monitor, review, and evaluate the impact of the company's energy transition policies and programs. Additionally, they could identify and address critical issues and challenges reported by workers and their representatives. The workers' opinions about the impact could be assessed through surveys, workshops, or other feedback methods and included in further application of the policies and programmes.

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Social dialogue and collective bargaining

- ❖ To secure employment, it is imperative to proactively renew and prolong existing collective agreements rather than engaging in frequent initiation of new negotiations. One possibility may be the inclusion of “future collective agreements”, which contain set goals defined by the company for the company’s future strategic direction and its necessary actions. One agreement can include, for instance, the investment into research (e.g., research about the energy transition, new technologies, works council work).
- ❖ Incentives for workers can be established in reference to the reduction of the company’s greenhouse gas emissions, or to the company’s energy efficiency and conservation (e.g., in terms of electricity, methane, paper and water consumption, and product waste). An additional payment for environmental training can be envisaged, as well as a gainsharing plan that increases pay proportionally to the number of anomalous environmental events denounced by workers denounce.
- ❖ Workers’ representatives and trade unionists are encouraged to find creative forms of interest representation to engage more workers. This includes, in particular, selective or permanent cooperation with external players, such as interest groups from other companies or enterprises, various civil society organisations, scientific institutions or political parties. In particular, trade unions need to be present in structural change committees.

Strategic management / Operational adjustment

- ❖ Since markets, competition, technologies and other factors are changing rapidly, one of the company's key responses to this process is developing into an "agile company". An “agile company” aims to drive forward disruptive innovations and new business models in its organisations and involve its employees along the way. To this end, agile forms of work and new management requirements need to be developed, including a change in corporate culture, involving employees and managers in the creation and implementation processes. In this process, trade unionists,

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workers' representatives and works council need to be involved and specific training sessions in "change management" are needed.

Info box 1: Agility in companies for transformation processes

Agility is the mobility of organisations and people or in structures and processes. Organisations react flexibly to unforeseen events and new requirements. Therefore, agility means that processes are interrupted and adapted, and projects are repeatedly restarted. Thus, organisations are proactive when it comes to change.

Integrating agile methods and processes is of great importance when it comes to the sustainable transformation of organisations. Agility enables organisations to drive innovation and take economic, social and ecological aspects into account. A holistic approach is required to ensure sustainable values and principles are anchored in agile processes. The combination of agility and sustainability has the potential to successfully tackle the challenges of sustainable transformation and develop innovative solutions.

Six central characteristics can be named to make a company "agile":

- ❖ Agile objectives: Employees in the energy sector need to have the appropriate qualifications, embody the company's will for implementing the energy transition, and support the new corporate culture. Since considering the different interests, ages, levels of experience, qualifications and expectations of each employee, diversity is promoted to incorporate different living conditions and experiences into the decision-making process.
- ❖ Customer-oriented organisational structure: There are slimmer and project-orientated forms of work. Teams have more autonomy but are connected in a network-like form.
- ❖ Iterative process landscapes: An iterative process landscape does not focus on executing a predefined project plan but rather determines its tasks and goals in short cycles ("sprints").
- ❖ Employee-centred understanding of leadership: There is a development from control to encouragement, motivation and openness. Managers support their employees in acting independently in the interests of the customer, which increases their responsibility.

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- ❖ Agile personnel and management tools: For more agile recruiting, the conventional setting is expanded to respond more individually to the applicants' needs and provide an authentic insight into the tasks, team and company.

Agile organisational culture: Dialogue and feedback are essential in an agile (learning) company. Risks must be communicated to employees at an early stage.

- ❖ Digitalisation is another big part of the transformation process towards decarbonisation. Workers' representatives and trade unionists and works councils must create the new space necessary to discuss important issues. In this context, the Internet of Things and the spread of sensors, self-driving cars, the so-called sharing economy and much more could increase precarious working conditions. A strong collaboration with the IT department might be needed. Qualification in these topics is necessary, too. In that regard, data protection - also of the workers' data - gains importance and is another topic to deepen.
- ❖ When developing a strategy for the energy transition, workers' representatives, trade unionists, works councils need to analyse the development of the sector and of the company as precisely as possible and then develop short, medium and long-term goals, starting with supporting and shaping new business models through to safeguarding employees in jobs that are under threat. In particular, the diversifying interests of different groups of employees must be adequately recognised and balanced in flexible, open and plural regulatory models. Specialised external advice can be called upon for strategy development.

Involvement with workers and communities

- ❖ Trade unionists and workers' representatives are encouraged to highlight to workers and communities that handling the green energy transition means that "the future will be created". Together with different stakeholders, people need to see how companies and regions will be sustainably transformed for a better future for all people so that the energy transition is not solely linked to job losses. Hence, it is vital that every affected group plays an active role in shaping the transition. It is therefore

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necessary to involve as many stakeholders as possible in this participatory process.

- ❖ Research shows that especially young people do not know what structural change and transitions mean for companies and society. Their impact and consequences are unclear. Trade unions, workers' representatives and works councils could organise projects, activities or campaigns specifically designed for and addressed to the young generation of the workforce. Similar activism should be sought for women, to enhance gender equality, and for the wider youth (outside the companies' walls) by, for instance, collaborating with universities, training centres, organised youth groups or social movements. A greater use of social media could present trade union endeavours for a just transition in a visually appealing, clearly understandable, informative and participatory way (e.g., YouTube shorts, TikTok shorts, Instagram reels).

Qualification in times of long-term planned dismissal

- ❖ When confronted with staff dismissal, it is necessary to ensure employment stability by offering retraining, upskilling, and relocation to other companies and sectors. While offering an early retirement for older workers, younger generations need skill training for them to keep on being employable in the labour market.
- ❖ When it is necessary to adapt the workforce to new skill requirements, the workers' knowledge should be adapted to the new technologies and work activities instead of replacing the workers with people already possessing the required knowledge.
- ❖ Qualification needs must be planned in advance and accomplished over several years. Companies should cooperate with other stakeholders, such as universities, educational facilities or local institutions, to organise the training sessions and increase the outcome.

Example 6: Establishing a new training company (RAG Deutsche Steinkohle AG - Germany)

After Germany's agreed coal phase-out in 2007, the works council at RAG Deutsche Steinkohle AG played a crucial role in managing the company's

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exit from coal mining. At the time, RAG had over 80,000 employees. One of the main challenges was retraining miners, many of whom lacked formal qualifications, to secure jobs in other sectors.

RAG had a dedicated training company, RAG Bildung GmbH, which expanded its services post-2007. This expansion included conducting regional labor market analyses and collaborating with various educational and business entities, such as the Chamber of Industry and Commerce and local job exchanges. These efforts were aimed at identifying job opportunities and placing retrained miners into new roles.

Works councils were actively involved across all mines and in recruitment processes. RAG provided scientific and expert support to aid the miners in their transition. This comprehensive support continued for weeks after miners started their new jobs.

Between 1997 and 2022, over 26,000 employees utilized RAG's retraining programs, moving into roles such as professional drivers, paramedics, nurses, and firefighters, with additional qualification measures and financial assistance provided by other employers.

Info box 2: Transfer company

Economic structural change and individual company crises regularly lead to restructuring and massive company redundancies. The instrument of job transfer protects affected employees from the social risks of job loss. Trade unions and works councils and employers can negotiate the implementation of a transfer company. It includes professional counselling and support in the search for a new job, creates qualification opportunities and builds various bridges into the labour market (e.g. through internships and the possibility of trial work).

The employees enter into a fixed-term employment relationship with the provider of the transfer company. For the employees, the transfer company offers the advantage of a monthly salary that is usually higher than the unemployment benefit. Trade unions and works councils significantly influence the framework conditions for training during the transfer. Transfer participants who are low-skilled, lack vocational training or are older than 45 can take part in measures to promote further vocational training. The risk of subsequent unemployment depends on

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many factors, such as the qualification and age structure of the employees or the capacity of the local labour market to absorb their professional profiles.

- ❖ Trade unions and works councils can negotiate agreements giving them access to quantitative and qualitative personnel planning to help coordinate the process of staff dismissal and qualification. During coordination meetings, together with the management, they could determine how many employees will leave in the following years, who will be qualified for the process of the staff transfer, and who will move up in terms of planning.

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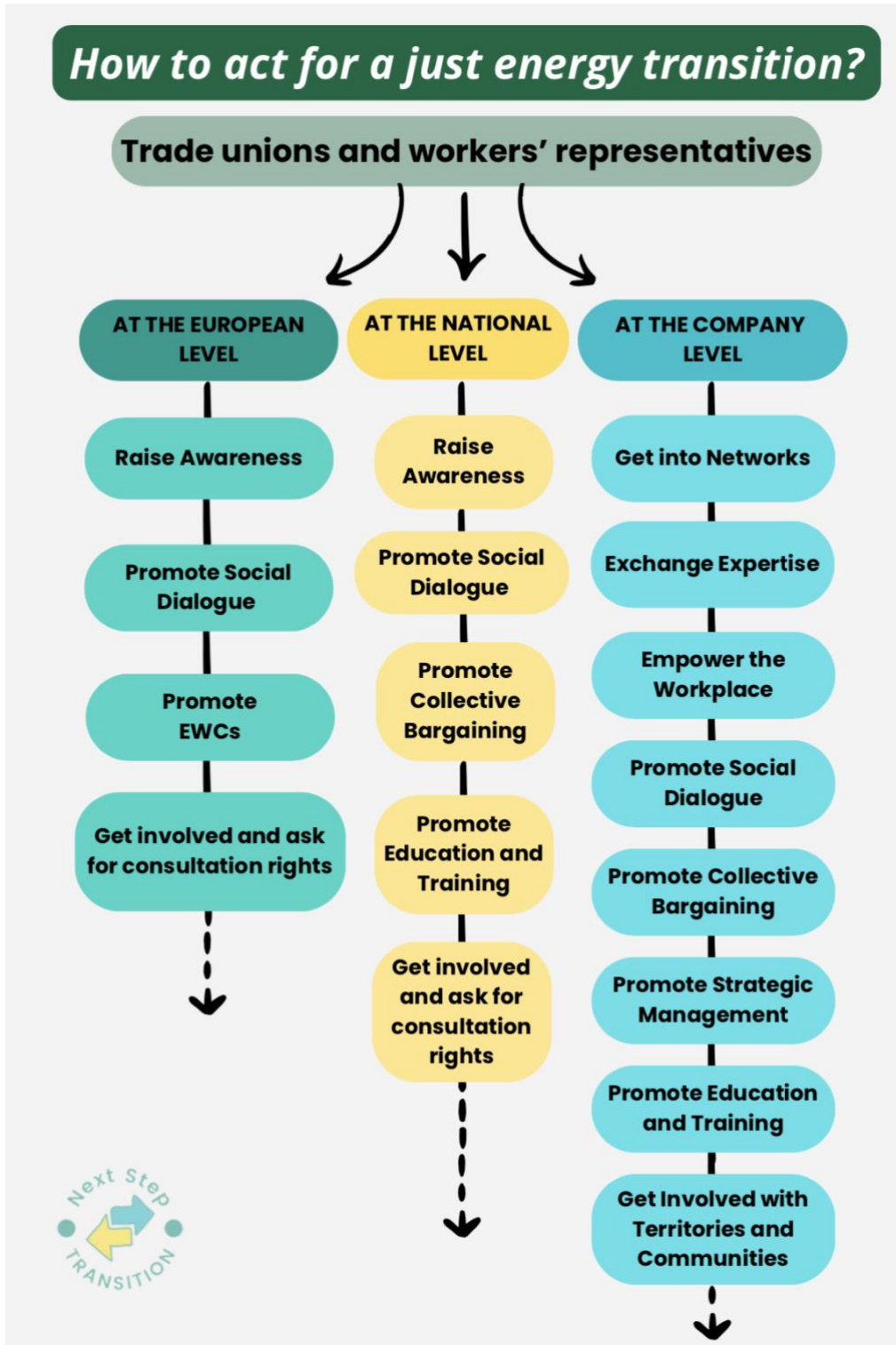
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5. Infographic



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