

## Category meeting 7th November

### Concept note

The digital and green Transformation is one of the most urgent tasks of our time, which above all represents a socio-political challenge. Climate neutrality and the digital transformation can only be achieved if the majority of people support the goals.

Although policies to combat climate change can lead to major socio-economic changes, **social progress is not possible without sustained economic progress**, and the latter cannot take place without a socially and employment-just transition.

The twin green and digital transition will lead to profound socio-economic changes. To make this transition socially just, so that it leads to a fairer, greener and more digital society, we need to create the necessary social and legal framework. If we can do this, we can create and sustain good green jobs that enable a good life for all - in the EU and beyond.

The EU has already taken a number of initiatives in the areas of digitization and climate protection, such as the AI Act, the DSA and the DMA on the one hand, and the EU Climate Law, Fit for 55 and RepowerEU on the other, to name just a few. Nevertheless, much remains to be done to achieve the goal of climate neutrality by 2050 and the associated necessary digitization and, above all, to make this socially equitable.

Nevertheless, the EU must work harder to put people at the heart of the green and digital transition. Both national and European legislation still focus far too little on people and how their everyday lives and, above all, their work will be changed by the green and digital transformation. For this to change in the future, we need to establish legislation that ensures that worker representatives are involved in the aforementioned transformation processes as early and as closely as possible. This is not for the benefit of employees, but also of businesses.

**Experiences so far show that transition processes that involve, at all levels, the social partners are more likely to succeed in terms of socio-economic justice.** It is therefore necessary to work together on a comprehensive approach that reinforces investment policies, as well as social compensation policies, for the benefit of the most vulnerable households. Industrial, labour and social protection measures must prevail, accompanied by training and retraining, **to ensure the preservation and creation of as many sustainable and quality jobs as possible.**

The **decarbonisation** process and the policies implemented are causing major economic changes in Europe and **are generating social disruption, affecting employment and welfare.** In short, energy and climate transition policies and the Fit for Fifty-Five legislative package are not taking into account the impact on employment and are having significant repercussions on employment, direct and indirect, at both sectoral and geographical level, and these impacts are being most drastic, especially in areas dependent on polluting sectors, where there are no alternatives.

**Territorial Just Transition Plans** define where MTJ funds will be used, through the identification of development challenges and needs. We therefore need them to be designed, with a long-term vision, **together with the social partners and through Social Dialogue and Collective Bargaining**, in a transparent way. Our challenge is to integrate the social partners **at the different levels of governance**, with participation in the design and monitoring, with particular attention to the local and regional level.

Another challenge is to ensure the protection of workers and their participation in the socially just management of the ecological transition in companies. There must be room in collective agreements **for a just transition that benefits workers and leaves no one behind. We must also talk about green social protection.**

Therefore, **we must ensure that the territorial green transition plans must be accompanied by fair social concertation agreements, and green collective agreements** with a gender perspective, in which the creation and protection of quality sustainable employment, as well as the support of people, are necessary conditions for companies to have access to financing for the green and socially just transition. **In short, there must be no green transition with a negative impact on employment.**

The digital transformation has brought with it an increase in inequality in the labour market, which is why **investments in access to lifelong learning are just as important as those in innovation** if the transition is to be made fairly.

Existing employment forecasts highlight a clear green skills deficit. **The digital and green skills gap exists, and it hits vulnerable groups hardest.** Full qualification to meet these challenges must become a real right for all people, based on validated and certified training in digital and green skills.

In this framework, **social dialogue and collective bargaining are absolutely necessary** to be able to adjust retraining and retraining programmes to the real needs arising from the double transition, ensuring that everyone has the possibility of training. Social dialogue also plays a role in setting decent wages and delivering job security, and investment in technology. Social dialogue is also highly relevant to the less visible moves to green production in companies across the economy, which involve adapting work organisation, job profiles and skills strategies.

**It is essential that workers have the time to train in these skills, which is why paid training leave, together with the implementation of a shorter working week,** must play a crucial role in the transition and in boosting women's participation in the labour market.

**The success of the green and digital transition** will depend to a large extent on the policies that are put in place. Therefore, the move towards a green economy is, in addition to the obvious positive impact on the environment, **a great opportunity to improve labour standards through social agreement between the social partners for a just transition. Experience suggests that negotiated outcomes can be more balanced and sustainable, and that giving an effective voice to those directly affected contributes to better designed jobs**