

Multi-stakeholder workshop “Challenges and opportunities of Eco-Social Policies”

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Introduction and discussion points

The European Green Deal (EGD) is an ambitious plan to make Europe more environmentally sustainable. It aims to tackle climate change, protect nature, and create a cleaner, healthier environment for all. But the EGD also recognizes that this transition to a green economy will bring about significant changes - not just in our environment, but also in our economy and society. It's crucial that these changes are fair and benefit everyone, not just a select few. That's why the EGD stresses the importance of a 'just transition leaving no one behind.' This means ensuring that the benefits of the green transition are shared equitably, and its burdens do not disproportionately affect vulnerable groups and regions.

Since the EGD's launch in 2019, the EU has been working on making this 'just transition' a reality. We've seen new policies and funding mechanisms specifically designed to address the social challenges that can arise from the shift to a green economy. Key initiatives include the Just Transition Mechanism and Fund, the 2022 Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality, and the Social Climate Fund. These represent positive steps, but there's still a lot more to do.

The European Commission's February 2024 Communication highlights the need for even more ambitious and effective just transition policies, especially as we accelerate towards our green goals. The EU's future plans will be influenced by both global events (like geopolitical shifts and international competition) and internal factors (such as the outcome of the recent European elections). While the commitment to achieving the EGD's climate targets for 2030 and 2050 remains strong, there's also a growing emphasis on linking the green transition to a revitalized EU competitiveness/industrial agenda. This includes a proposed 'new Clean Industrial Deal' aimed at creating competitive industries and quality jobs.

The new Commission's agenda also reaffirms the priority of ensuring 'a just transition for all.' This involves investing in skills for the green and digital transitions, working with social partners to create a 'Quality Jobs Roadmap,' tackling energy poverty, ensuring affordable housing, and significantly increasing funding for a just transition in the next long-term budget.

Workshop Objectives

This workshop aims to bring together experts from various fields - trade unions, policymakers, civil society, academics, and industry - to:

- Take stock of how well the idea of a just transition has been incorporated into the EGD's implementation so far
- Discuss how we can better integrate environmental and social goals in future EU policies.
- Explore the complex relationship between European welfare states and the green transition



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- Discuss whether and how ‘eco-social policies’ - policies that explicitly address both environmental and social goals in an integrated way - could offer effective solutions

Specific objectives include:

- Fostering open discussion and exchange of ideas on the challenges and opportunities of eco-social policies
- Sharing examples of successful eco-social policy implementation
- Identifying gaps in current policies and developing actionable recommendations
- Encouraging collaboration and networking among stakeholders

The workshop will follow the Chatham House Rule, allowing for open and frank discussions. The aim is to generate realistic recommendations that can inform EU policymaking in the coming years.

Key Topics and Issues

- Concrete examples of effective eco-social policies and their potential for inclusion in the EU agenda
- Strengthening the link between the European Pillar of Social Rights and the green transition
- Introducing legally binding measures to protect workers' rights during the transition to carbon neutrality
- Integrating an 'eco-social perspective' into the European Semester for better policy coordination
- The role of various stakeholders (social partners, citizens, civil society organizations) in developing EU eco-social policies
- Effective governance structures for multi-level and multi-stakeholder participation

We invite participants to contribute their insights and expertise to this crucial discussion.



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