

GREENET. Fast forwarding the green transition in just and socially responsible way – cases of industry, energy and transport sectors

NATIONAL REPORT



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1 Introduction

Background and objectives of the study

This report presents the results of research conducted in Poland by the Institute of Public Affairs as part of the project “*GREENET. Fast forwarding the green transition in just and socially responsible way – cases of industry, energy and transport sectors*” covering 10 European countries. The aim of the research was to provide the social partners with an up-to-date overview of the situation in the three sectors to develop a new strategic framework for action at national and European level.

Methodological note

The research comprised an analysis of the desk data and 17 in-depth interviews (online and face-to-face) with trade union and employer representatives from the sectors analysed and an online survey with 52 energy and industry workers. The field phase was carried out in January-July 2024.

2 Key national public policies and regulations relevant to the green transition

Green Deal policies

The most important climate policy documents in Poland (currently being updated) are the National Energy and Climate Action Plan 2021-2030 and the Energy Policy of Poland until 2040. According to their provisions, Poland is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 7% by 2030 compared to 2005. The targets adopted are to increase the share of RES in power generation (to 23%), heat (to 28%) and transport (to 14%) and to improve energy efficiency in power generation, buildings and transport. By 2030, the share of coal in the electricity supply is to fall to 37.5%-56%. Coal is to be replaced by natural gas as an interim fuel until nuclear energy is introduced into the energy mix: the first reactor is to be started up in 2035. Public policies supporting the achievement of these goals include the Polish Hydrogen Strategy up to 2030 with an outlook to 2040, the Polish Nuclear Energy Programme, the long-term strategy for the renovation of buildings, the roadmap for the transformation to a circular economy, the commitment to achieve the goals set by the European Green Deal, among others, are being implemented within the framework of the National Economic Recovery and Resilience Plan (NERP), Sustainable Transport Development Strategy to 2030 and Intermodal Transport Directions to 2030 with an Outlook to 204.

Policies and programmes for a just transition

A just transition is one of the axes of Poland's energy policy until 2040. In five coal regions: Eastern Wielkopolska, Silesia, Lower Silesia (in Wałbrzych), Łódź and Małopolska, territorial plans for a just transition are being implemented.

National industrial relations system

The system of collective industrial relations in Poland is characterised by high fragmentation, poor unionisation (12.7%¹) and membership of employers' organisations (20%²), and low coverage of

¹ 2018

² 2018

collective agreements (13,4%³) [OECD 2019]. There are two forms of employee representation in Poland: trade unions (the dominant form) and works councils. The right to information and consultation is guaranteed by the Trade Unions Act.

The collective bargaining system, which is fully decentralised, is dominated by the company level; there are few collective agreements at company level. According to the Labour Code, collective agreements regulate the terms and conditions of employment and define the mutual obligations of the parties and cannot contain provisions that are less favourable than those in the Labour Code. The law allows for a temporary derogation from autonomous labour legislation.

In the economic areas under study there is only one sectoral agreement covering companies in the lignite sector. Coverage by collective agreements (at company level) is 9-12% in the electricity sector [Eurofound 2022 1] and 90% in the gas sector [Eurofound 2022 2]. There is no collective bargaining at any level in the road transport sector (in the transport and storage sector, collective bargaining coverage was 1% in 2015 [Eurofound 2015]).

3 Green transition and its impact on restructuring, employment and working conditions in three sectors - a sectoral analysis

Energy sector

Sector. The electricity, gas, steam and hot water supply industry employs 112.9 thousand people, while the coal and lignite mining industry employs 72.3⁴ thousand people. Poland's energy mix is largely based on coal (60.5% in 2023; 70.4% in 2022), mainly from domestic mines (69% in 2022), and the fuel and energy sector are dominated by large companies (capital groups) controlled by the State Treasury. Private companies (including large, medium and small enterprises) are active in all links of the sector's value chain, but their share does not exceed a few percentages, except in sales, where it can reach 20%. Nevertheless, the private sector still dominates renewable energy production, with only a few conventional plants present. There are also a small number of municipal companies operating local networks in the energy and heat supply sector.

Strategies. On the one hand, the sector must respond to rising CO₂ prices and the obligations of the Fit for 55 Package; on the other hand, it faces the prospect of replacing old coal-fired units from the 1980s and 1990s (which are either being decommissioned or replaced by gas or bio-component units). Coal production is steadily declining due to economic factors, depletion of reserves (in the case of lignite) and the decreasing share of coal in the energy mix. Coal-fired combined heat and power plants in Silesia, which are located next to coal mines, have started to be adapted to burn gas from mine demethanisation due to restrictions on the extraction of this raw material, and older, less efficient emitters have been shut down. The strategies of energy companies resulting from climate policy also include the development of renewable energies: onshore and offshore wind farms, photovoltaic power station, the construction of energy storage facilities. Combined heat and power plants are installing electronic boilers and industrial heat pumps. Large energy producers and

³ 2019

⁴ Statistics Poland data, Q1. 2024

suppliers are focusing on quality, security and reliability of energy supply at an acceptable price. As the share of RES increases, the system becomes less stable, so coal-fired capacity is maintained as a stabiliser, hybrid solutions combining different RES sources with each other and with energy storage are planned, and smart grids are developed at the distribution level to ensure reliable system operation. In the sales area, RES energy is included according to regulations and customer preferences. One company is planning energy efficiency services. Implementing the strategies described requires large investments, often with long payback periods. As it is difficult to obtain debt financing for coal assets, the previous government planned to transfer them from the state-owned energy companies to a separate entity (the so-called NABE); a plan that is currently being modified.

Impact on employment and working conditions

Employment in coal mining and coal-fired power generation is declining, although to a limited extent for the time being, partly due to the negotiated timetable for the closure of state-owned coal mines by 2049 and the ongoing work to spin off coal assets from the state-owned power companies that dominate the industry. At the same time, employment is increasing due to the growth of new 'green' facilities and the construction of new power lines, which is creating demand for construction services. However, these trends are not offsetting each other, not only because of the lower labour intensity of low- and zero-carbon technologies, but also because low-skilled jobs are not being created.

The green and digital transformation is changing the **demand for skills**. Some of the jobs that are disappearing, e.g. in carburising departments, do not require qualifications, while where automated equipment is starting to dominate (especially where gas or renewable energy are the carriers), higher skills are needed. On the one hand, the sector is facing a generation gap, particularly for electricians, which is not easy to fill, partly due to the length of time it takes to obtain qualifications. On the other hand, there is a growing demand for workers with skills related to IT equipment and systems, including cybersecurity. In the future, the nuclear industry will create a potentially large labour market.

Industry sector

Sector. The share of manufacturing in GDP is 22.5%⁵, employment in the sector is 2,353.8 thousand⁶. Within the sector, there are industries that are particularly affected by the green transition: energy-intensive industries, such as the metal industry (62.5 thousand employees in metal production) and the construction materials industry (116.0 thousand employees), or the automotive industry, which generates 7-8% of GDP and employs 203.4⁷, thousand people, which will be described below. The sector includes companies that are part of multinationals as well as local manufacturers of various sizes.

Industrial companies face increasing costs related to CO₂ emissions (especially in energy-intensive industries) and competition from goods from outside the EU. The CBAM compensation mechanism, its efficiency and rigour will be crucial for their survival. Energy prices, which are high due to the

⁵ Source: Statistics Poland, data for 2022

⁶ Source: Statistics Poland, data for 1Q 2024

⁷ Source: Statistics Poland. Employment data for 1Q 2024.



share of coal in their generation, also play an important role. For energy-intensive industries, the technological challenges of decarbonisation are also an issue.

Corporate strategies. On the one hand, companies are aiming to reduce the carbon footprint of their manufacturing processes (CO₂ emissions and energy consumption), while on the other hand they are introducing products with more climate- and environmentally friendly parameters. Energy-intensive companies are investing in **low-carbon technologies** that incur costs and increase electricity demand. Some companies are developing their **own energy sources**.

Cement plants are switching to less carbon-intensive production of lower-grade cements or considering the use of CCS (CO₂ capture and underground injection), but this is a very expensive process. To reduce energy costs, companies are improving **energy efficiency and recovering waste energy** in production processes or using **renewable energy** (e.g. wood waste from wooden window production in biomass boilers). In the construction industry, **energy-efficient products** are being introduced in the building industry (energy efficient, with better insulation), and car manufacturers are switching to the production of electric vehicles and starting to phase out or reduce the production of combustion engines.

The growth of **secondary raw materials** for manufacturing in industry depends on the profitability and availability of uncontaminated materials. In the metals industry, there is a growing demand for good quality scrap and the importance of steelmaking capacity from scrap is increasing.

The challenge is to **obtain products with the right performance using recycled raw materials** (e.g. in the construction industry). In the automotive industry, three trends can be observed within the framework of the circular economy: the recycling of end-of-life vehicles, the remanufacturing and certification of parts for the aftermarket and, for the time being, experimental attempts to remanufacture entire (4–5-year-old) vehicles that are being returned to the production line (Renault). At the same time, the potential market for remanufactured cars in Poland is very narrow - it is dominated by cars with a very long service life and 4–5-year-old cars are treated as new

In general, companies are adapting their business strategies to climate change policies to varying degrees; small domestic industrial companies will find it more difficult to meet the challenges of the green transition.

Impact of Green Deal policies on sectoral reorganisation

Co-operation between producers and recyclers is increasing (e.g. in the metals industry), integration with RES suppliers is observed - partnerships, investments in RES projects or long-term agreements with RES energy suppliers to change the cost structure and reduce the carbon footprint. In the automotive sector, which relies on supplies from producers of steel and other metals, plastics, rubber products, glass and electronics, cooperation with the electrical industry (battery producers) is becoming increasingly important. As a third of the value of a car is represented by the electric battery, the result is that car manufacturers are mainly dependent on Chinese manufacturers (72% share of the global electric battery market). Another 1/3 of the cost is software, including energy management, provided by large IT companies (mainly American, partly Korean and increasingly Chinese) and in the hands of the European original equipment manufacturer (OEM). In the case of

hydrogen-powered vehicles, production is carried out on a joint venture basis with companies with the relevant technologies, with an OEM share of just under 50%. It currently has a marginal market share (vehicles are expensive and there is a lack of charging infrastructure) and is developing mainly in the bus segment. Among other things, a factory has been set up in Świdnik to produce vehicles under the Polish Nesobus brand.

Impact on employment and labour market

The impact on employment depends on the sector. In the case of energy-intensive industries, such as metals or cement, the key to maintaining jobs is to keep production profitable in the face of climate change policies. In the automotive sector, a third fewer workers are needed for electric cars than for combustion vehicles. As a result, cutbacks and layoffs are already beginning to occur in the industry (e.g. group layoffs at the FCA Poland Bielsko-Biała plant, which produced internal combustion engines), although on a lower level now. An opportunity for companies producing components for combustion engines and the fuel system (catalytic converters, spark plugs, gearboxes) could be the trend towards restoring the quality of used combustion cars for customers who cannot afford a relatively expensive (even remanufactured) electric car. Remanufacturing of used (post-lease) cars in Poland is limited for the time being to the Renault initiative, which is to be based on the existing staffing of dealer service workshops.

Climate policy contributes to the market introduction of many new products, e.g. in the construction industry, whose impact on the health of workers or users is not yet well understood.

The green transition creates a demand for innovation, there is an increasing demand for specialists, materials engineers, environmental technology (e.g. in the metals industry). In the automotive sector, digitalisation is the main driver of changes in demand for employee skills. On the other hand, the production of electrically powered cars may require appropriate professional skills due to the workers' contact with electric voltage. The demand for new skills does not affect employment, as companies rely on existing employees.

Transport sector

Sector. The transport and storage sector employs 849,518 persons⁸. It is dominated by land transport, which will employ 71% of the sector's workforce in 2021, of which 51% in road transport⁹. The road transport sector contributes 7% to GDP and 6.5% to employment in the economy as a whole¹⁰. There are 105,000 companies involved in road transport, of which 45,000 are engaged in international transport. There are about 100 large companies, including both foreign-owned and domestic companies. Most operators are micro-enterprises with an average of six vehicles or six employees. At the same time, it costs at least €13,000 to create a job in the industry, with a

⁸ Source: Statistics Poland, 31.12.2023.

⁹ Based on Eurostat: *sbs_na_1a_se_r2*

¹⁰ Source: <https://tlp.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/raport-transport-drogowy-w-polsce-2023.pdf>



profitability of 2-3%¹¹. Rail transport accounts for 5% of employment in the sector (around 47,000 people), and water¹² and air passenger transport for 1% each.

Strategies. Companies engaged in international road transport are reluctant to replace their fleets with electric ones (only about a dozen electric trucks have been registered in Poland so far) because of the limitations of electric tractors, namely the distance that can be travelled without recharging, the recharging time and the unavailability of recharging infrastructure, which makes the cost per kilometre at least twice as high as for a combustion engine tractor, while at the same time the price per vehicle is 4-5 times higher, which means an expenditure of EUR 400,000 - 600,000 per tractor and semi-trailer, i.e. for the creation of one climate-neutral job. Electric vehicles are emerging in the short-haul van segment. In passenger transport, public transport companies are replacing combustion-engine buses with electric or hydrogen-powered vehicles, as the Electric Mobility and Alternative Fuels Act stipulates that at least 30% of the public transport fleet in municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants must consist of zero-emission buses. However, to cover a given distance with one electric bus, a city needs 10% more buses than the diesel fleet to ensure continuity of service (due to the frequency and charging time required). Decarbonisation measures in the road transport sector other than electrification, such as fuel efficiency measures (driving economy, avoiding empty runs), eco-driving supported by computer software and AI, have long been implemented in the sector, without any link to climate policy, as part of optimisation and the drive to reduce costs, and are accompanied by various incentive tools used by employers to target employees.

The impact of climate policy on rail industry strategies is negligible, the focus is on the modernisation of some lines, the rail network is not being expanded and freight transport is declining. Current national transport policies favour the cannibalisation of rail transport by road, and measures to develop intermodal transport are ineffective.

Climate policy also has little impact on the strategies of companies operating in the maritime or aviation sectors, as zero-emission solutions for these modes of transport are still in the development phase.

Impact on employment and working conditions

The switch to electric propulsion does not threaten drivers' jobs, nor does it change the nature of their work. Public transport buses are plugged in for charging by the drivers at the end of their shift; the charging does not require the presence of the driver. However, the need to charge the vehicle in the end route may be different in the case of freight transport, raising the question of whether charging time should be counted as working time. In addition, awareness of the potential risk of spontaneous combustion of the battery in an electric vehicle can have a negative impact on driver comfort.

Skills. The green transition will not have a significant impact on the demand for skills, and any changes will be evolutionary.

¹¹ Data quoted after a participant in the study.

¹² Of the 34,000 seafarers, only 300 of them work under Polish flags.



4 Cross-sectoral view of changes perceived by employees

Actions taken at company level in the three sectors in relation to the green transition

More than half (58%) of the respondents in the energy and industry survey said that the company they work for **is changing or expanding its business profile in a low-carbon direction** (more common in the energy sector), 40% that it has an environmental or climate strategy or programme. A change in operating model, work organisation or technological processes in a low-carbon direction was reported by 37% of respondents. The same number of respondents said their employer had provided guidance or training to employees on green practices. The use of renewable or closed-loop energy was reported by a third of respondents, as was the expansion of the business profile in a low-carbon direction, with 27% of respondents reporting that their employer was reducing or phasing out fossil fuel-based activities. The provision of training or support for green transport was also reported. At the same time, almost a quarter of respondents said that they **did not have enough knowledge of the company's** green transition activities. In several cases, respondents had not heard of any activities in this area.

Impact of the green transformation on employment and working conditions as observed by employees

Most respondents **did not observe any impact of the green transition on jobs** in their company. The few changes that were most reported were the suspension of recruitment and the reduction of jobs (17% each). In isolated cases, respondents reported a change in health and safety conditions because of the green transformation (more often for the better).

Less than half of the respondents reported that the employer involved workers in monitoring and adapting OSH measures to new tasks (e.g. the introduction of new green technologies) and ¼ had no knowledge of the employer's activities in this respect.

Workers' opinions, expectations and needs

Perceptions of the greening of the economy and prospects for their jobs

Most respondents (63%) agree that the green transition **will improve the environment and citizens' health**. Only 40% expect it to improve the competitiveness of the national economy and only 36% expect it to contribute to **the country's energy independence**. Less than a third of respondents believe that the green transition will increase the total **number of jobs** in the economy. The vast majority (78%) believe that **regions** dependent on carbon-intensive industries will not be able to cope without government support. At the same time, two-thirds of respondents fear that the transition will lead to **higher prices and living costs**, and that **support** for social groups affected by the transition will be misplaced or delayed. Fewer employees expect a **loss of EU competitiveness** because of the implementation of green standards, but they are still in the majority (52%).

Employees overwhelmingly believe that green transition is important to **the company's future** they work for (42% of responses 'somewhat important' and 25% 'very important'), as is digital transformation (69% of responses: 'somewhat important' or 'definitely important'). However, even more respondents consider rising energy prices (78%, with 42% definitely important) and limited



access to raw materials (73%, with 44% definitely important) to be important to the future of their jobs.

Expectations for a just transition

Respondents rated **the impact of the selected measures on the possibility of a fair transition** on a 1 to 5 scale. The highest scores were given to the potential of *energy cost shielding instruments for vulnerable groups* (mean score: 4.0) and *social protection for workers at risk of negative effects of the transition* (mean score: 3.9) - in both cases a high or very high impact was reported by 63% of respondents. *Subsidised employment with new employers for workers made redundant because of the transition* received an average score of 3.7, as did *sectoral diversification of the economy in regions dominated by fossil fuels*. *The involvement of workers in the planning process* (25% rated its impact as low or negligible), followed by *the creation of new green jobs to replace high-carbon jobs that are being lost* (23% of such references), were considered by respondents to have less impact on the equity of the transition. On average, the impact of these instruments was rated at 3.6, as was the importance of *support for training and retraining of workers to keep them in employment*.

Forms of support available to employees in relation to the transition

In the case of redundancies reported by some respondents, employees were sometimes offered another job within the same company. Some may have benefited from one-off redundancy payments, early retirement (paid early retirement) or other forms of protection. Some respondents reported that new jobs had been created or changes had been made to existing jobs.

Reviewing and upgrading employee skills

Although only a low number of respondents reported that there was **a review of employees' skills** in their organisation, more than a quarter of respondents reported that the employer provided employees with **training** to improve their skills, which generally included digital skills training. In some cases, enterprises provided employees with **retraining** opportunities (including digital skills training).

Perceptions of own situation: level of information, career prospects, desired forms of support

Three-quarters of respondents **do not feel sufficiently informed** about the company's green transformation plans or the impact of climate change policies on the labour market in their sector, and a slightly smaller group feel insufficiently informed about how to reduce the company's environmental and climate impact.

Only in a few cases respondents indicated that the employer had discussed with them (or their representatives) the impact of the green transition on the workforce, how to minimise its negative effects, the changing skills needs of the workforce or the scope and form of support programmes.

Both the industry and the companies in which the respondents work are seen by them as **crucial to the region in which they live** (75% and 77% of the responses somewhat or definitely yes, respectively). Green transition is seen as a **threat to their own jobs** by 62% of respondents, and digital transformation by 54%. To keep their jobs, 81% of respondents **are willing to upgrade their skills** and 77% are willing to **retrain** if necessary. If necessary, 71% of respondents would be willing to work in another industry, with 65% rating their qualifications as useful outside their current industry.

The **limited geographical mobility** of workers is characteristic: only 40% would consider a job offer outside their current place of residence with comparable working conditions, and only 42% if these conditions were more favourable.

5 Social partners and the Green Deal

Strategies, demands, perceptions of their role

In general, neither trade union leaders nor employers **question the idea of the green transition as such**, but they have numerous comments on its implementation and the coherence of climate policy instruments.

Trade unions **do not agree that change should come at the expense of workers**, seeing their role primarily as defending their interests. Above all, they believe that **change should be spread over time**, so that transition-related job losses (e.g. in mining, energy, automotive) are gradual, and that redundant workers should be provided with protective instruments.

Workers should be warned of planned structural and job-related changes, given the opportunity to **adapt their skills** to work in a different position without loss of pay, and, in the case of higher skills or an independent position, the prospect of higher wages and, in the case of redundancies, **the possibility of retraining and assistance in finding work** in other companies and industries. **The creation of new quality jobs** is also important. Trade unionists are in favour of protecting and increasing the number of jobs in industry, as they are better paid than in services and workers are often covered by collective agreements.

Employers stressed the need for action at national or EU administrative level to **reduce the temporal and geographical gap between job losses and job creation**, and to offset the negative effects with protection programmes.

Both trade unions and employers **are opposed to pushing industry out of the EU**, which they believe the rapid implementation of the green transition will lead to. They point to the excessive burden of CO2 permit costs on energy-intensive industries and believe that climate policy should be implemented in a way that allows companies to remain profitable while maintaining environmental standards. They see the CBAM compensation mechanism as very important, but at the same time they are against the EU economy becoming dependent on imports from countries with less stringent environmental standards. In contrast, employers in the automotive sector believe that EU policy should respond to Europe's growing dependence on China to produce electric cars.

Employers in the transport sector believe that the electrification of long-distance transport will significantly increase operating costs and make Polish hauliers less competitive with, for example, Ukraine. Both employers' and employees' representatives consider that issues related to the working conditions of long-distance drivers (access to infrastructure) need to be addressed more urgently. Similarly, in rail transport, the lack of regulation of drivers' working time is an important issue.

Trade unionists report that the **financial burden on companies associated with the transition** (including CO2 costs, outlays needed for green investments) is leading employers to look for **savings**

in labour costs. While employers recognise the need to provide decent exit conditions for redundant workers (including adequate severance pay), they are unwilling to accept changes (e.g. wage rules) that generate fixed costs. An increase in business costs means **an increase in the price of goods and services for consumers and citizens**, which may meet with social resistance.

An objective obstacle to a fast transition pointed out by both workers' and employers' representatives in the energy sector, is the need to provide an energy source to stabilise the electricity supply, which could replace coal in this role, in a situation where Poland is only planning to build its first nuclear power plant. In this context, they point out that Poland's very high share of coal in the energy mix and the number of people working in the coal sector puts it in a very different position from other EU countries. In the construction industry, trade unions and employers feel that EU policy on the green transition does not **sufficiently consider the specificities of the eastern and southern walls of the EU**. In countries such as Poland, the green transition will take longer and, according to one respondent, "we will not be the beneficiaries because all the hardware and software will be produced there and not here".

Threats to the transition raise **questions about the real intentions behind its implementation**, both on the part of workers (industry, energy) and employers (transport).

Social partner action at sectoral and company level

At the sectoral level in the country, trade union activities have focused on seeking to protect the employment of workers and to provide social protection for those whose jobs will be lost because of the transition (particularly in relation to coal mining and conventional energy). The social partners - employers and trade unions - also sought to introduce instruments to mitigate the costs of the transition for companies (in energy-intensive industries). In the transport sector, issues unrelated to transition dominated: drivers' working conditions (access to infrastructure), the sectoral minimum wage, drivers' working time.

Trade unions were also involved in social dialogue at European level.

At company level, the survey results show that employee representative organisations were most likely to ask management for information about the company's plans and future in relation to the green transition (46% of references), to develop initiatives to safeguard employees' interests (36%) and to raise awareness among employees about the green transition (29%). At the same time, 40% of respondents said they were not sufficiently aware of the activities of these organisations.

6 Social dialogue and collective bargaining in the context of a just transition

Social dialogue at sectoral level

At sectoral (national) level, the main forums for dialogue are the tripartite teams, which have been established over the last two decades and bring together representatives of the government and representative trade unions and employers' organisations. Issues addressed in the context of a just

transition included protective instruments for employees in the energy and mining sectors, energy prices, ETS, CBAM.

The results of the social dialogue included the adoption of a demand for support for energy-intensive industries (subsidies of PLN 5.5 billion were granted) and the signing of two social agreements introducing protective solutions for employees in the coal mining and conventional energy industries threatened by negative consequences of the transition. The agreement for the coal industry also included the adoption of a timetable for the closure of coal mines owned by state companies.

However, the effectiveness of these forums has been limited. In some cases, the teams have not met and in others the government has not responded to positions developed jointly by workers and employers.

Social dialogue at company level

The main topics of dialogue at company level are wage issues and, in companies that are making changes that affect workers, employment stabilisation and labour aspects of planned restructurings. Green transformation as such is not a topic that organises dialogue.

In large state-owned energy companies, there are various types of social dialogue platforms, which include representatives of trade unions from the energy group, members of the management of the energy group and group companies.

In contrast, the functioning of a joint body (steering committee) dealing with the green transition with employee representatives in its composition is rare (single indications in the employee survey). An overwhelming number of respondents indicated that the employer did not discuss with employees (or their representatives) issues such as the impact of the green transition on the company's situation, the skills needed by employees, ways to minimise negative impacts, or the scope and form of support programmes (60-67% of indications).

Information and consultation procedures in collective agreements

In some cases, collective agreements clarify or extend the information obligations of employers and trade union organisations [Mądrzycki 2022]. For example, the employer may be obliged to consult the unions on changes to the company's organisational structure. In the energy sector, there are cooperation agreements with trade unions (resulting from previous industrial disputes) which oblige the employer to inform, consult and negotiate on a wide range of issues.

Provisions in collective agreements to support a just transition

Provisions on employment and new green jobs; education, training and skills; social protection and working conditions

Collective agreements, where they exist, do not contain provisions directly related to the green transition because they were negotiated earlier. However, they may contain more general provisions that can be applied to structural changes in companies, including those resulting from the

transformation. Examples (in the energy sector) include provisions on training and upskilling and, in one company's collective agreement, provisions on employment stabilisation, whereby the employer is required to help a redundant employee find a new job. This is partly because the collective agreements were negotiated before the green transition.

Most of the respondents indicated that the collective agreement in their company does not contain any provisions related to the green transition (90% of the respondents indicated that they are covered by such an agreement). Where there are provisions (isolated references), they relate to working conditions, sometimes to information and consultation procedures, exceptionally to training and qualifications, or to job guarantees. More than 62% of respondents think that the provisions of the collective agreement in their workplace should be supplemented in the context of the green transition.

Provisions to support a just transition can be found in two tripartite social agreements concluded to minimise the negative impact of the transition on workers in coal mining and conventional energy. They include paid early retirement (maximum four years, 80% of salary) or, in other cases, one-off severance payments and, for coal miners, one-off retraining for work outside the mining sector. It also provides for the creation of a Transformation Fund for Silesia to restore the region's economic potential and build an electric car factory. Under one of these agreements, the entity to which coal assets were to be spun off from state-owned companies (the National Energy Security Agency, which the former government had planned to set up) was obliged to develop zero- and low-carbon areas of activity and create jobs within it.

Environmental clauses

Environmental clauses are not found in collective agreements, although companies are finding solutions that combine reducing the company's climate and environmental impact with benefits for employees. For example, some employers organise collective transport for their employees, and the relevant departments within the company (environment and health and safety) are obliged to provide employees with relevant information on, for example, energy efficiency, recycling, waste separation, sources and ways of reducing emissions, and the costs involved. In the transport industry, drivers are rewarded for fuel efficiency, which reduces the impact on the climate, but is practised for economic reasons. Companies also have policies, not necessarily collective agreements, on remote working, but these have not been introduced to reduce emissions from commuting.

In industry, there is the potential to harness employee ingenuity to optimise production processes and increase energy efficiency, which, by affecting the health of companies, may offer better prospects for wage increases.

Of the practices that could be the subject of green clauses, the most cited by respondents were instruction or training in environmentally friendly behaviour in the workplace and, occasionally, support for the use of environmentally friendly forms of transport.

7 Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions and considerations on the future model of green social dialogue

So far, the impact of the green transition is mainly visible in the energy sector and to some extent in industry, but the fundamental job losses due to decarbonisation are yet to come.

However, companies are already under financial pressure due to the cost of CO₂, high energy prices (in Poland due to the high share of coal) and the investments needed to decarbonise operations. As a result, the transition may lead companies to cut labour costs and force them to raise prices for goods and services to consumers and citizens, which may in turn create a demand barrier and social resistance and reduce the competitiveness of companies vis-à-vis entities from countries with less restrictive climate policies. This in turn risks the closure or relocation of key industries outside the EU. These challenges need to be addressed through tripartite sectoral social dialogue.

Many employees perceive the green transition as a threat to their jobs and at the same time do not fully believe that their participation in planning the transition can influence its fairness. On issues related to the green transition at company level, employees mostly feel uninformed, and a large percentage of respondents also lack knowledge about the activities of their workplace representative organisations (as evidenced by the survey results). This points to the need for better communication at company level between employers, employees and their organisations. Among other things, this should be used to develop solutions that respond to the challenges of transition and are sanctioned within the framework of autonomous labour law.

To maintain employment, workers are mostly willing to upgrade and change their skills, but they are not willing to move, which makes it even more important to work on the sectoral diversification of regional economies in view of the risk of regional concentration of jobs, with the regions being supported by the state. In this context, a dialogue involving both the social partners and national and local authorities is important.

Recommendations to the social partners

The following recommendations for action address the issues identified by the research participants and can contribute to the realisation of a green transformation for the benefit of entrepreneurs, workers and citizens. These have been formulated based on the suggestions made in the interviews.

At European level - dialogue / initiating dialogue:

- how to protect and restore European production capacity and develop competitiveness while striving for climate neutrality in the context of global competition (e.g. how Europe should respond to the threats posed by Chinese dominance of the battery and electric car market in the context of the planned revision of the regulation of CO₂ emissions from cars and light commercial vehicles)?
- how to maintain and create jobs in the European manufacturing sector (reindustrialisation)?



- how to achieve climate objectives while maintaining the viability of the European road transport sector?
- adapt the pace and means of transition in a way that considers the differences between Member States in terms of the scale of the challenges, the capacity to absorb negative impacts and the potential share of the benefits of transition?

At national level - urge the government to take the following actions:

- develop and adopt:
 - an energy transition strategy (which would, inter alia, dispel the ambiguities expressed by workers due to inconsistent messages from the authorities and provide a stable reference point for corporate strategy and sound business decisions - e.g. electrification of industrial processes based on own energy sources);
 - a programme for the decarbonisation (including electrification) and development of domestic industry (identifying effective ways and forms of support for industry in this process, considering support instruments for the circular economy);
 - an integrated strategy for the development of climate-friendly, worker-friendly and citizen-friendly transport (covering all modes of transport and the relationship between them; identifying ways and means of meeting transport needs in a way that reduces the impact on the climate and the environment, including measures to reduce transport exclusion; identifying measures to improve working conditions in transport - driver access to infrastructure, regulation of driving time) through coherent planning with the social partners in order to increase the effectiveness of measures to achieve climate policy objectives and to make efficient use of limited resources to implement the transition.

The planning process should include a transparent and accurate cost analysis and cost distribution forecast.

- Implementing different types of instruments targeted at business to support the green transition (e.g. regulatory relief for the development of own sources of renewable energy, support for a closed loop economy by introducing lower VAT rates for products with appropriate environmental certificates, extending public support to smaller investments in electric mobility).
- Creation of a mechanism for forecasting the temporal and geographical gaps between job losses and job creation (in the energy and manufacturing sectors), linked to the provision of programmes to compensate for any negative impact of the green transition on workers.
- Creation of a system of public support for employer-led retraining and upskilling programmes (adopting solutions like those used in other European countries in this respect).

At national/sectoral and company level:

- promote socially responsible employer practices that support a just transition (upskilling, retraining, reskilling programmes, fair financial compensation for lost jobs in case of transition-related redundancies);



- promote solutions which combine benefits for employees with a reduction in the environmental and climate impact of businesses and their sanctioning by binding legislation at company level (particularly in the energy and manufacturing sectors);
- raise awareness among businesses, employees and consumers of the potential benefits of green transformation.

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