



Joint Statement on the need for good industrial jobs in Europe

The European forestry and forest-based bioeconomy sector, gathered within the Circular Choices Coalition, represents 3% of EU GDP and one in five manufacturing companies in the EU. The renewable and recyclable wood products and wood-based fibre solutions this sector provides, are made and recycled in Europe, with European technology and with raw materials coming predominantly from European sustainably growing forests.

The undersigned associations, including the ones part of the Circular Choices coalition and some of their counterparts in the labour unions, endorse the core labour requirements of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), including the respect of freedom of association, a well functioning social dialogue and an effective right to collective bargaining.

The transition to a circular economy in the EU must prioritize competitiveness, fairness and inclusivity, aiming to sustain and generate quality jobs while fostering innovation through the development of new and existing bio-based products. This shift presents economic opportunities but also requires the cultivation of young talent equipped with new skills, alongside reskilling and upskilling the current workforce, especially in the context of labour shortages which is a common challenge for the forest-based bioeconomy sector.

A strong industrial policy is needed, to be developed following European Commission's President von der Leyen's announced objectives, with an emphasis in the creation of good quality jobs¹.

A Clean Industrial Deal and the expected sustainable and affordable housing initiative should contribute to overcoming the challenges the industry faces in making this green transition happen while increasing investment in social, public, energy-efficient and sustainable living spaces. The undersigned associations acknowledge that such new industrial framework aims to help alleviate the industry's burden, but in order to support the industry's contribution to the Green Deal, the practical implementation of the Clean Industrial Deal and revitalising the construction sector will ensure that Europe becomes competitive again by fostering innovation and investment in future green technologies, products and solutions, and by promoting social progress and just transition, while ensuring good quality jobs.

To ensure good quality industrial jobs across Europe, the undersigned associations call to policymakers for:

1) Training and job-to-job transition

A successful and just transition requires a right to a job-to-job transition and to a quality reskilling and upskilling of the current workforce ensured via a right to training and the development of new training programmes for the changing and emerging job profiles of the green economy.

¹ The undersigned associations define quality jobs as direct employment including the following: (i) collective bargaining, (ii) full respect for workers and trade union rights, (iii) fair wages, (iv) work security and social protection, (v) training without costs and during working time, (vi) good working conditions, (vii) health and safety at the workplace, (viii) work-life balance, (ix) equality and non-discrimination (ETUC Resolution "A European Industrial Policy for Quality Jobs")

Strong investment in training and life-long learning coupled with career development and collective bargaining in the forestry and forest-based bioeconomy is needed. In addition, promotion and support of Vocational Education and Training is needed, taking into consideration the differences in the Member States.

2) Identify, assess, and prepare for the impacts of the industrial transition

It is important to identify and assess the impact of climate change on forests and of the various demands placed on them (e.g. as source of raw materials, energy, nature preservation, climate mitigation and space of recreation). It is also necessary to consider the new organisation of work, the fact that employment is provided in rural areas, the new & traditional materials, the new technologies, the production processes, and the persisting and emerging challenges to Occupational Safety and Health (OSH). Workers and companies also require support to put in place health and safety measures which are corresponding to the challenges in the forest value chain.

3) Guarantee high quality jobs throughout the industrial transition

The industrial transition can only be successful if high quality jobs are guaranteed and created at the scale that is needed. To maintain and create high quality industrial jobs, all jobs, including new emerging jobs, should be covered by collective agreements. It is also critical to make all public investments conditional to the creation of good quality jobs and to apply social conditionality clauses in public procurement.

The EU Social Partners reiterate that the availability of financial resources is necessary to stimulate industrial investment in innovative green and digital technologies and production methods in Europe, with guarantees to ensure the retention and creation of quality jobs, while ensuring a fair distribution of the wealth created across the value chain. As reflected in the Antwerp Dialogue [Joint Declaration](#) on quality industrial jobs, strict criteria on access to EU funds should promote a fair transformation of our industries, focusing on social cohesion, quality employment and promotion of social dialogue.

4) Build, rebuild and strengthen social dialogue and collective bargaining structures at all levels across Europe

Social dialogue and collective bargaining structures are essential for the transition to ensure the maintenance and create of good quality jobs. Both social partners need to be jointly engaged in planning and implementing the transition.

In the context of the current Hungarian presidency of the Council of the European Union, we are calling for a better and effective, social dialogue across all EU countries. Social dialogue is particularly important to guarantee the respect of the principle of non-discrimination of Third Country National workers.

5) Increase investments on Research and Development (R&D) and access to finance for decarbonization

More investment on R&D on the circular bioeconomy is needed. As example, there is an urge for the unlocking of financing instruments to implement energy efficiency programmes and the switch to renewable and low-carbon energy sources to reduce Europe's dependency on fossil fuels.