



Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for the Extractive Industries

**The extractive industry sector and its workers
at the heart of the European Industrial Deal for good quality jobs**

Joint recommendations for the next European Mandate (2024 – 2029)

As Europe must now embark on the path towards a just Green Transition via an Industrial Deal for good quality jobs, it is imperative to acknowledge the central role played by the extractive industry sector and its workforce. Raw materials serve as the backbone of all industrial processes and products, providing essential resources for manufacturing, construction and technological advancement in Europe, and contributing to strategic autonomy and economic security. Mineral raw materials constitute the cornerstone of Europe's most urgent and ambitious objectives, from Green and Digital transitions to the EU's defence and aerospace agendas. They are an essential enabler of multiple European strategic industries and provide 350,000 jobs in the EU, and more than 30 million jobs in the downstream sectors. Furthermore, Europe has developed strategic competences, skills and capabilities in these industries which must be protected and enhanced. In addition, the extractive industry sector and its workforce stand at the forefront of a transformative journey, navigating the complexities of transitioning towards cleaner and more sustainable practices.

We, the Social Partners of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for the Extractive Industries, are signatories to the [Antwerp Declaration for a European Industrial Deal](#) and express our full support for a European Industrial Deal to complement the Green Deal and keep quality jobs in Europe. We have also signed up to a specific [joint statement focused on the social dimension](#) of an EU Industrial Deal.

As we chart a course towards a more resilient and inclusive industrial future, this declaration emphasises the indispensable role of the extractive industry sector and its workers within the framework of the Just Transition and Industrial Deal for good quality jobs in Europe. It also highlights the importance of incorporating social aspects into the Industrial Deal, as these elements are crucial for its success and acceptance.

In this context, we are calling for:



1. The development of an industrial political strategy for quality jobs in Europe which takes into consideration the extractive industries

We must avoid deindustrialisation in Europe and safeguard good industrial jobs. We need a European Industrial Deal with more actions to support the extractive industry sector to develop activities for raw materials and ensure quality industrial jobs in Europe.

Domestic raw materials have a key role to play in meeting Europe's green ambitions and to ensure the EU's open strategic autonomy. Targeted policies and coordinated actions at EU level should be prioritised towards this sector in order to ensure its development, while ensuring good jobs. The Critical Raw Materials Act will help to strengthen EU raw materials value chain, from mining to refining, through processing and recycling. This will require development of domestic extraction, a more streamlined and predictable approach to permitting procedures and better access to finance as well as more strategic use of resources. The European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for the Extractive Industries welcomes the Critical Raw Materials Act and calls (i) for its implementation, with the necessary actions in terms of the means and political support, and the involvement of the social partners at European and national level, and (ii) for an extension of its scope to cover other essential raw materials.

The European Sectoral Social Partners also recommend actions to expand the scope of the Act - from critical or strategic raw materials to those essential for achieving the European Union's key objectives. We want to avoid a situation where the EU finds itself in a precarious position regarding the supply of raw materials that today are not considered critical or strategic. We believe it is necessary to use this momentum to establish a comprehensive raw materials policy, taking into account the essential role that non-critical raw materials play in securing EU prosperity, security and global industrial leadership. Improving the permitting procedure for all raw materials is key to guarantee the availability of authorised raw material reserves.

Mineral planning ensures that economic and societal needs, as well as the impact of extraction and treatment on the population and the environment, are managed in an integrated manner, taking into account the entire life cycle of the mine or quarry.

In addition, a strong focus on the circular economy is key to open strategic autonomy and the preservation of natural resources. The use of secondary raw materials represents enormous potential in terms of sustainability and security of supply. This requires strong incentives, investment in collection, sorting, research and development, and in eco-design. A broader vision on strategic use of resources to protect the environment and mitigate climate change will also be key.

Businesses have an important role to play in securing supply chains and ensuring strategic autonomy. In addition, the availability of financial resources is essential to encourage industrial investment in Europe. It is important to include guarantees that ensure the retention and creation of quality jobs, while also ensuring a fair distribution of the resulting wealth. Strict criteria for accessing EU funds



should promote a fair transformation of our industries, with a focus on social cohesion, quality employment, and the promotion of social dialogue.

2. Ensuring Quality Jobs in the Extractive Industry

Quality jobs are fundamental to the well-being of workers and the economic health of our communities. Any industrial and raw material policies must effectively secure good quality jobs. We, the European Sectoral Social Partners in the extractive industry sector, are fully committed to providing quality jobs in the sector. “Quality jobs” means work that provides fair wages, ensures work security via standard employment contracts, and access to social protection. There should also be access to quality lifelong learning opportunities, good working conditions in safe and healthy workplaces, reasonable working time and a good work-life balance, while ensuring the right to join a union, trade union representation and bargaining rights as well as right to strike

Quality jobs also rely upon a culture of diversity, inclusion and belonging at work, where all workers are truly able to be their authentic selves, and where everyone feels welcome, respected, and valued. Successful businesses in the extractive industry sector increasingly recognise the benefits that a diverse workforce brings, including attracting and retaining the best talent, fostering innovation and bringing new ideas, all of which lead to more effective and profitable businesses that are better prepared for the Just Transition. All aspects of diversity must be considered, including a strong gender equality perspective, to drive these issues and ensure inclusivity and fairness across the sector.

It is recommended to ensure that older individuals are supported in adapting to evolving industry expectations through targeted training and improved healthcare. To address properly the ageing of the workforce, it will require the implementation of dedicated initiatives and programmes targeting older workers to adapt their working conditions and to benefit from their experience which can be transmitted to younger workers.

Protecting workers in the extractive industries requires a solid commitment to occupational health and safety (H&S) related to accidents and working conditions during mining activities but also on consequences of extraction and mineral processing activities.

Identifying new H&S risks linked to raw materials, as well as the ways that new technologies can reduce risks, is crucial.

By prioritising quality jobs, we not only enhance the lives of workers but also attract and retain talent and drive industrial excellence.

3. A Just Transition for the Extractive Industry and workforce

As we navigate the transition towards a greener and more sustainable future, companies and workers will both face unprecedented challenges and major transformations. It is thus imperative that we ensure a Just Transition for the extractive industry and its workforce. This means providing robust support systems for workers affected by changes in the industry. To address this, transformation must



be accompanied by a Just Transition framework that ensures effective anticipation and management of employment and skills. This framework should provide security for companies and workers undergoing these industrial changes, supported by the strong and stable involvement of social partners at all levels.

A Just Transition is not only a moral imperative but also a practical necessity to maintain social stability and economic cohesion.

4. Concrete agenda and actions for re-skilling and up-skilling

The future of the extractive industry will demand new skills and competencies as we adopt advanced and digital technologies and sustainable practices. A concrete agenda focused on re-skilling and up-skilling the workforce is crucial. We must invest in education and quality training programmes that equip workers with the skills needed for the jobs of tomorrow. Collaboration between industry, educational institutions, trade unions and government agencies will be key to create targeted training and development initiatives that reflect the evolving demands of the sector. By prioritising continuous learning and professional development, we can ensure that the workforce remains competitive and capable of driving the industry forward.

5. Nothing about us without us: social dialogue at the heart of industrial and raw materials policies

At the heart of this ambitious transformation lies the principle of social dialogue. Engaging all social partners in meaningful dialogue is essential for developing and implementing policies that reflect the interests and needs of the entire industry. Social dialogue fosters transparency, builds trust, and ensures that the voices of workers are heard and respected. By promoting inclusive and participatory decision-making processes, we can achieve balanced solutions that benefit both the industry and its workforce, proactively anticipating change and establishing observatories at both the company and sector level.

6. Towards a fair global playing field

To uphold a truly fair trade approach, it is crucial that the procurement of raw materials from non-EU sources not only complies with EU legislation and standards for social and environmental aspects but also ensure that fair returns directly benefit the population of extraction countries. By enforcing strict adherence to the same standards that apply within the EU – covering human and labour rights and environmental protection, and EU principles for sustainable raw materials –we can prevent unfair competition, promote sustainable practices worldwide, and protect the interests of workers and industries. This approach is vital for maintaining good jobs in Europe, attracting investment and ensuring that the benefits of raw material extraction are equitably distributed. Compliance with ILO core conventions and the OECD guidelines is non-negotiable, as it is a cornerstone of ethical sourcing that prioritises the well-being of people over profits.