



SPAIN

A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2024

**WORKERS
DEMAND A
NEW SOCIAL
CONTRACT**

WORKERS NEED SUSTAINABLE RESPONSES TO MULTIPLE CRISES

The Spanish government has consulted the design of its European Union-funded Recovery and Resilience Plan (the EU's flagship instrument to alleviate and counter the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic) with social actors, including trade unions. The plan focuses on four main priorities: ecological transition, digital transformation, territorial and social cohesion and gender equality. In addition, the government prepared a national response plan to the economic and social consequences of the war in Ukraine, consulted with social partners. This plan includes measures to protect employment, support the most vulnerable groups and the most affected productive sectors, guarantee supplies and lower the prices of fuel and electricity.

To address the challenge of the climate crisis, the government approved in 2019 a Strategic Energy and Climate Framework aiming to shift towards a sustainable and competitive economic model. Within this framework, a Just Transition Strategy was introduced, which focuses on maximising employment opportunities in the transition to a low-carbon development model and promoting a fair and socially beneficial design of industrial policies, research and development, economic activity, employment and vocational training.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

Trade unions report that the Spanish government has integrated many of the 2030 Agenda objectives into its policies. In particular, it created a Ministry of Social Affairs and the 2030 Agenda to oversee implementation of the SDGs. Reaching specific goals was also integrated into Spain's Recovery and Resilience Plan. The government delivers annual reports on the alignment of the national budget with the SDG objectives, and trade unions consider that the funds pledged towards these goals are adequate.

Despite these efforts, trade unions report that currently, none of the SDGs are on track to be achieved since their progress has been hindered by the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact of the war in Ukraine. Nevertheless, in 2023, significant progress was made on SDGs 3, 7 and 11, in addition to progress already made on SDG 5. On SDG 8, the ongoing labour reform, the increase of the minimum wage and pension reform, all of which had been implemented in consultation with social partners, promote the achievement of this goal.

Trade unions suggest that the Spanish government should improve its efforts on transparency, as not all social partners are involved in the Sustainable Development Council, where consultations on SDG implementation are held, and future plans developed. However, the process is transparent when it comes to reporting and accountability. Furthermore, the trade union participation is wider within the Common Future civil society platform. In addition, all social partners are involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the progress on the 2030 Agenda in the framework of the social dialogue. Within the social dialogue process, sectoral dialogue tables have been created for SDG 8 and SDG 13. Since the beginning of 2024, there has been a greater desire to involve the most representative trade unions, although no significant changes have occurred yet.

TRANSPARENCY



Complete access to information

CONSULTATION



There is a structured consultation/
multi-stakeholder platform

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



There are tripartite instances to implement and
monitor the SDGs involving social partners and
governments



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

With regards to **SDG 1**, indicators for **target 1.1 (eradicating extreme poverty)** show that only 1 per cent of the population is living under the international poverty line. However, 27.1 per cent of women and 25.4 per cent of men were at risk of poverty and social exclusion in 2023, with the proportion much higher among the under 16-year-old group (31.4 per cent and 32.4 per cent respectively). With regards to **target 1.3 (nationally appropriate social protection systems)**, while in 2018, 82.6 per cent of the population benefitted from some type of social security benefit, only 44.2 per cent of those unemployed received benefits and only 45 per cent of vulnerable people received social assistance. On **target 1.a.2 (essential services) in 2021, spending on social protection (including health)** stood at 40.7 per cent.

On **SDG 5**, further efforts are required to reach the objective set by **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)**, as in 2010, women were responsible for 68.4 per cent of the time spent on domestic tasks, compared to 31.6 per cent of the time spent on them by men, a proportion that is unlikely to have changed significantly according to trade unions. With regards to **target 5.5 (women's full and effective participation)**, the proportion of women in senior and middle management positions increased from 15.5 per cent in 2000 to 36.5 per cent in 2020 and the proportion of seats held by women in parliament increased from 21.6 per cent in 2000 to 42.4 per cent in 2023. Spain produces a gender impact report of its public spending.

Further efforts need to be made on **SDG 8**. On **target 8.3 (support decent job creation)**, informal employment outside of agriculture stands at 5.3 per cent for women and 5.1 per cent for men. Trade unions report that informal employment is much higher among migrant workers, who are overrepresented in the agricultural sector. Additionally, the rate of precarious employment is very high, standing at 46.9 per cent in 2023. On **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)**, the unemployment rate stood at 13.4 per cent for women and 10.3 per cent for men. In addition, women only earn 95.1 per cent of a man's average salary. In 2023, 8 per cent of workers were underemployed, highlighting the challenges

faced by overqualified workers, or those forced to work shorter hours due to the difficult situation in the labour market. NEET indicators for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** stood at 2.4 per cent in 2023 – trade unions suggest that the majority are to be found in the 18–24 age group, who continue to struggle with the transition from education to employment. With regards to **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**, trade unions report an insufficient number of trained labour inspectors, especially in view of the high numbers of fatal work accidents, especially among men (3.49 for every 100,000 workers). In 2020, nine violations of labour rights were noted – four in law and five in practice. Trade unions note that the removal of the gag law restricting the right to strike and protest has been an improvement in this regard.

With regards to **SDG 10, target 10.4 (progressively achieve greater equality)** requires further attention. In 2020, 10 per cent of the highest income earners controlled 25 per cent of GDP, while the lowest 20 per cent controlled 6 per cent of GDP. The labour share of GDP stood at 36.8 per cent in 2020. On **target 10.7 (migration and mobility)**, trade unions discuss the situation of migrant workers in the framework of social dialogue and within collective bargaining processes; social actors also participate in negotiating bilateral migration agreements.

On **SDG 13 and target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into policies)**, trade unions report that in the framework of its Just Transition Plan, the government launched Just Transition Agreements designed to maintain and create jobs in the climate transition process. These agreements were developed through a participative process which included social actors.



TRADE UNIONS ASK THAT NO-ONE IS LEFT BEHIND

Trade unions call on the Spanish government to:

- Establish a dialogue with the most representative trade unions, beyond multilateral forums, for the implementation of the sustainable development strategy.
- Improve social protection for unemployed and vulnerable people.
- In addition to allocating sufficient resources to social protection, introduce systemic changes to the education and health systems, which require substantial increases in numbers of personnel and availability of infrastructure.
- Take action to reduce unemployment, underemployment and informal employment, especially among young people.
- Continue efforts to increase incomes to counter the phenomenon of the working poor and ensure that workers can meet their basic needs.
- Monitor the impact of the gender equality laws approved to ensure progress on achieving parity in all aspects of life.
- Promote efforts to eliminate the gender pay gap.
- Increase the capacity to analyse the gender impact of public spending.
- Implement policies to reduce the rate of fatal work accidents, notably by substantially increasing the number of trained labour inspectors.
- Further promote fiscal policies that impose higher taxes on large companies and the richest social classes to improve social protection and build greater equality.



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