

# Time to Climate and Employment Proof our Workplaces

September 22  
#CEPOW



STRONGER TOGETHER

**CONGRESS**

Irish Congress of Trade Unions



# We're in a race against time

These are difficult times for many workers as the COVID-19 pandemic disrupts lives and livelihoods.

And we're in a race against time to respond to climate change which threatens everyone and could leave whole regions of the world uninhabitable. Extreme weather events with lasting devastation are already destroying jobs and livelihoods.

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) is asking for your support to help Climate and Employment Proof Our Work #CEPOW.

Join us by taking part in the biggest global conversation about our future with your employer.

**Workers around the world will invite their employers to discuss plans for a Just Transition, the need for jobs, to tackle emissions and create a secure pathway for the future.**

Climate change cannot be ignored.

→ We have only ten years to cut carbon dioxide emissions by at least 50% and stabilise the planet at a 1.5-degree temperature rise.

→ We have less than 30 years to reach net zero by 2050.

## Why we need your help to Climate and Employment Proof Our Work

Every government must raise its ambition with updated plans, including Just Transition measures to protect workers, their families and their communities. Every employer must have a plan for climate and employment proofing and Just Transition measures must be at the heart of such plans.

Workers and their unions must be part of the dialogue that shapes our future in order to ensure the measures agreed can deliver.

We have a chance to coordinate all our efforts to maintain and grow good jobs in a healthy, sustainable and more balanced economic future. This is what a Just Transition looks like.

This campaign guide sets out how you can take part in the **September 22 Global Day of Action** to Climate and Employment Proof Our Work.

## The time to act is now

We urgently need to have a conversation about both climate and employment. Our economies are undergoing huge changes and workers need to be part of the team designing our future with Just Transition plans.

All governments need to include Just Transition plans in their national plans, in accordance with the 2015 Paris Agreement. The time to act is now – science tells us this is not something that can be delayed or postponed.

Let's work together and design a future with secure jobs, sustainable economies and a safe and healthy living planet.

A future that starts now.

**Patricia King,**  
ICTU General Secretary

**Sharan Burrow,**  
General Secretary,  
International Trade Union Confederation

# Plans in Ireland and the EU

The EU Green New deal agreed in December 2020 sets out to “transform the EU into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy”, ensuring:

- no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050
- economic growth decoupled from resource use
- no person and no place left behind

It also explicitly **requires that member states engage in social dialogue** when drawing up national Just Transition plans: “Member States should prepare, **in social dialogue** and cooperation with the **relevant stakeholders**.....territorial Just Transition plans, detailing the transition process, consistent with their National Energy and Climate Plans.”

Congress is working to ensure these requirements are implemented at national and regional level.

In July 2021, the European Commission adopted its long-awaited Fit for 55 Package. This consists of proposals aimed at aligning EU climate and energy policies with the new climate targets set by the recently adopted Climate Law – a GHG emission reduction of 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels and climate neutrality by 2050.

Ireland has also signed up to a number of global treaties and declarations which commit us to the adoption of Just Transition policies and practices in respect of climate change policy. These include the 2015 Paris Agreement - including the ILO Guidelines on Just Transition – the 2018 Silesia Declaration and the 2019 UN Climate Action for Jobs Initiative.

**It's time to make those promises a reality.**

## Ireland's plan

In July 2021, the Government approved legislation – the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 - to set Ireland on the path to net-zero emissions no later than 2050, and to a 51% reduction in emissions by the end of this decade. This has significant implications for existing jobs in all sectors and for new job opportunities across the economy.

The Act provides the framework for Ireland to meet its international and EU climate commitments and “to become a leader rather than a laggard in addressing climate change”.

Key elements of the Act include:

- Sets binding and ambitious emissions-reductions targets in law;
- Provides that the first two five-year carbon budgets proposed by the Climate Change Advisory Council should equate to a total reduction of 51% over the period to 2030;
- The Government will determine, how to apply the carbon budget across the relevant sectors and what each sector will contribute in a given five-year period;
- Actions for each sector will be detailed in the Climate Action Plan and updated annually;
- Local Authorities prepare individual Climate Action Plans to be updated every five years;
- Public bodies obliged to take account of Climate Action Plans in their work.

**However, the Act is weak on Just Transition measures and it is up to all of us to seek to change that.**

**Congress has called for the creation of a national Just Transition Commission based on social dialogue that would be charged with developing the plans and strategies required to deliver a genuine Just Transition across all sectors of our economy and society.**

# CEPOW Global Day of Action, Sept 22

The 2021 Global Day of Action to Climate and Employment Proof Our Work takes place on September 22.

We must protect jobs, stabilise economies and reduce emissions in every job and workplace with Just Transition measures.

Employers need to plan for that future – and workers and their unions can help develop those plans.

Take part in the biggest global conversation about our future #CEPOW.

## How to take part?

**1 Sign up**  
Sign up to show your interest in climate- and employment-proofing your work and get updates about the Global Day of Action.

**2 Ask to talk to your employer, a local business or someone from your local or national government on 22 September**

Let us know if you ask for a meeting, and we'll keep a tally of all places around the world taking part in the Global Day of Action.

Your meeting can be in person or a virtual meeting using an online platform like Skype, Teams, WhatsApp, Zoom etc.

Share a poster on social media or in your workplace to show you're taking part in the Global Day of Action.

**3 Tell us how it went**  
Share a photo of yourself at the in-person or virtual meeting and the highlights of what was discussed.

## Who should I send the letter to?

The CEPOW Global Day of Action is about starting a conversation. All workers have a right to know what the plans are to climate proof our jobs.

You can ask the company CEO, your manager, or even start the conversation with your colleagues and fellow workers, or local and national government representatives.

It doesn't matter if you work in the public sector or private sector, we all have a say in our future. All our jobs are different, but all workplaces will have to reduce emissions.

## When should I send the letter?

Give as much notice as possible so that the meeting can take place in person – or virtually – on or around the September 22. Let us know if you have asked for a meeting, and we will keep a tally of all the places taking part so that you can let your employer know about all the other countries taking part in the day of action.

## Who is the letter from?

The letter can come from a group of workers or workers and their union, depending on how you organise yourselves to take part in the CEPOW Global Day of Action.

## Do we have to meet on the September 22? What if my employer wants to meet on a different day?

If you can't meet on the 22 September, have the conversation as near to the date as possible. By all taking part in the action on the same day, we can show that this is the biggest global conversation on climate and employment and workers are asking the same questions.

## What do we do after the meeting?

The meeting is the start of a conversation on the plan to reduce emissions.

You or your union can ask for support from the Just Transition Centre of the ITUC if you think your employer wants to have a Just Transition plan. The Just Transition Centre can help set up a round table and advise on the social dialogue process so that workers have a say in their future.

Next year, we'll be asking you and unions to take part in the next Global Day of Action to see what progress has been made.

## Model letter text

**Subject:** Let's talk about making our future safe and sustainable

**Dear** <<Insert Name>>,

These are difficult times for many workers and businesses as the Covid-19 pandemic disrupts lives and livelihoods. Many of us have seen changes to our workplaces and our daily routines and are facing a convergence of crises – a pandemic with no known end date, the devastation of inequality and climate devastation with extreme weather events and changing seasons.

But climate change and the deteriorating capacity of our planet to sustain life cannot be ignored, and pandemics represent a threat to our health and economies – a threat that is now too big to ignore. We know that the devastation from Covid-19 will require new levels of care, of social protection and of economic stimulus in all countries. The world is already experiencing severe impacts of climate change from extreme heatwaves, sea level rises, to crop failures. IPCC climate scientists tell us we must act quickly to stabilise global warming below 1.5 degrees to avoid massive threats.

While there has been progress by some organisations and workplaces towards preparing the zero-carbon economies of the future, we need to see more ambition as we reshape our economies and societies in the post-pandemic world.

It is our duty to make sure we don't pass the debt of climate change on to our children and grandchildren. That's why we as workers want to work with you to plan how we are going to reduce emissions and have a sustainable future.

ICTU would like to meet with you as part of the International Trade Union Confederation Global Day of Action on 22 September to discuss how we can climate- and employment-proof our work. Acting together can only be good for business, good for employment and good for climate.

Now more than ever in our recent history, workers, just like employers, want a sense of security, and climate change is a driver of a more uncertain future for us and our families.

The ICTU/ITUC campaigns to make all jobs green and decent – and achieved a global commitment for Just Transition in the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement. A Just Transition secures the future and livelihoods of workers and their communities in the transition to a low-carbon economy.

To get there, we need to have a plan. Here are five questions for discussion:

1. How can we make our jobs and workplaces safer?
2. How can we secure jobs and employment and make them more sustainable?
3. Do you measure CO2 emissions?
  - If yes, can we develop a plan for reducing emissions?
  - If no, can we agree to a process to measure our emissions?
4. Are we prepared to reduce emissions by 50% by 2030 and to net zero by 2050?
5. What can we do together to get there?

Yours sincerely,  
[Name and/or union]



The 17 Sustainable Development Goals cover issues highly relevant to just transition, including the promotion of decent work, the fight against poverty, inequality, and climate change.

Thanks for the support of Coalition 2030 in producing this guide.



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