

From Copenhagen to Cancun - climate change grounds metalworkers

In 2010 the EMF has developed, on its own and together with other European trade union federations, policies related to climate change, that include improvements of European industrial policy necessary to achieve sustainable industrial manufacturing in Europe.

Instead of flying to Mexico to participate in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP16), that is taking place in Cancun on 29 November – 10 December 2010, the European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF) has decided to stay at home. Instead of exposing the globe to additional CO2 emissions, the EMF will promote its message for Cancun using digital means.

<http://www.industrialpolicy.eu/Climate-change>

The EMF reconfirms its Resolution from Copenhagen and takes it to Cancun together with newly developed policies

Copenhagen Resolution of the European Metalworkers' Federation

For the European Metalworkers' Federation climate change is a dangerous reality, which demands a social response at international as well as European, national and regional/local and company levels.

The EMF believes that a drive towards new industrial strategies based on low carbon technologies and products can offer opportunities but also challenges for the future of industrial workplaces in Europe, especially in the context of the worst recession for 80 years and an older and broader energy and raw materials crisis.

EMF key demands:

1. Promoting sustainable employment policies - not more of the same
2. Europe urgently needs a sustainable industrial policy
3. Creating an international sectoral level playing field to avoid carbon leakage
4. Ensuring a socially just transition to a low-carbon economy
5. Greening our workplaces

At Cancun the EU must again demand a binding and comprehensive international agreement on the reduction of greenhouse gases (GHG) guaranteeing a just transition towards a low-carbon economy. External trade policies must also pursue a fair level-playing field for industries and their workers. In light of Europe's strong commitment to energy and resource efficiency, border adjustment measures and carbon traceability standards should be developed to avoid carbon leakage in energy-intensive industries whilst pursuing necessary climate policy objectives.

Industrial workers' vision for a European industrial policy agenda

The three European industry federations (EMF, EMCEF and ETUF:TCL) representing manufacturing workers in the metalworking, chemical, energy, mining, textile, clothing and leather sectors, have outlined 6 principles for a strong and credible European industrial policy capable of tackling the challenges of the aftermath of the economic crisis, climate change and intensifying globalisation pressures:

6 principles for a strong and credible European industrial policy:

1. A strong social dimension to industrial policies
2. Growth-oriented macroeconomic and wage policies
3. A concrete industrial investment agenda
4. A fair transformation towards an energy- and resource-efficient industrial model
5. An effective European energy policy
6. A fair level-playing field internationally

Sustainable development and a fair transformation should ensure the development of new industrial strategies and the maintenance and sustainable upgrading of Europe's industrial infrastructure, focusing on the transformation of all industries. European binding standards on energy efficiency and incentives for improved performance must be combined to create a virtuous circle.

At Cancun the EU must again demand a binding and comprehensive international agreement on the reduction of greenhouse gases (GHG) guaranteeing a just transition towards a low-carbon economy. Climate change policy must ensure that industry globally continually upgrades its environmental performance and responsibility, whilst maintaining international competitiveness (including, measures against carbon leakage). In the absence of such conditions, the EU should review its proposal to unilaterally increase its own emissions reductions target from -20% to -30%.

Steel industry

Together, the International and European Metalworkers' Federations have signed a social and environmental pact for a strong and sustainable steel industry and call for the enforcement of five pillars of sustainability.

Millions of steelworkers around the world have found themselves victims of the global crisis. These workers are the tip of the iceberg in steel-producing regions and cities, with many more workers in the local supply chain and subcontractors dependent on the global steel companies.

Five pillars of sustainability:

1. Long-term investment in plants and workers
2. Employment security and safety
3. Environmental modernisation and social responsibility
4. A trade policy working for workers
5. Active routes for worker participation

At Cancun the EMF and IMF call for governments to conclude a binding, comprehensive and ambitious international agreement on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction.

We maintain our long-held demands for social justice and long-term employment policies as an integral element of climate policy. Only if employment concerns are effectively integrated into climate policy, can economic, technological and social change be directed towards achieving a low emissions and just society. We are concerned that international regulation on carbon emissions unless binding and applied evenly will lead to carbon leakage (the movement of heavy industries from countries who respect or try to implement international governance to countries with weaker or no measures).

Climate change legislation must contain strong provisions dealing with international competitiveness (including border adjustment mechanisms), in order to ensure that nations that lack a strong emissions programme do not receive an unfair advantage, and investment in R&D and technology transfer to ensure that industry globally continually upgrades its environmental performance and responsibility.

Automotive industry

The EMF strategy on clean and energy-efficient vehicles

The EMF expects, in the medium-term, decreasing usage of individual motor vehicles as a means of mobility in the EU15. In new EU Member States and in China there is a potential for growth, but this will concern other kinds of vehicles. Particularly in urban areas, this development is already likely to become noticeable in the coming decade.

A development of this kind has the following implications:

- Users would no longer be owners of their vehicles
- Electric vehicles are the most likely to emerge in new EU Member States and in China, as their features best fulfil the transportation needs required there
- Costs and distances to be covered will influence users' choices
- Various car-sharing schemes will appear in the coming years

In rural areas, the ICE (internal combustion engine) vehicles will remain for the foreseeable future the most suitable means of transportation. Owing to unsuitability of public transportation in rural areas, more cars per inhabitant will be needed, considering that the distances are greater than in the cities. This implies that the e-vehicle will not and cannot just replace the ICE-vehicle on the short term, as their market segments differ. Therefore trade-off situations between both technologies will be unlikely, while market segments will be complementary; there should be only limited capacity for cross-segment compensation for fleet emission levels. Future EU policy should provide responses for both the specific needs in urban areas and rural areas.

The electric vehicle cannot be an end in itself

Framework conditions are required with the electric vehicle being integrated into a systematic approach to transportation, at least in urban areas. The e-vehicle will only have a chance on the market if it can be incorporated into the broader system, and if there are functioning interfaces between various transportation modes. Thus strong coordination linking European Commission initiatives is necessary. To stimulate manufacturers to accelerate the launch of e-vehicles, Member States must now make efforts to acquire captive fleets in order to equip their urban administrations with small e-vehicles.

ICT industry

Mobilising information and communication technologies to facilitate the transition to an energy-efficient, low-carbon economy is imperative in order to reduce climate change.

The EMF supports the transition to an energy-efficient, low-carbon economy in order to reduce climate change by mobilising information and communication technologies (ICT). Maximising the application of ICTs in industry and society, in order to boost growth and increase manufacturing and R&D in the ICT industry in Europe will transform Europe's economy into a low-carbon one with green employment as a direct result.

The ICT sector itself is responsible for 2% of carbon emissions in Europe: 1.75% resulting from the use of ICT products and services, and 0.25% from their production. The ICT sector can help realise the goal to move Europe towards a green economy in several sectors, while increasing the number of job opportunities.

Today, government and industry initiatives concentrate on greening ICTs rather than tackling global warming and environmental problems by using ICT applications. That is to say, reducing direct environmental impacts of ICT should take second place to tackling global warming and environmental problems by using ICT applications as enablers. ICT-related applications, such as environmental information systems, smart transport and smart buildings are among the most used ICT applications.

Shipbuilding industry

The EU should support the stricter regulation of the sulphur content in marine fuels in European Emission Control Areas (ECA), as recommended by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

The EMF together with the Environment Alliance protest against attempts of some European ship owners to weaken the 'sulphur limitation regulation' that applies in European ECAs. Ship owners claim that the regulation weakens competitiveness. The EMF, together with the Environment Alliance, argues that the case for an eco-innovative ship industry should be made.

The EMF has repeatedly argued for an expansion of ECAs and sulphur emission control areas (SECA) to all EU coasts in order to stimulate demand for more environmentally friendly and energy-efficient ships.

In its response the European Commission states that:

- it does not support the weakening of sulphur limits adopted by the IMO in 2008
- the new limits will be incorporated into EU law in due course
- it will assess further measures to reduce air polluting emissions in existing or new ECAs

The last point implies that the European Commission considers extending the European emission control areas, which is one of the EMF's demands.

Wind energy industry

The world energy consumption is unsustainable but yet growing. To guarantee that humanity will be able to continue living on Planet Earth, a massive shift towards carbon-free energy systems is necessary. Without energy production from renewable sources, the anticipated reduction of CO₂ is improbable.

Industrial productivity growth is largely happening on the microeconomic level. New technologies are developed and deployed, new investments are made, new infrastructure is put in place, and organisational changes occur on the common playing field where business managers, workers, and consumers meet. It is therefore crucial to empower the small- and medium sized companies to allow them to develop and foster green activities, products and organisations. This requires implementing new and alternative financial tools, such as a financial transaction tax, green and carbon taxes and Euro-bonds.

Furthermore, a fair global carbon regime is needed to strengthen innovation in the development of new technologies to prevent carbon leakage. The social dimension will be crucial in changing realities. The wind power industry has still a long way to go before it develops its full potential, while the potential lies with a variety of industries that will become dependent and have to be adapted to new energy sources.

Agricultural machinery industry

Representatives of the metalworkers' unions, works councils and workplace union committees at the international, sectoral Future Forum of the European Employee Network Agricultural Machinery, have adopted the following joint declaration:

As a significant employer in the EU, the European agricultural machinery sector is a crucial and core segment of Europe's mechanical engineering industry. The sector is the largest supplier of agricultural machinery in the world and is an innovative sector whose global competitiveness is underpinned by an experienced industrial and service workforce with substantial technical capabilities.

The agricultural machinery sector is an industry of the future. In view of the pressing global challenges associated with food, raw materials and the environment, the importance of agricultural machinery now extends well beyond its traditional role in the agricultural industry and also has a significant bearing on energy and environmental policy.

Europe's agricultural machinery industry is distinguished by strong trade union structures enabling workers' representation, which has a positive impact on the development of companies' global competitiveness, management of structural change and innovation. However, given the internationalisation of the sector and the increasingly cross-border nature of labour distribution, the predominantly national system of worker representation is no longer sufficient. For this reason, workplace union committees and national metalworkers' federations established the European Employee Network Agricultural Machinery, which is now coordinated by the EMF.

Rail transport industry

In 2004, the transport sector's total contribution to CO₂ emissions in the EU was approximately 26%. Therefore, following manufacturing industries and the construction/housing sector, transportation is one of the largest emitters of harmful greenhouse gases.

The various modes of transport have dramatically different impacts on the environment. In comparison to rail, public transport generally, inland navigation, cycling and pedestrian alternatives, individual cars, road haulage and air traffic contribute significantly more proportionally to pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, noise pollution and land use. A closer view on the different modes of transport shows that nearly 60% of transport-related CO₂ emissions came from passenger cars. If heavy road haulage is added to passenger cars, together they account for approximately 87% of CO₂ emissions (about 159 millions t CO₂). Meanwhile, the rail sector accounted for only 6% of transport-related annual greenhouse gas emissions in 2010. Consequently, rail transport has particular importance in terms of developing sustainable climate and environmental policies.

In view of dangerous climate change and increasing demand for transport, emphasis must be placed on safety and the development of low-carbon transportation, in particular rail transport. To ensure that the sector is able to play a strong role, urgently required investment in Europe's rail transport system must be secured immediately. For the rail industry, it is crucial that middle to long-term financial investment is secured for the development of the rail network and new rolling stock. Public authorities should take on central responsibility in guaranteeing this investment. To this end and above all other responsibilities, public authorities must ensure that the transport policy framework provides clear incentives to make cleaner, environmentally-friendly modes of transport such as rail more attractive for investment.

Training & Education

To fulfil the potential of greening industries, many jobs will require highly-skilled workers. Companies and the education system need to consider offering entirely new education and training programmes as a result of technology development. Industrial workers were the first to understand the link between occupational health and the environment; therefore they must be part of the solution. Their knowledge and skills should be developed and deployed to change the economy. Sustainability must include a forward-looking industrial strategy and anticipative social programmes. To move towards a low carbon economy, improving industrial training and education is crucial. Traineeships must be used as a tool to make education and research in this area more attractive for young people. Special training programmes must be implemented to identify the needs of the companies and the transferable skills available on the labour market due to the economic crisis. Long-term employment policies and sufficient investment are necessary to ensure a smooth transition to a low carbon economy. The costs of this transformation will be significant but European leaders should consider this process and its costs as a rational and calculated investment that will bear fruit both in the near and in the distant future. An involved, well-educated and highly-skilled work-force is a powerful asset for the industry, the economy and society as a whole.