



ITALY

A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2017



© Stop Caporalato march in Bari, photo by FLAI Federazione Nazionale

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

In 2017, the Italian government included references to the SDGs in its official budgetary and planning report for the first time. However, until the 2018-2020 budgetary and planning report is released, it is not clear what resources will be allocated to supporting concrete actions targeting the SDGs.

The lead ministry on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is the Ministry of the Environment, which will coordinate the work of the other government bodies involved, such as the Ministries for Health, Education, Universities and Research, Labour and Social Affairs, Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Economic Development and the Institute of National Statistics.

The Italian government held two consultations, the first one of which focused on each SDG individually and a second one which was more general. In January 2017, the government released a position paper on the SDGs. Trade unions officially complained about their exclusion from the consultations ahead of the drafting of this document. Additionally, trade union requests for establishing social dialogue with the Ministry of the Environment have so far been ignored.

Trade unions can access information on SDG implementation at national level. However, the information mechanisms available have not been adapted to promote a genuine trade union participation in the implementation process.



TRANSPARENCY

access to key documents on SDGs programming and/or implementation



CONSULTATION

existence of an official multi-stakeholder platform on the SDGs



SOCIAL DIALOGUE

dialogue among worker, employer and government representatives on SDG implementation



IS THE (DECENT) WORK BEING DONE?

The Italian government engagement on the SDGs is not always straightforward, nor is it planned in a holistic way. This is particularly true when it comes to the integration of labour rights policies. Trade union analysis reveals that, if the SDGs are to be achieved in Italy, a greater commitment is needed and that more coordination is required at the implementation level in particular.

Currently, achieving **SDG 1 (eradicating poverty)** remains a challenge in Italy. Data from 2014 indicates that 6.8% of the population lives below the nationally defined poverty line, an increase of 3.5% points compared to 2005. The poverty rate in southern Italy is 9%.

The achievement of targets relevant to **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)** poses a challenge in Italy. While indicators for **target 8.3 (policies supporting productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation)** show that between 2000-2013, 1.5% of workers left the informal economy, the overall rates of participation within it remain considerable, with 9.9% of workers remaining informally employed in 2013. Women's labour market participation rate is another concerning factor, with only 50.6% of women in the 20-64 age group being employed, compared to 60.5% of men in the same age group. In addition, unemployment is at 12.1% and the proportion of those in employment for at least five years in 2015 was 19.5%, demonstrating the precariousness of the labour market.

Target 8b (develop and operationalise a global strategy for youth employment) remains unmet, as Italy does not have a concrete strategy

for youth employment nor has it made the necessary commitments to meet the priorities set out in the 2009 Global Jobs Pact of the ILO. These could be contributing factors to the country's poor performance on target 8.6 (substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training - NEET), as NEET numbers of the youth population (15-24) grew from 16% in 2004 to 21.4% in 2015, as a direct consequence of the economic crisis.

Concerningly, reaching **target 8.7 (take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour)** poses a challenge in Italy, as a form of forced labour referred to as *caporalato* (informal work primarily in the agricultural sector) remains common. While, following trade union demands, the government approved a law prohibiting this practice, it is on the rise again following recent increases in migration.

Indicators associated to **target 10.4 (progressive achievement of greater equality)** demonstrate that the rate of inequality is on the rise in Italy. In 2015, the ratio of the GDP share held by the highest 20% of income earners and the lowest 20% of income earners was 5.8, against a European average of 5.2.

Progress on **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning)** is stilted by the fact that Italy has not approved a new national strategy to achieve the Paris Climate Agreement goals. It is currently implementing a policy from 2014 and the EU 20-20-20 Protocol. However, the country did not manage to reduce its 2015 emissions to the assigned value.

WHERE TO NEXT? TRADE UNION RECIPE TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The Italian government must prioritise the following objectives: ensure full employment, fight inequalities and decarbonise its economy.

To ensure the effective implementation of these objectives, the Italian government should:

- Establish social dialogue with the Ministry of the Environment by engaging in a genuine and transparent dialogue with social partners on SDG implementation and follow up.
- Allocate resources to support concrete actions targeting the SDGs.
- Reinforce legal provisions and measures fighting forced labour and the practice of *caporalato* (informal work primarily in the agricultural sector).



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