



LATVIA



TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2018



ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The Latvian government has committed to the implementation of all the SDGs and to integrating them into its national planning. The entity in charge of coordinating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is the Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre (CSCC), which is responsible for developing and monitoring the highest-level national development planning documents: the National Development Plan for 2014-2020 and the 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy. All ministries are responsible for implementing the SDGs within their area of competence.

Trade unions report having access to information on the SDG implementation process and being able to provide input towards it through ad hoc consultations, with at least part of their recommendations being taken on board by the government. Social partners make individual contributions on the SDG but formal tripartite instances are not in place for their implementation.

According to Latvian trade unions, not enough resources have been allocated within national plans to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

TRANSPARENCY



Complete access to information

CONSULTATION



There is informal or ad hoc consultation

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



There are individual contributions from social partners to the national government



IS THE (DECENT) WORK BEING DONE?

Latvian trade unions highlight the need to improve performance on several key indicators to reach the goals set by the 2030 Agenda in their country.

Indicators on **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty)** show that while only 0.7% of the population was living in extreme poverty in 2015, and therefore people are unlikely to live under the international poverty threshold, in 2016 22.1% of the population was at risk of poverty according to nationally defined thresholds. This figure has been growing since 2009, with an increasing income gap between generations: 39.9% of the people over the age of 65 were at risk of poverty in 2016, compared to 17.7% of people between the ages of 18-65. Trade unions associate this phenomenon to the stagnation in the growth of pensions. In addition, 10% of workers are at risk of poverty. With regards to **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures)**, trade unions report that workers, except those employed in some non-standard forms of employment, are provided with a wide variety of social protection instruments at different levels and that total social expenditure for 2016 stood at 15.06% of GDP.

There is a need for improvement to achieve progress on **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)**, as in 2016 the proportion of workers whose monthly income did not exceed the minimum monthly wage in the country was higher for women (25,3% for women workers and 15,5% for men workers). However, positive stable indicators can be noted on **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life)** as, in 2016, there were more women than men among university graduates, 63.5% of whom were female.

There are multiple concerns about the targets set by **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)**. Regarding **target 8.3 (promote policies that support productive activities, decent job creation)**, undeclared work or informal employment amounts to 7.4% of total employment. In 2014, 7.6% of employment was categorised as vulnerable. Recent data shows that 34.5% of the labour force earns below two-thirds of the median income for the country, which qualifies them as being in low paid work. On **target 8.5 (achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all)** unemployment stood at 8.7%, with 9.8% of men and 7.7% of women being unemployed in 2017; youth unemployment stood at 17% for people aged 15-24 in 2017, marking a significant improvement since the high of 33.3% in 2009. However, women's wages were on average 12.6% lower than men's in the first semester of 2018. In 2017, 29.9% of part-time workers were further classified as underemployed. NEET indicators for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** stand at 10.3% of youth aged between 15-24. With regard to **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**, trade union density stands at 10 %. In 2017, 20 workplace deaths were registered, a number which nearly halved in size since the previous year, when it stood at 38; 181 serious workplace injuries took place in 2017. Meanwhile, the number of trained labour inspectors per 10,000 workers remains low, at 1.5 in 2016.

Progress remains to be made for Latvia to reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)**, as the labour share of GDP (wages and social protection transfers) remains low, at 46.6% in 2017. In addition, wealth inequalities remain a challenge. In 2016 the share of wealth owned by the top 10% income earners stood at 25.9 %, compared to 6.7% for the bottom 20%.

WHERE TO NEXT?

TRADE UNION RECIPE TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Latvian trade unions call on their government to ensure the implementation of the SGDs by:

- ratifying the European Social Charter to ensure workers' rights to a decent wage, raise social security levels and apply the ILO recommendation No. 204 concerning the transition from the informal to the formal economy;
- strengthening the monitoring and control of occupational health and safety laws and regulations by enhancing cooperation with trade unions;
- financing high-quality and accessible public services, especially for health care, education, science and higher education institutions;
- increasing workers' income, raising wages and implementing a fair taxation policy;
- strengthening sectoral collective bargaining to ensure equal, decent and fair income for workers.



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