



# POLAND

## TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2018



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### ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The Polish Government has undertaken to fully implement the 2030 Agenda, including those Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are particularly relevant for trade unions (1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13). However, the Government has not developed a detailed plan for achieving the SDGs. It has assumed that their scope largely corresponds to the objectives set out in its Strategy for Responsible Development (SDR), in which the Government defines Poland's medium and long-term economic policy. The Government has made its own decision that the definition and implementation of the SDGs will be through the SDR. However, it has still not established regular reporting mechanisms on SDG implementation. The trade union standpoint is that SDG implementation processes are not transparent, which mirrors how the SDR was developed. For example, the Social Dialogue Council was consulted on the SDR only at the request of the trade unions. The implementation of the SDR, is discussed in the Social Dialogue Council, although this discussion is limited to the exchange of views.

The Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and ensuring that the SDR and SDGs are aligned. However, no additional resources are earmarked for SDG implementation for the period up to 2030. Polish civil society organisations were invited to give their input to the Team for the Coherence of the SDR with the 2030 Agenda, whose task was to prepare a draft VNR report for the United Nations. This Team consists of a wide range of stakeholders, including NGOs. The Team has, however, only held three meetings since its inception in 2017. Moreover, the comments of trade unions on the draft VNR were only taken into account to a limited extent and did not have a significant impact on the final document.

#### TRANSPARENCY



Irregular access to limited information

#### CONSULTATION



There is a structured consultation/ multi-stakeholder platform

#### SOCIAL DIALOGUE



There are individual contributions from social partners to the national government



## IS THE (DECENT) WORK BEING DONE?

Polish trade unions highlight the obstacles hindering the country from achieving SDGs, including wage-setting policies, state fiscal policies, and public services policies.

On **SDG 1 (end poverty in all its forms everywhere)**, 17.3% of the population lived below the statutory poverty line in 2016. The situation has improved in recent years. However, poverty still represents a greater risk for single parents, the elderly and people with disabilities. Despite a significant improvement, Poland does not spend enough on social policy as a proportion of GDP, which is why trade unions are calling for increased expenditure, including raising the amount of social benefits and broadening the group of people entitled to them. Long-term care and health care also require a systematic increase in budget expenditure.

There are obstacles to achieving **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)**. Despite the faster growth dynamics of its economy, wages in Poland are below the European average and do not allow for a dignified life. Wages are not growing adequately to increase employee productivity. In 2015, 10.8% of those in employment were classified as working poor. In addition, 13% of employees receive a minimum wage that does not meet the criterion of fair pay. Poland has not ratified Convention 131 of the International Labour Organization and the section in the European Social Charter on fair remuneration. Budgetary wages have been frozen since 2011. Moreover, Poland is one of the leading users of fixed-term contracts, and the scale of civil law contracts and so-called false self-employment on the labour market is high. The gender pay gap remains a challenge, the average male salary in 2017 was 18.5% higher than

the average salary of women. Employment law and trade union rights violations in the economy are frequent and the resources for inspection are limited. In addition, the lengthiness of court proceedings and the limited number of labour courts make it difficult for employees to assert their rights. The number of collective bargaining agreements and the level of unionisation at 17.1% and 11% respectively, remain low.

Unemployment in 2017 remained at a low level (4.9%) and continued to fall in the first quarter of 2018. Young people, with a 12% rate of unemployment, are the most affected. The NEETs rate was 9.5%. The size of the informal economy is about 14.4% of GDP. Measures are needed to improve people's work-life balance. On average, women spent 4.4% more time on housework and care than men in 2013. Unpaid care and domestic work needs to be better valued in order to achieve **SDG 5 (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls)**.

With regards to SDG 10 (reduce inequality within and among countries), Poland should take more effective action to reduce social inequalities. In 2016, the GDP share of the richest 10% was 25.1%, compared to 8.1% of GDP for the poorest 20%. Trade unions are demanding the adoption of a more socially equitable tax policy.

On **SDG 13 (take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts)**, a challenge for Poland is to include the concept of social justice in its climate policy objectives, i.e., to prepare mechanisms to support societies, and especially the poor, in their transformation to a more environmentally friendly and sustainable economy. The trade unions believe that every country should have the right to choose which path to take to achieve its climate policy objectives.

## WHERE TO NEXT?

### TRADE UNION RECIPE TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Trade unions call on the Government to implement the SDGs by:

- increasing wages;
- reducing poverty by improving the quality of public services, in particular health services;
- establishing a more socially equitable tax system;
- including the idea of just transition in its climate policy;
- strengthening the role of social dialogue and collective bargaining in the economy;
- enhancing the role of tripartite dialogue in national policy decisions.



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