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УНИЈА ПОСЛОДАВАЦА СРБИЈЕ  
SERBIAN ASSOCIATION OF EMPLOYERS



## **NATIONAL REPORT**

### **GREENET PROJECT**

**Fast forwarding the Green Transition in a Just and Socially Responsible Way - Cases of Industry, Energy and Transport Sectors**



## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Research Background and Objectives

**Objective** – determine the impact of the Green Transition and REPowerEU policies on employment and working conditions in the Republic of Serbia, situation in the field of Social Dialogue, attitude of social partners towards policies, adjustment of collective bargaining to the Green Transition challenges

**Special Focus** – social dimension of the transition – transition to a climate-neutral economy in a socially just and sustainable manner

### 1.2. Note on Methodology

#### Research January - May 2024

**A total of 47 respondents** – employers who are members of the Serbian Association of Employers and union representatives from the transport, energy and industrial sectors

*During the selection of the interviewees, attention was paid to the activities that will be most affected by the Green Transition, the diversity of companies, the gender perspective - the answers received largely reflect the current situation in the sectors in accordance with the set requirements*

**Zoom, telephone** (January, February) **15 in-depth interviews: 8 employers, 7 employee representatives** (3 authorized persons of representative branch unions)

11 men, 4 women (1 managing director, 1 in a high management position in the company)

**E-mail survey** (January - May) **32 employees**

62.5% men, 34.4% women, 3.1% unspecified

Age structure: 34.4% - 46 to 44 years old, as well as in the category 56 and above, 28.1% - 31 to 45, 3.1% younger than 30

Energy sector with the highest percentage of 43.8%, transport and industrial sector both with a percentage of 28.1%



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Categories: 40.6% managers, 28.1% office workers, 25% specialists, 6.3% technicians and other staff

Company size: 75% from large, 12.5% from medium, 9.4% from micro, 3.1% from small

62.5% from domestic companies, 28.1% from multinational companies, approx. 9.4% unspecified

43.8 % union leaders/member of a workers' council, while that was not the case with the other 56.2%

## **2. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT NATIONAL POLICIES AND REGULATIONS IMPORTANT FOR THE GREEN TRANSITION**

### **2.1 Green Deal Policies**

*Low-Carbon Development Strategy for the Period from 2023 to 2030 with Projections until 2050*

*Waste Management Program 2022 - 2031*

*National Environmental Protection Program*

*Law on Integrated Environmental Pollution Prevention and Control*

*Law on Environmental Protection*

*Energy Law*

*Road Traffic Safety Law*

### **2.2 Policies and Programs for Just Transition**

**The Republic of Serbia is reforming its educational system**

***The Serbian Association of Employers is the initiator of the reforms – Objective***

to provide the economy with high-quality personnel in conditions of rapid changes

to provide young people with easy access to the labor market

***The reform is supported by***

**the Law on the National Qualifications Framework of Serbia**

**the Amendments to the Dual Education Law** – active participation of the representatives of the Serbian Association of Employers, propositions for improvements



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**Unified Education Information System** - important for the digitization of education - the basis for the implementation of important reforms. It enables insight into the process and quality of education by monitoring data within the educational system, connected to the labor market

2024 piloting the **Youth Guarantee** - 3 branch offices of the National Employment Service: Niš, Sremska Mitrovica, Kruševac. Objective: providing a high-quality supply of jobs, continuing education, internship/training for young people within 4 months after completing formal education/obtaining the unemployment status

**Increased coverage in terms of adult education** (primary schools, secondary schools and publicly recognized organizers of adult education activities) and establishing the system of prior learning recognition

**Reform** - *to contribute to a just transition and ensure the position of employees/persons entering the world of work*

## 2.3 National System of Industrial Relations

### Dialogue: Tripartite/Bipartite

**The most important body in the tripartite dialogue = the Social and Economic Council** – for the purpose of establishing and improving Social Dialogue with regard to the matters significant for economic and social freedoms and rights, considers and gives opinions of draft laws

**For the territory of the Republic of Serbia:** representatives of the Government, representative employer associations and unions

**For the territory of autonomous provinces/local self-government units:** representatives of executive bodies of autonomous provinces/local self-government units, representative employer associations and unions

### Labor Law - Forms of Employee Representation – Workers' Councils and Unions

*Workers employed with an employer (with more than 50 employees) may form a Workers' Council* – providing opinions and participation in the decision-making process with regard to economic and social rights of employees. They are very rare in practice.

*Union* – an autonomous, democratic and independent organization of employees which they voluntarily join for the purpose of representation, promotion and protection of their professional, work, economic, social, cultural and other interests. Employees are guaranteed the freedom to organize unions and act without approval, but with registration in the register. Employees join the union by signing the membership form.

*Association of employers* - an autonomous, democratic and independent organization which employers voluntarily join to represent, promote and protect their business interests

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*Collective Agreement* – rights, obligations and responsibilities from the employment relationship, and other issues significant for the employee and the employer

Collective Agreement: general, special and with an employer

General and special Collective Agreement for a specific branch, group, subgroup/activity for the territory of the Republic of Serbia

Special for the territory of autonomous provinces/local self-government units

Collective Agreement with an employer – employer and representative union

There are not many Collective Agreements in the Republic of Serbia at the branch level – in these three sectors there are no collective agreements at the branch level, but there are many Collective Agreements with employers

**The Labor Law does not define the terms *Employee Information and Consultation*** – it is stipulated for specific cases, usually through a union. With regard to the basic rights and obligations from the employment relationship, it stipulates the employee's obligation to inform the employer about certain issues; employer's obligation to inform employees about certain issues. Employees directly/through their representatives have the right to associate, to participate in negotiations for Collective Agreements, peaceful resolution of labor disputes, consultation, information and expression of their views on important issues. Unions have the right to be informed by the employer about the economic, labor and social matters and issues of importance for the position of employees, i.e., union members. Consulting employees in most situations refers to a representative union: change of the employer, status changes, redundancy matters.

### **3. GREEN TRANSITION AND ITS IMPACT ON REORGANIZATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE ENERGY, INDUSTRIAL AND TRANSPORT SECTORS**

**GDP in current prices RSD 7,097,629** - Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, latest available data – October 2023 for 2022

**By activity** - significant participation in the formation of GDP processing industry 13.5%. A significant real increase of GVA in mining - 23.3%, while there is a real decrease of GVA in the supply of electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning - about 6.8%

#### **GVA by activity and GDP in the 3 sectors, considering the current prices (millions of dinars)**

Mining – 193,789 – in the total structure - 2.7 %

Supply of electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning – 194,994 - 2.7%

Processing industry – 959,015 - 13.5%

Traffic and storage – 250,659 - 3.5 %



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**Total number of employed persons: 2,364,580** - Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Q1 of 2024

1,898,894 in legal entities

414,777 sole proprietors, persons employed by them and self-employed persons

50,909 registered individual agricultural workers

### **Number of employees by sector**

Mining 30,271

Supply of electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning 24,732

Processing industry 500,666

Traffic and storage 129,891

*Employees* – persons with a formal legal employment contract, who work outside of the employment relationship under other types of contracts, who are self-employed/founders of companies/sole proprietorships and who are engaged in agricultural activities and are in the CROSO records.

### **3.1 Energy Sector**

Companies and sole proprietors in the energy and mining sector in 2022: 2,186 companies – 1.6% of the total number of companies

Mining - 461 – 14.5%

Production of coke and petroleum derivatives - 37

Production of electrical equipment - 535 – 24.5%

Supply of electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning – 1,153 – 52.7%

Activities in the energy and mining sector and approx. 445 sole proprietors

### **There is no special Collective Agreement**

**Collective Agreements exist with employers**, some of which in the energy sector are the largest companies in the Republic of Serbia (14,000 - 20,000 employees). They are mostly in the majority ownership of the state, they control and manage the operation of thermal power plants/hydropower plants/mining pits. A smaller number companies (small companies) generate energy using the energy of wind, small watercourses (mini hydropower plants), and a certain number of companies partially uses solar energy only for the production of energy for own needs. The Republic of Serbia has a good hydro potential (the Danube River), so it is possible to build another hydropower plant, but most of the energy for electricity production is obtained from the mining branch by the production of coal (lignite), which has a low calorific and energy value. Regardless of the upcoming challenges, everyone is very optimistic when it comes to the impact of the Green Transition on employment, working conditions, OSH, taking into account

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the creation of new jobs, modernization of technology and automation of work processes. Examples of good strategies of individual state policies - Government Regulation for simpler procedures for buyers-producers and suppliers of electricity - additionally simplified procedure for the production of energy for own needs from renewable energy sources; several cities are switching from mazut to biomass in heat plants, which indicates the importance and involvement of local self-governments and all other important actors in the Green Transition processes.

**The majority believes that the whole world, including the Republic of Serbia, is not at the appropriate technological level to fully transition to a green economy** - it is currently impossible to reach the desired level of energy production from cleaner sources (solar, wind energy) in order to meet the overall needs of the economy and society.

The strategies undertaken by companies are different and depend on their activity and size. Given that the energy prices are rising, they believe that costs and consumption should be reduced, and that investments should be made in modernization. In the upcoming changes, there is a development opportunity for companies, employees, and society.

A representative of a representative branch union from the largest company in the field of electric power: The Green Transition will certainly have a great impact on the company - they are making long-term plans in which the state will be involved (construction of another reversible hydropower plant, construction of large wind farms and installation of a large number of solar power plants on mine pits that have already been exhausted in terms of exploitation). There are plans to increase production and the number of employees. A more pronounced decarbonization will be seen in 2030 - 2040 as production from renewable and cleaner sources grows - the opinion of many respondents in the energy sector. He expects changes in employment in 10 years when the construction of larger hydropower plants with fewer employees occurs, sees the matter of resolving the position of employees in the Social Dialogue with the state and local self-governments. Working conditions and OSH will be improved by introducing more modern technologies and cleaner forms of energy. Reskilling and upskilling, new educational profiles are also necessary.

A union representative from a large company (distribution, transport, gas storage) does not see any danger when it comes to jobs – the Green Transition is still not present to a larger extent, but it will bring about the improvement of working conditions, modernization and better quality of OSH.

An interviewee from a company that carries out waste management activities (collection, treatment and processing, but not incineration) - there are 2 types of companies, those that have to implement the Green Transition and make changes, and are indirectly affected by the Green Transition, and those that fully implement and bring about the Green Transition. The bottom line is that they enable the Green Transition for others. Their impact on employment, working conditions and OSH is positive and their workplaces are green. They opened 105 job positions that did not exist at all. The growth of such a trend and the positive impact on the position of employees (many processes must be measurable) - positive on working conditions, Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only, and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



OSH. Carbon reporting will mean measurements in the working environment: noise, harmful gas emissions, water, etc. - companies will try to reduce it in order to reduce fees for the same. This will indirectly affect the position of employees and the improvement of working conditions.

### **3.2 Industrial Sector**

In the Sector, it was not possible to obtain completely precise group data - data related to some activities from it include both cultivation (which does not represent production in the sense of industrial production) and processing of certain products (which can be considered an industrial activity with the fulfillment of certain conditions). They are presented according to individual activities, and in some cases, they should be considered insufficiently precise - it was not possible to single out industrial production from a specific activity (aggregate data is available). In the **agriculture and food industry** in 2022, there were 9,465 companies (6.9% of the total number of companies) and 10,248 sole proprietors. **Livestock farming and processing of livestock products**: 9,363 companies (6.9%) and 10,630 sole proprietors. **Wood, furniture and paper industry**: 3,474 companies (2.5%) and 8,527 sole proprietors. **Metal and electrical**: 5,987 companies (4.4%) and about 12,175 sole proprietors. **Chemical, rubber and non-metal industry**: 3,019 companies (2.2%) and 4,785 sole proprietors. **Textiles, clothing, leather and footwear**: 1,774 companies (1.3%) and 6,140 sole proprietors. **Construction activities and construction industry**: 17,882 companies (13.1%) and 43,298 sole proprietors, **creative industry**: 6,002 companies (4.4%) and 18,132 sole proprietors.

#### **There is no special Collective Agreement**

**Collective Agreements exist with employers**, that are mostly larger companies. They point out - many companies were undergoing restructuring (privatization) – a change from social to state/private ownership, many lost experts, it is a very difficult, long-lasting process.

Companies adapt to the Green Transition, activities are different (type of activity, experience, duration of business, readiness for changes, company size, revenue size, company capabilities). The attitude and support of the state/local self-government mean a lot. A large number of SMEs, there are different opportunities. There are good and less good sides of the Green Transition. The state is increasingly demanding more from companies, and they are trying to adapt. The strategies are different, companies have to form special departments for environmental protection, waste management, handling of dangerous substances, solving problems with harmful/excessive emissions - work on savings, modernization, new standards – this requires investments. In some companies, ESG is at a very high level, but that is not the case with the majority of companies. Many have started installing solar panels/are getting ready and expect incentive legislation. Most of the production companies for now have only the prescribed minimum – the lack of funds as it is in the EU. They see changes not only in the economy, but also in society (raising awareness) - it will influence the adoption of new policies in companies and harmonization with those brought by the Green Transition. Increased awareness of waste disposal and the importance of working on business culture to make it sustainable.





**A large problem is the lack of personnel.** The Green Transition will not affect the reduction of the number of employees - together with other trends, it will bring new employment opportunities (highly skilled, various engineers, economic experts, qualified workers). Part of the problem was solved by introducing AI, digitization.

An important prerequisite for a successful transition – the education reform and the creation profiles for the needs of the economy and society now and in the future, reskilling and upskilling which the economy cannot fund on its own - various programs and state subsidies are necessary.

The Green Transition will not automatically improve the working conditions of everyone because it will not be a linear process, but it will still be the case with many. Improvement - an increase in earnings and a better standard of living.

*Environmental protection is a very demanding lady - it requires numerous adjustments, but it is the path we have to follow. In order to be green, we have to save up in many things in nature, which means not only that we pollute less, but also that we invest more in the prevention and remediation of all side effects - opinion of an employee from the Sector.*

### **3.3 Transport / Traffic Sector**

#### **There is no special Collective Agreement**

Serbian Chamber of Commerce, according to the Business Registers Agency in 2022, 8,847 companies performed **land, water, air transport and storage activities** - 6.5% of the total number of companies

Land transport and transport via pipelines – 6,483 – 73.3%

Storage and related activities in traffic – 2,214 – 25.0%

Beside companies, about 29,791 sole proprietors performed land, water, air transport and storage activities.

There are different views on the Green Transition and the strategies undertaken by companies. The concept itself is good, it is the humanity's need, but there are different views on how to implement it.

An employee representative from a large public enterprise for passenger transport - progress in digitization: bus tracking via GPRS, direct communication between the driver and the command center, fuel consumption is monitored via digital platforms, ticket sales. He does not see an impact on reducing pollution or a (direct) connection with the Green Transition. Staff shortage for years - not related to the Green Transition. Gas/electric buses are not being procured on a larger scale - investments are expensive, and part of that transition is the procurement of vehicles that have a lower negative impact.



An interviewee (truck driver) experienced a personal transition when, after working in a bank (with a Bachelor of Economics degree), due to unfavorable working conditions, after undergoing training and obtaining licenses, she started working as a truck driver. As a woman in a sector that is considered a traditionally male sector, she works to promote the profession among women because there is a shortage of staff (one of the biggest problems in the sector, but she cannot link it to the Green Transition). The best strategies include acquiring new vehicles that emit less harmful gases, but that requires big investments. There are trainings, but the mandatory ones are not adapted to the real needs of the job.

Interviewed employers - representatives of the most important associations for international transport and road passenger transport: the state must provide more support to the Green Transition (practice in the EU). Law changes are necessary. In the capital city, public transport is moving rapidly towards the Green Transition due to the purchase of EVs, but this is not the case in other areas. The organization of public transport of passengers should be organized on a regional basis (as in Croatia, Austria) to adapt to passengers – the one currently organized is not profitable for the local self-government and is left to their discretion, often does not meet the needs of the population, economy (he had in mind the former industrial centers that no longer exist/are dislocated) - the reason for the drastic drop in passenger transport, and public transport can greatly affect the environment - reduces the number of vehicles in traffic. Individuals from their place of residence to their place of work in such conditions use their own transport, which is neither cost-effective nor environmentally desirable. Large state projects for mobility, digitization, formation of digital allotments are necessary, and significantly higher amounts of excise taxes compared to the EU are highlighted. The state must react more quickly to the lack of personnel.

Opinion - investment in the Green Transition means high costs - good and supportive policies, subsidies are necessary. The Republic of Serbia, for example, adopted amendments to the law that stipulate a lower age limit for truck and bus drivers (previously, the limit was 24 years of age), but they are not yet applicable (bylaws are missing).

They expect support from the state for the purchase of newer vehicles that will contribute to the reduction of harmful gas emissions - through reduced costs, tolls, subsidies for the renewal of the vehicle fleet after some time for the purchase of other types of stimulation, tax credit, reduction of taxes and contributions, subsidies for young drivers who will use vehicles more responsibly.

They do not see too much impact on the conditions and way of working, even when EV/CNG appear more massively because they believe that the driver's job (demanding and difficult) will not change much. Only a small number could switch to working from home - dispatchers, but they still need to have constant contact with drivers and vehicles, which is still direct and involves the arrival of the driver to the company for the delivery and collection of documents. The documentation is not yet in electronic form.



### **3.4 Cross-Sectoral Situation with Changes from the Perspective of Employees in the Energy, Industrial and Transport Sector**

About 20% completely agree that the transition from fossil fuels to renewable sources will contribute to energy efficiency and energy security of the country, 60% tend to agree with this statement. Just under 20% mostly disagree, while less than 1% absolutely disagree.

The impact of the development of green technologies on the competitiveness of the domestic economy, the improvement of the environment and the health of citizens, as well as the increase in the number of jobs in the domestic economy: almost half of the respondents agree with these statements. Close to 40% definitely agree that the Green Transition will have a positive impact on the state of the environment and the health of citizens, and slightly more than 33% mostly disagree that it will lead to an increase in the number of jobs.

About 45% mostly disagree with the statement that the implementation of the EU green standards will result in the loss of competitiveness of the European economy compared to companies outside the EU, and about 30% mostly agree with that statement. A little more than 1/3 expects an increase in the cost of living: energy, services and products as a result of the Green Transition. About 45% tend to agree that support for employees in those processes will either be delayed or poorly organized. About 30% generally agree, about 30% of them strongly agree with the statement that regions that depend on high-emission industries will not manage without government assistance.

About 60% believe that the Green Transition is quite important for the future of their company, while slightly less than 30% believe that it is definitely important. Only 1% declared that it is rather unimportant, that is, completely unimportant. Digital transformation is seen as quite important or definitely important by more than 1/3. About 54% see the restriction of access to raw materials as a fairly important issue for the future of companies, while the rising energy prices are important in the opinion of 57% of respondents.

Companies' strategies for adapting to the Green Transition: the largest number of employees states that the strategies include the application of certain environmental criteria in policies/procurement, developing environmental protection programs, issuing instructions or organizing trainings related to savings and efficient use of energy in the workplace, reuse, sorting and recycling materials and raw materials, as well as efficient use of materials and raw materials, application of practices of efficient use of resources, as well as changes in the business model, organization of work or technological processes in terms of low emission of harmful substances. A large number declared that they do not have enough knowledge about the company's activities related to the Green Transition. The smallest number declared that they had not heard of such activities of the company they work for, that the company they work for does not use RES, i.e., does not support ecological means of transport.



#### 4. EMPLOYEES' OPINIONS, EXPECTATIONS AND NEEDS

##### ***Considering the Prospect of the Green Transition Jobs from the Employees' Perspective***

More than 1/2 of respondents think that the Green Transition will not change the scope of work, responsibilities and requirements in the existing positions, while around 1/4 believe that this will be the case and the same number of respondents is not sure.

##### ***The Impact of the Green Transition on the Creation of New Jobs due to a Change or Increase in Business Profit***

About 1/2 of the respondents believe that this will not happen, more than 1/3 cannot determine whether there is such an impact, while less than 1/5 gave positive answers.

##### ***Has the company hired new people to replace retiring people?***

The majority believes that this is not the case, slightly less than 1% of respondents think that companies do this and slightly more than 1/4 cannot say.

##### ***Employees' Perception of the Possible Impact of the Transition on Job Losses due to Changes in Technology, Manner of Organizing Activities, Giving up***

82.1% are of the opinion that this will not happen, and slightly less than 18% cannot say. No one fears that it will cause job losses.

##### ***The Segment of Employees' Qualifications, Training and Skills***

The respondents are divided when it comes to the fact whether or not the employer checks the qualifications and skills of employees: close to 1/3 is of the opinion that the employer does not do this (35.7%) and also close to 1/3 says that the employer does this (32.1%), i.e., they do not know (32.1%).

42.9% stated ***that employers provide training to employees to improve their qualifications and skills*** (which can be linked to the Green Transition), while the same number of respondents (28.6%) is of the opinion that they either do not know or that this is not the case. 66.7% claim that digital skills training is included as part of their training, about 1/3 is not sure (33.3%), while there are no negative answers.

##### ***Reskilling Training***

Nearly 1/2 of respondents (46.4%) believes that it is, 28.6% cannot say, 25% believe that this is not the case.



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A vast majority (84.4%) believes that reskilling training includes digital skills training, while an approximately equal number of respondents (7.7%) declared that they do not know or that this is not the case when it comes to reskilling, which is a difference in attitude towards training provided to improve their skills.

### ***Impact of the Green Transition on the Companies' Work Organization***

- 60.7% - no impact
- 35.7% - it is difficult to determine
- 3.6% - there is an impact

### ***Working Conditions and OSH after the Green Transition***

- 67.9% no changes
- 28.6% they are better
- 3.5% they are worse

***Does the employer include employee representatives in the monitoring/supervision and adaptation of OSH measures to new tasks*** (application of new technologies, waste management, use of materials in regeneration and recycling)

- 67.9% yes
- 28.6% not sure
- 3.5% no

***Level of awareness in the companies they work for of plans affecting the position of employees*** - more than 30% claim that they probably do not feel sufficiently informed, approximately 30% probably feel that way, 1/5 says that they definitely do not feel informed, only 1% definitely feel informed.

***Level of awareness of the impact of climate policy on the labor market in the industry in which they work***, close to 50% probably do not feel informed, slightly more than 30% probably feel informed, about 1% definitely do not feel informed, and 1% definitely feel informed.

Opinions are almost identical ***when it comes to information and awareness about reducing the impact of the company in which they work on the climate and the environment.***

### ***The Importance of the Industry in Which They Work for the Economy of the Region***

- Almost 50% respondents see that there is importance
- Around 30% respondents say it is possible
- Slightly less than 20% do not see the company in such a role



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***The Significance of the Company in Which They Work for the Economy of the Region*** - around 50%, while the rest of the respondents are divided

50% respondents think that the Green Transition probably cannot threaten their jobs, about 30% are certain that this will not happen, while only 1% fear that this will happen.

The respondents similarly perceive the ***impact of digital transformation***

50% digital transformation probably cannot threaten their jobs  
Around 30% of respondents are sure that this will not happen  
20% respondents believe that it is likely to happen

***Support in Industries with High Emissions in Improving or Changing Their Qualifications***

Important to a very large extent - about 33%, i.e., to a large extent - about 20%. Moderately important - around 20%, while the rest do not see the impact of that support/it is negligible.

Close to 50% of respondents believe: ***the co-funding of employees who were dismissed as a result of the Green Transition*** was one of the important measures, while the rest see this measure as either moderately important, slightly important, or they cannot say.

They believe that it is very important **to support companies from industries with high emissions to modify their activities towards low emissions, as well as that it is important to include employees and their organizations in the process of planning and implementing the Green Transition.**

## **5. ATTITUDE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS TOWARDS THE GREEN TRANSITION POLICY AND THE ACTIONS THEY ARE UNDERTAKING**

We have noticed numerous similarities but also some differences when it comes to the opinions of employers.

### **TRANSPORT SECTOR**

Improve the business environment and work on the development of the economy - simplify the procedures (long wait times at the borders - drivers waste time) and there will be more profit and higher earnings.

The sector must also address the issues that are not exclusively related to transport and that are related to and certainly affect the position of workers - complicated legal procedures, bureaucracy, inadequate qualifications, the Green Transition must be implemented both by the economy and citizens.

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An employee representative from the passenger transportation company points out: for now, they have not undertaken any special actions related to the Green Transition - he believes that no special training is needed, not even when electric buses are obtained. An employee of a company for the road transport of goods thinks similarly. She does not know what actions the employees and their representatives could undertake, the highest expectations are from the state, which must be involved in the main problem in the sector – the lack of personnel.

## **INDUSTRIAL SECTOR**

They pay great attention to training and upskilling in accordance with the needs of the work process, new technology and equipment, energy efficiency and energy saving. Some are involved in the dual education system and hope that the students will continue working in companies. They pay the most attention to waste sorting, to a greater or lesser extent, and recycle their own waste, install solar panels, and purchase environmentally cleaner vehicles. A number of employers is doing studies related to energy efficiency, energy saving and the use of geothermal energy and is making plans for better insulation of certain departments, to modernize systems and monitor innovations for energy saving and CO<sub>2</sub> reduction. Many are working to introduce a department for the segments of green policies (which will contribute to new employment opportunities). Waste sorting should be applied both by companies and citizens. The state should provide relief so that companies can start adapting, and only then can social partners become more actively involved.

## **ENERGY SECTOR**

Appropriate training and reskilling are required, energy saving. It is necessary to work on improving working conditions and OSH, and not to delay the implementation of ESG. Many companies are undertaking actions in local communities.

Green Transition activities undertaken by employee organizations in the company in which they are employed: a large number does not have enough knowledge about such activities, while an equally large number declared exactly the opposite - the organizations spread knowledge about the Green Transition among employees, stating that they even represented own initiatives to reduce the company's impact on the climate and the environment, presented ideas for protecting the interests of employees during the Green Transition etc. The smallest number believes that the employees' organizations presented initiatives.

## **6. SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN THE CONTEXT OF JUST TRANSITION**

### **Employees' Views and Opinions on the Social Dialogue at the Company Level**

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78.1% affirmatively stated that there is a union/WC in the company, 15.6% stated that there is no union/WC, while 6.3% are not sure.

### **Companies do not have separate management bodies for the Green Transition together with employee representatives as their members**

opinion of 53.1%, 34.4% do not know, 12.5% say yes

Has the employer talked with the employees about the impact of the Green Transition on their position, the way to minimize the negative effects of the activities it brings, such as ensuring dignified work, the possibility of reskilling, current and future needs for skills and qualifications of employees, the scope and form of the training program that would prepare employees for changes related to the Green Transition: an almost equal number, about 40%, was divided between the answers “no” and “not sure”, while about 20% gave an affirmative answer to all these questions.

87.5% confirmed that the employees of the company in which they work are covered by a Collective Agreement, 9.4% of them confirmed that they are not, 3.1% are not sure.

Collective Agreement provisions related to the guarantee of employment: over 50% believe that such provisions do not exist, more than 30% do not know. When it comes to the provisions about training, qualification improvement and reskilling, slightly less than 50% say that such trainings do not exist, while around 30% declared that they do not know, and the smallest number stated that such provisions do exist. Opinions are divided when it comes to information and consultation procedures, and only a small number of respondents is unable to state their answer. In relation to the regulations on working conditions, the majority says that they exist in Collective Agreements (nearly 50%), while a large number does not think so (over 30% of all respondents) and only a small number is not familiar with that.

53.6% of respondents say that Collective Agreements should be supplemented by provisions on the Green Transition, 43.9% of respondents state that it is difficult to say, and only 3.5% say that it is not necessary.

**Employers from the energy sector** believe that Social Dialogue at the branch or activity level could be better, and, as a reason for that, they see the period of transition that our country was going through, many companies were restructured and workers were forced to change jobs, go through reskilling. One of the challenges for Social Dialogue - the largest number of SMEs in the Republic of Serbia does not have a union, and even though a union is prescribed under the Labor Law, it does not exist in practice. The state must involve social partners in the adoption of policies. They believe that: unions are the most important actors of the Social Dialogue with the employer, it should include topics of interest to employees, while business operations and business plans are in the domain of capital owners. Important topics: quality of work environment, improvement of working conditions, training. They have not encountered the so-called green clauses in Collective Agreements, they know that they exist in some Scandinavian countries.

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An owner of a promising company in the energy sector: they do not have a Collective Agreement (not even a union), but they have a high-quality Code of Conduct, consultations are constant and direct, opinions and suggestions are respected, and the training they organize includes environmental behavior.

An employee representative of one of the largest companies in the energy sector: Collective Agreements defined clear procedures for redundant workers, union representatives were included. In the next 3 years, we will think about finances - every restructuring process requires money from the state. We hope for good cooperation with the representatives of the relevant ministry in the future as well. So far there are no indications that there will be layoffs, they expect that there will be new employment opportunities in the mining basin. The employer informs them about everything on time: about working conditions, plans. They further inform the employees; they will react if there is a need to protect the rights of the workers. The age structure is 48 - 49 years of age, with 90% of employees having an early retirement entitlement (they retire at 57, 58 years old) - coincides with the time of realization of the Green Transition. The construction of a new hydropower plant is a positive change - new employment opportunities. The Green Transition will not bring prosperity to the miners in the following period because this branch of the energy industry will be shut down, and there will certainly be a need for reskilling and upskilling – and where that is not possible - social programs, inclusion of local self-governments. The objective is a just, fair and social transition, so that the worker does not pay the highest price; if no solution is found, the worker will receive adequate severance pay to bridge the personal transition. So far, they have had good social programs on a couple of occasions. For now, they are getting information from their colleagues who have gone through the transition: for example, Slovenia - when it shut down the mines, it redirected the workers to the construction and maintenance of roads. Educate generations for new profiles, reduce mining orientations (coal and electric power industry). The Collective Agreement at the company level is solid (the employer pays into a special account funds for the prevention of work disability, rehabilitation and recreation - the amount of 0.59% of the funds in relation to the total funds paid for earnings; certain funds (0.2% of the funds paid for earnings) are paid for the financing of cultural and sports activities; procedures for informing and consulting employees, not in relation to the Green Transition). The Collective Agreement does not contain the so-called green clauses. The union has its own autonomous solidarity funds, additional health insurance. Informing - two company sheets with useful information (about the production in the company, but also in connection with the electric power industry of the Republic of Serbia, planned projects, and recently - green energy and Green Transition have been a topic). They have a representative in the Supervisory Board. When talking about topics that are important to them, the attending representative later informs everyone about it through the union. They have weekly meetings to share information. Good Social Dialogue at the company level - representatives of relevant ministries, employers, unions are all involved.

**Industrial Sector** – employees who do not have a union or a Collective Agreement - communication between employees and management is transparent, the director's door is open (SMEs, family businesses). Many decisions and information important to employees are displayed on notice boards. A manager of one of the companies - they have employment

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branding - they have no problem with the workforce - the general atmosphere is very supportive, employees are listened to and consulted, funds for well-being, a transparent reward system, OSH at a very satisfactory level - all this even though they do not have a Collective Agreement.

An employee of a company for the production of tires, protective equipment and industrial explosives: a very good Collective Agreement, significantly more rights than it is stipulated by the law: gender equality, the right to education, more days of paid leave, OSH, personal data protection, detailed procedures in case of redundancy and the planned participation of the representative union, clear procedures for information and consultation, and sector managers inform about all important issues and employees convey their views, which they further convey to the top management, great attention is paid to team spirit, team building days are organized to improve work, sports clubs, employee sports games. The Collective Agreement still does not contain the so-called green clauses.

**In the transport sector**, a significant number of small companies - there are no unions or Collective Agreements. Public enterprises for the transport of passengers and goods, in road and rail transport, have Collective Agreements.

The most important issues - the right to the protection of employees, appropriate equipment, preventive and periodic medical examinations, procedures for redundant employees - representatives of the representative union must participate, which is also the case in the event of a change of employer. The parties to the Collective Agreement still do not invoke the concepts of just transition, there are no so-called environmental clauses (they know Germany and France have them). The transfer of knowledge and experience is good. The employee representative points out that the drivers could be given an early retirement entitlement, because the working conditions are special, the work is demanding and, in that case, there would be no staff shortage.

Collective Agreements for railway companies: plenty of education, protection of employees' rights, years of service awards, New Year gifts for employees' children, other types of solidarity assistance, the procedures are thoroughly regulated in case of redundant employees - a representative union is included.



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## 7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### TRANSPORT

The Republic of Serbia relies on conventional modes of transport where the use of fossil fuels is the most common.

Public transport networks are outdated.

The infrastructure for EVs is underdeveloped.

### ENERGY

The energy sector still relies on coal as the primary source of energy, while RES have a smaller share.

### INDUSTRY

Outdated technology and high energy intensity.

Industrial plants rely heavily on fossil fuels.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### TRANSPORT

***Development of infrastructure for EVs***

***Improvement of public transport***

***Raising awareness and education***

### ENERGY

***Increasing the use of RES***

Incentives for investment in solar, wind and hydropower

Simplification of procedures for permits for RES projects

***Improvement of energy efficiency***

Investments in the modernization of the electric power system

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Supporting energy efficiency in households and industry

### ***Regulatory framework***

Adoption of laws for faster transition to green energy  
Supporting research and innovation in the field of RES

## **INDUSTRY**

### ***Modernization of industrial plants***

Incentives for the introduction of energy-efficient equipment and technology  
Supporting recycling and the circular economy

### ***Reduction of emissions***

Introduction of standards for the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and other pollutants  
Incentives for the use of RES in industry

### ***Supporting innovations***

Investments in research and development of green technologies  
Partnerships with academic and research institutions to develop sustainable solutions

## **MAJOR CHANGES ARE NEEDED AT ALL LEVELS**

**THE GREEN TRANSITION SHOULD BE BUILT AS PART OF A NEW CULTURE OF LIVING IF WE WANT IT TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND, BE JUST, BRING NEW OPPORTUNITIES, SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT, A NEW QUALITY OF LIFE AND WORK**