

# Irish Congress of Trade Unions

## Manifesto for the European Elections 2024

The 2024 European Parliament elections are the most important for many years. They will determine whether Europe remains on the path of progress and solidarity we saw in its response to the Covid-19 crisis, and support working people and their communities; or whether it will return to austerity, with its attacks on working people.

We call on all people in Ireland to vote in the European elections and to make their voice heard for a fairer and more social Europe.

There is a social justice emergency in Europe. Over the past few years, working people in Ireland and all across Europe have suffered record real-term pay cuts while unscrupulous employers continue to register record profits. Meanwhile, the European institutions threaten to return to austerity and open the door to further deregulation, further punishing workers.

Instead, we need the European elections to deliver a European Parliament and a European Commission committed to work for a fair Europe with secure jobs, decent pay, excellent public services, women's rights and equality for all, strong workers' rights, and reinforced collective bargaining and social dialogue. Irish MEPs must play a pivotal role in achieving these goals.

**Together we can achieve this essential mission for a Europe we can be proud to pass on to future generations.**

### Better jobs and incomes

Take effective EU action to protect jobs and incomes, including pensions, with decisive measures to address the social dimension of the cost-of-living crisis. Europe needs a pay rise! Promote wage increases and support upwards convergence in incomes and working conditions, including through the introduction of a European framework to promote upward convergence on wages, and stronger action at EU level to eliminate the gender pay gap.

### End precarious work and improve working conditions

End precarious work by guaranteeing legal rights to permanent contracts and full-time work, and a ban on unpaid internships. Increase workers' control over working time flexibility and reduce working time. Protect remote-workers' rights, including legislation for the right to disconnect, and ban invasive and disrespectful surveillance.

### Support for trade unions, collective bargaining and social dialogue

Defend and strengthen trade union and workers' rights, including the universal right to organise, workers access to unions, the right to bargain collectively, and the right to strike. Increase collective bargaining coverage, including through an ambitious transposition of the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages, targeting 80% coverage, and the Directive on Gender Pay Transparency. Reinforce democracy at work in the first place by strengthening collective bargaining, introducing a comprehensive EU framework on information, consultation and participation.



## Safe work

Improve and expand the EU occupational health and safety legislation and other European initiatives to achieve zero deaths at work or caused by work, including domestic workers. Address psychosocial risks and online harassment and shaming at work through a European Directive. Develop initiatives to ensure the full enforcement of workers and trade union rights and reinforce labour and social law inspection services and complaint mechanisms. Ensure an end to all forms of gender-based violence in the world of work, including online.

## Reject austerity - an economy for the people and the planet

Reject a return to austerity policies and promote a new economic model centred on the real economy, job creation, decent work, and redistribution through fair and progressive taxation. Ensure a revision of economic governance rules that includes the termination of the EU Fiscal Compact and the reform of the Stability and Growth Pact to align it with the achievement of the rights included in the European Pillar of Social Rights. Provide member states with the necessary room for manoeuvre to finance the investments for a fair twin green and digital transition. Implement a new fiscal capacity for investment, an EU sovereignty fund for just socio-economic transition and common goods, leaving no one and no region behind. Regulate financial, energy and food commodities markets and tackle speculation. Combat tax evasion and avoidance and ensure that excessive profits are taxed.

## Strong industrial policy and public services

Implement a strong European industrial policy with significant and effective public and private investment that underpins quality jobs and social progress. Guarantee universal rights-based access to high-quality public services, including healthcare, education, childcare and transport. Ensure the full respect for the right to adequate, decent and affordable housing. Guarantee quality services and a right for service workers to provide quality services.

## Public money for social progress

Apply strong conditionalities, covering social, tax and environmental criteria, linked to all forms of public funding and support to business. Revise EU public procurement rules to ensure that public money goes to organisations that respect workers' and trade union rights, that negotiate with trade unions and whose workers are covered by collective agreements.

## Ensure just transitions

Guarantee a just digital transformation based on human-centred digitalisation and the effective regulation of AI with the 'human in control' principle incorporated into EU law. Achieve climate targets through a just transition, including a Directive for just transition in the world of work through anticipation and management of change, based on the principles of trade union involvement and collective bargaining. Ensure the right for all to lifelong training without cost to the worker and during working time.

## Fight against social dumping and fraud

Regulate the role of labour intermediaries, such as temporary work and employment placement agencies, and introduce an EU general legal framework limiting subcontracting and ensuring joint and several liability through the subcontracting chain. Improve the enforcement of labour mobility rules by a more effective European Labour Authority (ELA).

## A fair, rights-based approach to migration and asylum

Strengthen safe, legal and regular migration pathways, enhance protections, rights and support for migrants and asylum-seekers within the EU. Save lives in the Mediterranean and at the external borders, also by re-introducing an EU search and rescue mechanism. Refuse borders externalisation policies and oppose multi- and bi-lateral agreements with States that do not comply with the rule of law and do not respect human rights.

## A progressive role for Europe in the world

Ensure that the EU acts globally and through its trade policy, in line with our social model, to promote peace, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and global economic justice, including to end Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The ICTU calls for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, the distribution of humanitarian aid, the release of all hostages and an end to the illegal occupation by Israel of Palestinian land. The EU should vigorously seek a political process to end the conflict in Palestine/Israel and ensure a peaceful and permanent settlement. EU finally deliver concrete results for workers in companies and supply chains and improve the human rights of millions of working people by ensuring effective transposition of the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive.

## A fairer and more democratic Europe

Establish a Social Progress Protocol, to be included in the Treaties, to guarantee that workers' and social rights take precedence over economic freedoms. Promote a reform of the European institutions to ensure a more social and democratic EU. Support EU enlargement based on the full respect of workers' and social rights and social dialogue.

**This Manifesto is compiled in partnership with the European Trade Union Confederation.**