

Thank you for giving industriAll Europe the opportunity to speak today on the crisis impacting manufacturing, mining and energy workers across Europe.

The scale of this crisis for our members has been staggering.

The pandemic has accelerated and intensified existing structural changes due to decarbonization and digitalisation in many sectors. We are witnessing massive and simultaneous sectoral restructuring across our economies. In the automotive industry alone, in OEMs and first tier suppliers, over 100,000 job losses have been announced in a matter of months. A similar situation is happening in aerospace – a sector employing 800.000 and the embodiment of European industrial cooperation. Meanwhile in basic metals, especially the steel sector, we risk losing half of Europe's steel capacity and thousands of jobs through this crisis without urgent targeted action. Just Transition will mean nothing if there is no plan for these key European sectors' transformations.

We welcome the Recovery Plan.

But it will only be successful if the 27 National Recovery and Resilience Plans are effectively coordinated at European level – into a true European plan bound with a strong, forward-looking industrial policy, and underpinned by strong social partnership. And we must bridge the gap, recognising the upcoming corporate liquidity crisis.

The main objective must be employment. No public money should be allocated without social strings attached.

We strongly welcome the Just Transition Fund: no one should be left behind. Knowing the scale of the challenges we face to decarbonise, we are deeply disappointed by the EU Council decision to reduce the resources available, while the EU increases its climate ambition. This sends a terrible message to workers and regions undergoing substantial transformation. We urge you to put the money back in.

[Finally, we are witnessing today a worrying trend in Europe. Big non-European multinational companies announced closures of companies in Europe, despite serious interest from other companies to buy these companies. One example: Alcoa intends to end aluminum production in Spain, although an interested other company would like to buy their plant. This trend is also visible in other member states. Industrial capacity is reduced in Europe, quality jobs disappears and Europe becomes industrially and economically weaker.]

The need for a coherent and effective EU Recovery Plan, supported by a strong European vision, is for this more as ever important.