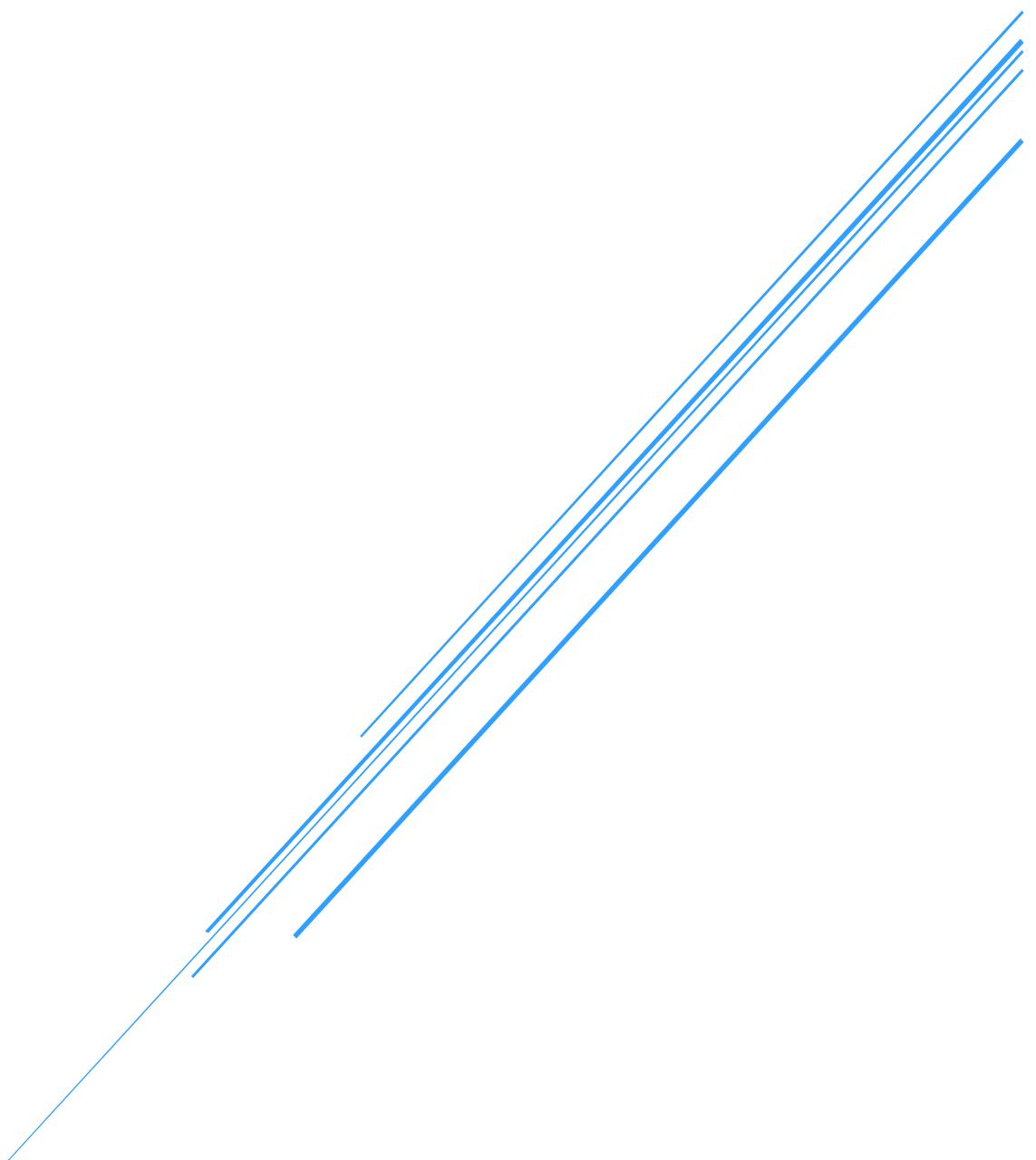


CO-CREATING A COMMON VISION

Towards a Strategic Research & Innovation Agenda for
the new European Partnership on Social Transformations
and Resilience





IMPRINT

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1. VISIONING

The development of the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) for the new European Partnership on Social Transformations and Resilience (STR-Partnership) is a multi-stage process designed to ensure that research priorities align with long-term societal needs and policy objectives. As part of this process, the development of the SRIA will be informed using Strategic Foresight, a methodology that enables the systematic exploration of future challenges and opportunities to support evidence-based decision-making.

The visioning phase marks the first step in this Foresight process. It establishes a shared understanding of the Partnership's long-term ambitions and provides a strategic framework for the subsequent Foresight activities and discussions. By defining a common vision early in the process, stakeholders can ensure that future analyses and policy recommendations are aligned with a coherent and forward-looking agenda.

The following chapters will briefly examine the importance of visioning within Strategic Foresight, outline the process leading to the final visions, and present the common visions for the Partnership's key impact areas:

1. Supporting the modernization of social protection systems and essential services
2. Shaping the future of work
3. Fostering education and skills development for the green and digital transition
4. Contributing to a fair transition towards climate neutrality

1.1 Why Visioning

Visioning is often the first step in a Strategic Foresight exercise, as it establishes a common foundation for all subsequent activities. By creating a shared understanding of long-term ambitions, visioning ensures that all stakeholders are aligned and working towards a coherent and strategic direction. In the context of the STR-Partnership, visioning serves as a critical starting point for developing the SRIA. Before engaging in detailed Foresight analyses, it is essential to define a collective direction and clarify what success looks like for the Partnership.

A well-defined vision enables stakeholders to align on overarching goals, fostering cohesion and strategic coherence across different impact areas. By establishing a common reference point, visioning helps coordinate contributions, ensuring that efforts are complementary rather than fragmented. It also clarifies key priorities that will require further exploration in the Foresight process, ensuring that research and policy efforts remain targeted and impactful.

Beyond serving as an alignment tool, the visioning process provides a strategic framework for Foresight activities and the development of the SRIA. The resulting visions serve as a guiding reference for trend analyses, scenario development, policy recommendations, and strategic initiatives. Without this foundational step, Foresight efforts risk becoming disconnected, reactive, or misaligned, diminishing their overall effectiveness.

The primary outcome of the visioning process is a shared understanding of the overarching vision for the STR-Partnership, complemented by common vision statements for each impact area. To achieve this, a dedicated Visioning Workshop was conducted, bringing together key stakeholders to collaboratively define the Partnership's aspirations and priorities. Through this structured process, the Partnership ensures that its long-term objectives are both ambitious and actionable, setting the stage for meaningful Strategic Foresight and evidence-based decision-making.

1.2 Visioning Workshop

Objectives:

The Visioning Workshop took place on February 4, 2025, bringing together key stakeholders involved in the SRIA drafting process. The workshop had two main objectives:

The first objective was to officially launch the process of developing the new strategy. As part of the SRIA development, the Partnership is conducting a Foresight exercise to ensure that the strategy is forward-looking and well-prepared to address both current and future challenges. The workshop marked the starting point of this process, providing participants with a clear overview of the Foresight approach, its objectives, and the role of stakeholders in shaping the strategy. Establishing this shared understanding is crucial, ensuring that all participants are aware of the process, their role, and the points at which they will be engaged.

The second objective was to collaboratively create shared visions for the four impact areas identified in the STR-Partnership's draft proposal. The aim was to define the aspirations, priorities, and strategic direction of the Partnership's impact areas. The outcome of this exercise serves as a guiding framework for the next steps in the SRIA process, ensuring that all stakeholders are aligned and share a common understanding of the Partnership's long-term goals.

Agenda:

The workshop was structured into three key sessions:

The first session introduced participants to the Strategic Foresight exercise and its role in shaping the SRIA. It provided an overview of the Foresight cycle, highlighting how the visioning phase fits into the broader process. The session also outlined the expected outcomes of the Foresight exercise and clarified the role of stakeholders in contributing to the development of the strategy. This ensured that all participants had a shared understanding of the methodology, objectives, and their engagement in the process.

In the second session, participants explored the key characteristics of an effective vision, emphasizing that it should be action-inspiring, motivating, long-term oriented, ambitious yet realistic, specific, measurable, and widely understood. Following this discussion, the facilitators presented the STR-Partnership's common vision, as outlined in its draft proposal. Participants were then invited to provide feedback and engage in a structured discussion to refine and further enhance the overarching vision. This session ensured that all stakeholders had a shared understanding of the Partnership's strategic direction and a clear grasp of what constitutes a strong vision before moving on to the more detailed visioning work for the impact areas in the breakout sessions.

Table 1: Agenda Kick-off and Visioning Workshop

Tuesday, 4 February 2025	
10:00	Welcome and introduction
10:15	Presentation of the Strategic Foresight exercise that lays the foundation for the SRIA
10:45	Recap and reflection of the STR-Partnership's vision
11:15	Co-creation of visions for each impact area: Breakout sessions
11:40	Short Break
11:50	Synthesis and refinement
12:25	Closing remarks and next steps
12:30	End of workshop

The third session was dedicated to co-creating vision statements for each of the four impact areas. Participants were divided into breakout groups, where they worked collaboratively to define the key aspirations, enablers, and stakeholders relevant to their respective impact area. The discussions followed a structured Visioning Template that guided participants in articulating the long-term goals of their area, identifying the key factors and policies necessary for implementation, and mapping out the relevant actors responsible for driving the transition.

By the end of the workshop, participants had developed the building blocks for four common visions, which served as the foundation for drafting the final vision statements. These drafts were then shared with participants for feedback, and their input was carefully incorporated into the final versions. The following chapter presents the refined visions, along with non-exhaustive lists of enablers and key stakeholder groups. These visions will serve as strategic guidance for the next phases of the SRIA process, ensuring that all stakeholders remain aligned in their collective efforts to shape the future direction of the Partnership.

1.3 Workshop Participants

1. Social Protection

Last Name	First Name	Institution	Country
Austaller	Monika	Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection	AT
Davies	Jamie	Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)-UKRI	UK
di Luzio	Gaia	DLR Project Management Agency Society, Innovation / Humanities, Cultural Heritage	DE
Gupte	Jaideep	Arts and Humanities Research Council (UKRI-AHRC)	UK
Hammarberg	Tove	Forte, Swedish Research Council for Health, Working life and Welfare	SE
Haugan	Siv	Research Council of Norway	NO
Kangas	Olavi	Academy of Finland & Department of Social Research, University of Turku	FIN
Nahabedian	Matilda	Dutch Research Council (NWO)	NL
Palimarcicu	Mihai	European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, Unit F.3 - Fair Green and Digital Transitions, Research	BE
Siebern-Thomas	Frank		

2. Future of Work

Last Name	First Name	Institution	Country
Berrebi-Hoffmann	Isabelle	Lise - laboratoire interdisciplinaire pour la sociologie économique	FR
Bloch	Francis	Ministry of Higher Education and Research	FR
Eichhorst	Werner	IZA - Institute of Labor Economics (RAPPORTEUR)	DE
Gebalska	Malwina	National Science Centre	PL
Illera	Jessica	FECYT - Fundación Española para la Ciencia y la Tecnología	ES

Meredith	Gregory	Arts and Humanities Research Council (UKRI-AHRC)	UK
Milic	Marina	Research Ireland	IE
Schmälter	Julia	DLR Project Management Agency, European and International Cooperation, International Strategies and Instruments	DE

3. Education and Skills

Last Name	First Name	Institution	Country
Bram	Hendrawan	Taskforce Applied Research (SIA)/The Dutch Research Council	NL
Herbst	Mikołaj	University of Warsaw Centre for European Regional and Local Studies (EUROREG)	PL
Lenders	Jeanne	European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, Unit F.3 - Fair Green and Digital Transitions, Research	BE
Mooney Simmie	Geraldine	University of Limerick (RAPPORTEUR)	IE
Priimets	Hele	Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia	EE
Walshe	Gráinne	Research Ireland	IE
Winter	Simon	DLR Project Management Agency, European and International Cooperation, International Strategies and Instruments	DE

4. Fair Transition towards Climate Neutrality

Last Name	First Name	Institution	Country
Antretter	Marlene	Federal Ministry Republic of Austria Education, Science and Research Directorate V – Scientific Research; International Relations; Gender Equality and Diversity Management; Department 4 – Social Sciences and Humanities	AT
Croci	Edoardo	Bocconi University Department of Socio-political research matters	IT
Engel	Christa	DLR Project Management Agency Future Societies, Social Innovations	DE
Harmáčková	Zuzana	Global Change Research Institute CAS – CzechGlobe	CZ
Hubert	Gaëlle	Innoviris, Strategic Research Department	BE
Norwig	Christina	Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)	DE
Van der Wel	Esther	Dutch Research Council (NWO), International Programmes	NL
Rizzo	Francesca	Politecnico di Milano	IT

2. COMMON VISIONS

2.1 Social Protection Systems and Essential Services

Aspirations – What Do we want to achieve?

Social protection systems and essential services in Europe are resilient, inclusive, and futures-oriented, ensuring **security and equal access for all**. A modernized welfare system effectively supports individuals throughout the life course to maintain a **decent standard of living, irrespective of work status**. It is supported by a people-oriented Public Employment Service, which offers effective and accessible services that lead those who are able to decent and skilled work. Social policies are recognized as an investment in societies which do not only contribute to social cohesion but also to the resilience and competitiveness of economies. In turn, the resilience of the social protection systems against external shocks has become a central element of its design. While social protection remains a national competence, greater coordination and exchange of best practices foster stronger cooperation across Member States, reinforcing shared values that contribute to a sense of European solidarity and contribute to upward social convergence within the Union. On this ground, social policies are regarded as a shared responsibility, ensuring that national approaches remain adaptive and responsive to common challenges. Digitalization has been successfully leveraged to enhance service accessibility, including remote healthcare and digital social protection solutions, without reinforcing inequalities or digital divides. Through strong collaboration between science, policy, and society, social protection is adaptive, innovative, and financially sustainable, equipping Europe to navigate demographic shifts, labor market transformations, and climate-related challenges. To support better evidence-based policymaking, researchers have access to administrative data in the area of social security. Finally, social protection systems are designed to proactively support and integrate those most at risk of social exclusion, ensuring that vulnerable groups have access to the necessary services and opportunities to fully participate in society.

Enablers – What makes this vision possible?

- ❖ Collaboration between science, policy and society, including co-creation efforts.
- ❖ Digital transformation in social protection, such as local-level pilot projects for digital service delivery.
- ❖ Inclusion of vulnerable groups, ensuring digital access and responsible AI and other emergent technologies.
- ❖ Awareness-raising initiatives and policies to bridge the digital divide.
- ❖ Scaling up successful social policy models through European collaboration mechanisms.

Stakeholders – Who needs to act?

- ❖ Ministries for Social Affairs and Employment to drive policy reform and funding.
- ❖ Representatives of workers, employers and vulnerable groups to ensure inclusivity in policy design and strengthen social dialogue
- ❖ Research institutions and think tanks to provide evidence-based insights.
- ❖ Private sector and social enterprises to develop innovative service models.
- ❖ European and international institutions to facilitate policy coordination and knowledge-sharing.
- ❖ Public Employment Services to ensure effective, accessible and people-oriented implementation of relevant policies

2.2 Shaping the Future of Work

Aspirations – What Do we want to achieve?

Europe's workforce thrives in an inclusive, resilient, and human-centered work environment that embraces digitalization, demographic shifts, and the green transition and withstands external shocks while ensuring Europe remains a competitive at a global scale. A prosperous and skilled workforce contributes to strengthening the EU's competitiveness and innovation capacity, makes operations efficient and facilitates the supply of skills, which in turn lays the foundation for European cohesion, democracy and geopolitical stability. All those of working age – including workers, job seekers, and those re-entering the labor market – enjoy access to sustainable and quality employment, supported by continuous re- and upskilling opportunities that ensure adaptability to evolving skill demands. A dynamic and future-oriented productive model balances economic growth with social well-being, ensuring that job quantity and job quality reinforce each other. Work-life balance, well-being, and health are prioritized, fostering a fair and participatory work culture that strengthens worker representation, agency and the productivity and innovation of firms. Social partners, governments, businesses, and research institutions collaborate to co-create and implement policies and solutions that ensure fair work distribution, equitable wages, and transparency in labor relations. AI and automation are leveraged to support workers and enhance job quality, rather than replace human labor. Special focus is placed on ensuring equal access to employment for all social groups, addressing inequalities and discrimination related to gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age, disability, geography, and socio-economic backgrounds. Through multi-level governance and social dialogue, Europe pioneers a Future of Work that is fair, adaptable, and globally competitive. Strengthening worker rights is central to this transformation, including decision-making power over work conditions, protections against unfair labor practices, and the right to withdraw from unsafe, unhealthy or unethical work environments.

Enablers – What makes this vision possible?

- ❖ Collaboration between social partners, governments, and research institutions to co-create and implement policies and labor market solutions.
- ❖ AI and digital technologies designed to enhance job quality.
- ❖ Lifelong learning and training to continuously re-/upskill workers for the twin transition.
- ❖ Strengthened social dialogue and participation mechanisms to amplify worker representation.
- ❖ Policy frameworks that promote fair and inclusive employment by addressing inequalities and discrimination.
- ❖ Multi-level governance approaches ensuring that employment policies align.
- ❖ New forms of work organization/participation, incl. co-determination and collective bargaining.
- ❖ Supporting policies and institutions that promote business investment in workforce development, technological innovation, and high-value industries, enhancing firms' productivity and innovation capacities and reinforcing Europe's distinct economic model.
- ❖ Continuous adherence to and improvement of occupational safety and health.
- ❖ Reviewing past experimentations: What has been tested and successfully scaled to inform future work models.

Stakeholders – Who needs to act?

- ❖ **Governments and policymakers** to establish regulatory frameworks.
- ❖ **Employers and business associations** to integrate sustainable education and work models and well-being.
- ❖ **Trade unions and worker organizations** to advocate for fair wages, education, and working conditions.
- ❖ **Educational and training institutions** to align curricula with labor market needs.
- ❖ **Tech developers and AI researchers** to create ethical, worker-supportive digital tools.
- ❖ **European institutions** to facilitate policy alignment and knowledge-sharing across MS.
- ❖ **Civil society** to monitor social impact and ensure accountability in work-related policies.
- ❖ **Research institutions** to produce implementable knowledge that addresses societal needs.
- ❖ **Knowledge brokers** to promote and facilitate the uptake of knowledge.

2.3 Skills and Education for the Twin Transition

Aspirations – What Do we want to achieve?

Europe has built an inclusive, adaptive, and futures-oriented education and skills ecosystem that empowers individuals to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Education systems—from early childhood to lifelong learning—are holistic, equitable, and responsive, enabling learners of all backgrounds to gain the knowledge, skills, and mindsets needed for the green and digital transitions, demographic shifts, and unforeseen global challenges. Learning is recognized as a continuous journey, with flexible pathways that support both personal development and societal needs. Education embraces innovation and digitalization to enhance accessibility, while maintaining a human-centered approach that values creativity, critical thinking, and social responsibility. Barriers to participation are systematically removed, ensuring a gender-sensitive approach as well as equal opportunities for disadvantaged groups. Teachers, institutions, and policymakers co-create inclusive learning environments that foster democratic values, social cohesion, and resilience. The future of education is collaborative, innovative, and transformative, shaping a Europe where everyone has the right to learn, adapt, and contribute.

Enablers – What makes this vision possible?

- ❖ Right to training, education, and skills development: National policies ensuring all adults, especially disadvantaged groups, can access workplace training.
- ❖ Ethical policymaking for resilience: Policies and resources to uphold human rights.
- ❖ Rethinking the role of the teacher: Supporting teachers in adapting to changes.
- ❖ Strengthening lifelong learning – Expanding access to upskilling and reskilling opportunities.
- ❖ Bridging the education-to-work transition as well as support and guidance during the transition from school to work
- ❖ Enhancing digital education while maintaining human interaction.
- ❖ Recognizing diverse qualifications – Expanding micro-credentials and cross-border skill recognition.
- ❖ Learning for sustainability: Supporting collective responsibility, environmental awareness, behavioral change.

Stakeholders – Who needs to act?

- ❖ **Governments and policymakers** to develop policies that support inclusive and adaptive education and employment systems.
- ❖ **Education institutions** (formal and informal) to foster lifelong learning and skills development.
- ❖ **Teachers and educators** to adapt to evolving learning needs and promote inclusive education.
- ❖ **Employers and industry leaders** to provide training opportunities and ensure fair work conditions aligned with labor market needs.
- ❖ **Trade unions and worker organizations** to advocate for fair labor conditions, worker participation, and lifelong learning opportunities.
- ❖ **Tech developers and digital education platforms** to create inclusive and accessible learning technologies.
- ❖ **Civil society organizations** to ensure equal access to education and skills development.
- ❖ **European institutions** to facilitate policy alignment, funding, and cross-border recognition of qualifications.
- ❖ **European agencies** (CEDEFOP, ETF, Eurofound) to facilitate knowledge exchange, data access and sharing.

2.4 Fair Transition Towards Climate Neutrality

Aspirations – What Do we want to achieve?

Europe has achieved a **just and inclusive climate transition**, ensuring that no person or community is left behind. Fairness and social equity are at the core of climate policies, enabling all citizens – regardless of gender, income, geography, or background – to benefit from the opportunities of a climate-neutral economy as citizens, consumers, workers, and entrepreneurs. The transition is not only environmentally sustainable but also **socially and economically just**, mitigating distributional impacts and fostering societal resilience. Communities play an active role in shaping transition policies through **meaningful participation, democratic decision-making, and social dialogue** that challenge existing power structures. Locally grounded and culturally relevant narratives make the green transition accessible and inspire behavioral change, ensuring that global policies are successfully adapted to local realities. Energy poverty has been defeated, and financial mechanisms ensure that all individuals and businesses, particularly in vulnerable regions, can experience direct benefits from climate action. Project funding is designed to maximize tangible, localized impacts, empowering communities to see and feel the transformation in their daily lives. Sustainable technological solutions, including in construction and energy systems, are developed with environmental integrity, social fairness, and improving working conditions in mind. By integrating social innovation, participatory governance, and equitable economic policies, Europe's green transition is not only a necessity but a **driver of social cohesion, innovation, and economic prosperity**.

Enablers – What makes this vision possible?

- ❖ Inclusive participation tools to enhance citizen engagement as well as social dialogue and ensure fair decision-making.
- ❖ Strengthening social dialog and participation mechanisms to strengthen employee and vocational training representation.
- ❖ Social innovation and collective action, encouraging bottom-up initiatives, digital participation tools, and new forms of collaborative problem-solving.
- ❖ Trust-building in governance, strengthening transparency, access to administrative data.
- ❖ Policy frameworks that promote fair and inclusive vocational training and employment by addressing inequalities and discrimination.
- ❖ Access to financial support, providing new financial tools, mechanisms, and education to communities, which contain conditionalities of engagement of citizens and employees (in the case of funding provided for companies).
- ❖ Cooperation between social partners, governments and research institutions to jointly design and implement policies and labour as well as vocational training market solutions
- ❖ Cultural and narrative framing, using local media, storytelling, and archives to make climate transition relatable, accessible, and engaging to inspire behavioural change.
- ❖ Multi-level governance approaches that ensure that education and employment policies are aligned.
- ❖ Locally embedded solutions, ensuring climate policies are co-designed with local actors.
- ❖ AI and digital technologies to improve the quality of jobs and vocational training.
- ❖ Energy justice and infrastructure, supporting sustainable construction, equitable access to clean energy, and targeted investments to eliminate energy poverty.

Stakeholders – Who needs to act?

- ❖ **Local governments** to implement region-specific policies and engage citizens in transition planning.
- ❖ **Social partners and civil society** to facilitate community participation and advocate for fair and inclusive policies.
- ❖ **Industry representatives** to ensure the private sector adopts sustainable practices.
- ❖ **Employers and trade associations** to integrate sustainable vocational training and working models and well-being.
- ❖ **Trade unions and employee organizations** that are committed to fair wages & vocational training and working conditions.
- ❖ **Public sector** to provide policy guidance, funding, and infrastructure for equitable climate policies.

- ❖ **Financial sector** to develop new financial products/mechanisms for fair participation in climate action.
- ❖ **Construction and energy sectors** to integrate sustainable practices into urban planning.
- ❖ **Local media, archives, and libraries** to promote awareness and support cultural narratives.