

Document for the 18th UIL Congress

UIL for the economic, social and civil rebirth of Italy with Europe

UIL launches its Congress season at an extremely sensitive and complex time: a pandemic that continues to be alarming and the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, which is an act of aggression against the freedom of a sovereign State and generates the worried solidarity of all Western democracies. These two events change the economic and social outlook and force the entire Union to reflect anew. We must be aware that we are faced with the task of rebuilding Italy and Europe on renewed foundations, pursuing a model of economic, social and civil rebirth inspired by the values of fairness, humanity, freedom and justice. It is time to overturn the paradoxical assumption that has influenced European and national choices in recent times, i.e. to reduce rights in order to boost growth. The exact opposite is true: development is such only if it broadens the range of responses to old and new needs. The social elevator has broken and we must repair it. Let us launch the broadest challenge to inequalities, let us build the conditions to orient the choices of often distracted politicians that fail to look beyond the mere electoral outcome.

Unity of action by UIL, CISL and CGIL

We must rebuild the union unity after the choice that saw UIL and CGIL diverge from CISL on the absolute need of calling a general strike on December 16, 2021 to give voice to widespread suffering and discontent. We must restart from two aspects that have positively characterised the action of UIL, CISL and CGIL over the last four years. The first one is to reaffirm and strengthen the confederal union's independence from political parties, judging on the merits and not abdicating the role to make claim; the second one is to renew our ability to develop original and innovative proposals to solve the country's current and future problems. Around these two aspects UIL, CISL and CGIL can concretely find a unity of action to make the workers', pensioners' and young people's ideas count.

The citizens' Union in the age of globalisation: the people's Union

On the one hand economic globalisation has reduced the differences between countries while, on the other, it has greatly increased internal inequalities, as well as insecurity and fear of the future. The unregulated competition inherent in global capitalism has undermined the foundations of democracy itself. This democratic deficit must be filled through supranational regulatory action and through global governance. A new balance must be sought that needs new international institutions with regulatory powers so that the capitalism of globalisation can be reconciled with democracy. UIL believes that the global economy governance must combine again three factors that Keynes pointed out at the time: economic efficiency, social justice and individual freedom. These values must be the cornerstone of an economic and social policy that redesigns individual and collective rights by safeguarding people's choices, on the one hand, and the need to eliminate the inequalities created by the development of capitalism, on the other. The globalisation process must be governed by promoting policy coordination that facilitates redistributive capacity. This is the way to fight inequalities effectively.

We must express and implement in a new way the important intuition that UIL had in 1985, i.e. the idea of the citizens' Union. Citizenship must currently be reaffirmed and exercised globally, putting people with their needs and expectations at the centre of our action. We must combine rights with duties in a new way. We must fight to broaden and extend rights, being aware that in order to enjoy a right, you need to fulfil a duty. This applies to all areas of citizenship in the age of globalisation. It is an objective to be built and achieved. It is an objective that is currently not pursued in a time of regression of rights,

in which sometimes even constitutionally guaranteed rights are not fulfilled or enforced. Just think about those who flee wars and seek refuge from them or about the rights that are often denied, such as the right to health or to a decent job. Significant segments of society live in a condition of social and economic marginalisation, while others even in a condition of institutional invisibility. This is the reason why we need to put into practice a broader and more inclusive action to face old and new needs, in a society in which the threshold of rights has regressed. A people's Union is absolutely useful to the country.

The Unions of the Third Millennium

Openness to young people, peripheries, associations; new languages and communication tools.

UIL has long opened up to younger generations, peripheries and the most modern languages, with the aim of broadening its action and strengthening the foundations for the future. We must continue to tread this path, by extending horizons, testing traditionally uncharted terrain and constantly innovating to intercept new demands and increase the sphere of our representation.

UIL still wants to strengthen its position in sectors other than those in which it is normally called to take action in view of expanding the opportunities of bringing new realities closer to unions. In this sense, we need to look to the variegated world of associations and the third sector, with which we can create synergies. UIL has opened its offices throughout Italy to young people eager to discuss and exchange their views, or simply in search of a place to study and meet. UIL has put in place structural projects aimed at sowing seeds, such as "Viaggio nella memoria" (A Journey into Memory'), "Go Beyond", 'Imparo Lavoro' (Learning while Working) and "UIL Camp", where hundreds of under-35 union delegates and university students approaching our union could exchange their views with authoritative personalities on relevant and topical issues. UIL has strengthened its presence in institutional youth representation, joining the Presidency of the National Youth Council, and has strongly supported the statutory amendment of the European union movement aimed at setting a 25% threshold of youth participation in all bodies.

In the meantime, there has been a desire to step up relations and synergies with the world of entertainment, starting with the concert organized every May 1 for the "Labour Day" featuring the most popular emerging artists among young people. We have also explored the possibility of establishing closer relations with sports associations, not only of professionals, but also of amateurs, young people and women. A more lively and dynamic approach has been strengthened, at times 'supporting grassroots initiatives', ranging from the promotion of ongoing thematic campaigns to the presence in the most populous and disadvantaged suburbs.

Communication methods have been reorganised completely: new tools; more focus on social networks and more immediate messages; the use of gamification projects to reach children more effectively and enter schools. The world's first union digital platform, Terzo Millennio, has been built. A new, technological and modern medium, constantly updated and capable of listening also those who have less voice. A resource made available to unions for their mission that complements the essential traditional and classic way of interacting with members and people. The Unions of the Third Millennium will dynamically travel into the future, by exploring new spaces and connecting with young generations, sometimes even taking risks with an approach of "greater openness".

Proselytism and union training

UIL is currently organised as a truly new union, a post-ideological one that knows how to combine its values such as reformism, secularism, pluralism, democracy and freedom with the new dynamics of the

labour world and the modern communication languages. This has enabled many workers to see UIL as a common home where they can be united and have their voice heard.

In these years of huge difficulties UIL has continued its growth both in terms of members and votes in the elections of the joint union representations (RSU). This is the result of the policy line and the organisational innovations introduced. The regionalisation of services has led to a more efficient management of resources and has definitively established service activity as an integral part of union policy. This path must be completed in order to increase the quality of the UIL services provided. UIL has devoted great attention to union training, by implementing new training methods open to all members that have made it possible to meet the needs of thousands of delegates.

International affairs

In recent years UIL has been committed to building strong European and international confederal unions capable of interacting with all European and international institutions. This work has led to significant results, starting with the adoption of the EU social pillar. ETUC has played a decisive role in bringing about a change in economic policy following the pandemic through the SURE and the Next Generation EU programmes. Today we must continue along this path and this is the objective of the ILO's campaign "Stability Pact? No thanks". The international crisis resulting from Russia's invasion of Ukraine requires a European political response that is developed through all possible aid to Ukraine and strict economic sanctions on Russia. UIL is for peace and recognises Ukraine's right to defend itself. UIL believes that Italy's adhering to an Atlantist position is an unavoidable point of reference for defending the libertarian values of a West that shows respect for people's inviolable rights. We must inevitably define a path leading to the creation of a true European federal state, by retracing the inspiring principles of the Ventotene Manifesto towards the concrete construction of a social Europe of the peoples, with a single common policy on various fronts. Italy shall lead this process because Europe is our destiny.

In the coming months UIL is also committed to defining a more incisive role for the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), because the fight against injustice and inequality and the defence and expansion of workers' rights are currently played out on a global basis.

Economic renaissance

Economic policy

In the coming years the overriding goal of economic policy shall be to pursue sustained and lasting growth, which is the best response to both combating inequalities and recovering public debt.

The Next Generation EU resources are an opportunity not to be missed to modernise the country and make it fairer and more equitable. All gaps and inequalities must be resolved and the green and digital transition must be promoted, while at the same time strengthening the digital skills of workers and citizens at risk of digital marginalisation. The National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) should create good and new jobs and reduce territorial gaps, but its success will also depend on governance and participation. UIL believes that exchange views with the social partners is an added value for all public policy investment.

The focus of this new economic policy shall be on taxation.

UIL proposes a tax reform inspired by fairness and progressive taxation by also reorganising local finance. The objective must be to cut taxes for employees and pensioners. UIL proposes a tax on the extra profits

made during the pandemic; a tax on excess profits to be extended to all the companies that have generated large profits in the last period, as we have been advocating for a year. More courage is needed. At the same time, an epoch-making change shall be made in the fight against tax evasion by showing political will on the part of all institutions, which has been lacking so far, by also involving Municipalities and Regions. Tax evasion is indeed Italy's absolute evil.

Energy price increases have disruptive consequences on both the production system and the Italian families' budgets. Action is needed to curb and limit this impact. More generally, the National Energy and Climate Plan needs to be updated to provide Italy with a new energy strategy based on the social and economic sustainability of the ecological transition.

European funds must be used in a full and new way. The European Structural and Investment Funds and the Development and Cohesion Fund are valuable resources to be allocated to development and growth, thus overcoming past delays, as well as selecting the interventions aiming at expenditure quality and speeding up their pace.

Italy has a great cultural and landscape heritage that is unique in the world, a real wealth of beauty that can be leveraged to contribute to economic growth. In this field we also need to make a change both in the definition of infrastructures and in the management of this heritage.

The South of Italy

The Southern issue must go back to the centre of Italy's renaissance policies.

We must urge the people who live in the South of Italy to react in the face of a ruling class that continues to waste development opportunities and always go unpunished. Those who live in Southern Italy's areas must pull out their desire for redemption and success and claim and require actions. We will be at their side. We need to urge institutional and private players to create a system and a network, leaving behind the parochial logic and following the good practices and winning models of other geographical areas. The allocation of 40% of the NRRP resources to Southern Italy is insufficient and inadequate to bridge the gaps. The South of Italy has productive realities of excellence, which represent a point of reference to boost development. The current "tax relief measures for Southern Italy" should be made structural, with a 30% contribution exemption for all workers. The Special Economic Zones should be made operational, and productive tax breaks should be introduced for companies that increase their employment base through new hiring on a permanent basis. The Public Administration's role is fundamental in the use of resources, eliminating all the delays that have characterised its action so far.

The modernisation of the Public Administration and investment in its functioning, together with the fight against illegality and undeclared work, must be perceived and conceived as proper and true prerequisites for development.

Another essential precondition for development is the "bargaining" system. Second-level bargaining and territorial bargaining with the local authorities becomes an exceptional development policy tool, to increase the attractiveness of territories and to regenerate the suburbs where our young people are often left behind.

It is important to review the issue of insularity and territorial continuity.

A new industrial policy

We need to define an industrial policy capable of supporting the Italian manufacturing sector, which remains the second largest in Europe, and to govern the entire transition process towards a green economy. The NRRP is an opportunity to reverse Italy's decade-long decline in public and private investment.

A multi-year National Steel Plan must be drawn up, which is essential to provide a framework for companies and workers in the sector.

In the automotive sector the transition to electricity must be combined with production and employment stability. The document signed by the trade unions and Federmeccanica is an excellent starting point.

The energy sector is at the heart of industrial interdependencies. The National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan (PNIEC) must be updated, and the “Manifesto for Energy and Employment” drawn up by social partners is a valuable contribution to a systematic and consistent strategy with respect to the various energy sources.

The agri-food sector has a fundamental role to play in industrial policy. UIL thinks it is necessary to work on the quality of products and the quality of the labour employed to produce them. This is the best way to enhance “Made in Italy” products.

Telecommunications have a strategic role to play. In particular, a debate with the government must be reopened on TIM and the Single Network to protect employment levels and maintain a public presence in these sectors.

The role of craftsmanship will be decisive in Italy’s economic rebirth. UIL Artigianato has developed bargaining that has led to important agreements for workers through the development of joint bodies.

Environment

UIL believes we need to define a new model of sustainable development through a Just Transition Plan to turn our economic and production model into a green one and to launch training and retraining pathways to increase workers’ green and digital skills. This is consistent with the European Green Deal. We need to tackle climate change, air pollution, and hydrogeological disruption in a systemic way.

Considering the well-known fragility of the national territory from the seismic and hydrogeological viewpoint, UIL believes it is also essential to create a systematic body of legislation that acts on prevention and also deals any emergency in a coordinated manner, with the full involvement of all stakeholders, starting with social partners.

We also have the ambition to redefine an overall project on asbestos, ranging from research to health surveillance, from mapping to reclamation and the disposal of this material that continues to cause thousands of deaths in Italy every year.

We must pursue urban regeneration and housing policies capable of upgrading our urban heritage. The bonuses introduced in recent years have played an important role in this regard.

Creating safe, stable and quality jobs

UIL believes that stable employment must go back to the centre of Italy’s political choices. This is the reason why it proposes a large Pact between the government and social partners, modelled on what has happened in Spain, to eliminate all precarious employment by introducing open-ended contracts for all workers.

At the same time, fixed-term contracts must be made much more expensive than now, whatever type of temporary contract type is used, and the apprenticeship contract must be simplified.

We need to mainly focus on young people and women: an open-ended employment contract with training purposes must be introduced in Italy’s legal system and the obligation to reserve 30% of hiring for young people and women must be extended to all public procurement contracts, as is already the case with the NRRP resources.

The reform of social safety nets is a first step in the direction of a universal social protection system. The work needs to be completed by making the Redundancy Fund (CIGS) for cessation of activity structural, and by changing the so-called *décalage* of the unemployment benefit known as NASPI with more favourable durations in the case of discontinuous and fragmented careers, workers aged over 55 and unemployed people living in Southern Italy.

A plan is needed to strengthen the employment centres by focusing on the number of operators and their professionalism; stabilising the navigators with permanent employment contracts; launching the necessary training measures; modernising the tangible and intangible infrastructure also to manage the Guaranteed Workers' Employability Plan (GOL) efficiently and effectively.

Education and training are central to Italy's rebirth, so as to permit the individuals' professional growth and companies' greater competitiveness. A National Permanent Guidance System must be created and the Territorial Networks for Lifelong Learning must be recognised as having a strategic role. We need to encourage their greater expansion throughout the country. We must necessarily provide continuity and make the interventions financed by the New Skills Fund, in synergy with the Interprofessional Funds, structural.

Likewise, in view of coping with the overwhelming changes in production processes and the essential adjustment and improvement of professional skills, we need to strengthen continuous training throughout working life, by reaffirming the worker's individual right to training and enhancing and strengthening the Interprofessional Funds, whose role must also be extended to active training policies for the laid-off, inactive and unemployed people.

Safety at work must be the priority objective to put an end to the tragic deaths at work. With its campaign "Zero deaths at work", launched amidst widespread silence, UIL has been the first to bring this issue to everyone's attention, in Italy and in Europe, starting to obtain partial and important measures from the government. We will not stop until this incredible disgrace, fuelled by the unconditional lust for profit, is put to an end.

Thinking about new work organisation models

We cannot postpone the work organisation challenge. It is a challenge that we want and must face. The Fordist model no longer works. We were already firmly convinced of this, and this is the reason why we want to urge entrepreneurs to talk about productivity, product innovation, achieving targets and reducing working hours for the same pay.

We need a new development model going beyond an idea of productivity strictly related to curbing production costs, and a logic that has been and continues to be that of social dumping, of cutting down on rights, of the battle of the have-nots. We want no more backtracking on rights that have been conquered and widely established, and we oppose those who want to shift the normal business risk onto workers at all costs. Instead, we must strive for an economic growth that facilitates production processes through technological investment, by speeding them up and at the same time offering new opportunities for the necessary skills and the recognition of new professional figures. We therefore need to imagine technological innovation not as a threat to employment, but as added value that stimulates production to the point of distributing greater profits among the workers themselves. We are convinced that productivity does not mean that workers must work longer hours, but rather that they must be put in a position to work better, alongside a systemic assessment of working time that cannot be detached from the individual working contexts and the innovations of the times. The European and global context itself should also make us reflect on a change of mindset.

We can and must relaunch the idea of a new organisation of work in which working hours are reduced with equal pay, in the wake of what has been tested successfully in other European countries. There would also be benefits in the area of reconciliation and social interaction.

Pursuing effective bargaining and wage policies

Collective bargaining

Collective bargaining is the fundamental instrument of economic and regulatory protection for workers, which is why all contracts must be renewed immediately and an expansive wage policy must be promoted to increase consumption. National collective agreements (CCNL) must also focus on labour market issues, training, work organisation, working time, health and safety, participation and welfare. Second-tier bargaining must be oriented to working wellbeing to increase productivity and the performance bonus. A contractual welfare, which integrates the public one built at the national and corporate contractual level and managed primarily through the different joint bodies, is essential to increase social protection and ensure broader protection of the living conditions of workers and their families.

UIL believes it is important to “conquer” a leading and participatory role also at territorial level, through consultation and bargaining on the local authorities’ budget choices and planning documents (DUP).

With the national Protocol signed between the government and social partners, smart working has become a well-established working method. UIL has fought for smart working to be a voluntary choice, as well as for the right to disconnect, for union rights, for training, for equal treatment and for equal opportunities, so as to prevent smart working from becoming a new form of discrimination against women.

Wage policy

If inflation became structural, wage stagnation would negatively affect Italy’s economic growth. We need to review and update what was established in the Factory Pact of March 9, 2018, since the HICP adjusted for energy products is no longer an effective parameter to protect workers’ purchasing power at this stage.

There is a need for the wages regulated by the national collective agreements (CCNL) to be set also on the basis of indicators that take into account macroeconomic trends also linked to sector productivity, and not only inflation, and for the government to prepare a plan to exempt contractual wage increases from taxes.

UIL is in favour of introducing a minimum wage that should, however, coincide with minimum statutory wages and not become an instrument to replace collective agreements.

Representation, representativeness and participation

UIL, together with CGIL and CISL, has set criteria for measuring and certifying the representation and representativeness of union organisations in all productive sectors, in view of determining which of them are entitled to sign National Collective Agreements (CCNL) and thus combat contractual dumping. It is also necessary to measure employer representativeness in order to avoid the contractual dumping that harms workers.

To this end, we also deem it urgent and necessary that employer representativeness be measured.

UIL thinks that worker participation within companies is important. Conflict is not an end but the tool, where necessary, to achieve goals. We have an idea of the enterprise as a meeting place to produce

wealth, which must be distributed fairly. The issue of Corporate Social Responsibility must be re-launched, by enhancing the codes of ethics, and strengthening the role played by European Works Councils (EWCs).

Social renaissance

A new fair and universal welfare

The social renaissance of the country should be promoted through interventions aimed at removing the inequalities that have arisen in recent years and have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

UIL believes that the National Health Service must be redesigned. The 20 billion euros allocated by the NRRP, although insufficient, must be used to achieve this goal, because currently the best economic policy for the country is a good health policy. We must invest in proximity medicine and enact a law on non-self-sufficiency.

UIL is convinced that the so-called *Reddito di Cittadinanza* (guaranteed minimum income) is an essential measure to fight poverty. It must be improved to effectively support large households and families with children, and the criteria that discriminate against foreign citizens must be revised. We must also start a revision of the so-called ISEE (Equivalent Financial Situation Index), which currently runs the risk of causing distortions that penalise single parents or single elderly people.

We need to realign the age of access to pensions in Italy around 63, as is the case in other EU Member States. We need to tell the truth with respect to social security accounts by finally separating spending on pensions from welfare spending. We need to ensure decent pension to young people when they retire, as well as consider and enhance maternity and care work for social security purposes. Membership of supplementary pension funds, which have proved their importance in recent years, must be re-launched. Existing pensions must be revalued by recovering part of the amount lost in recent years and extending the fourteenth month's salary to pensions amounting up to 1,500 euros.

Concrete policies are needed for the inclusion of persons with disabilities and for the protection of their rights, pursuing a multidimensional assessment of the person. We need to take care of these people in an integrated way, i.e. at health, social, and welfare levels, by strengthening territorial and home services. We must also support the family members of people with disabilities and recognise the figure of the family caregiver.

Families must once again become central to Italy's rebirth, and for this reason citizenship rights must be recognised for all families. We need to ensure work-life balance and fight educational poverty with integrated public services. The single allowance is an important measure, but it must not entail a decrease in the amounts previously received, nor a reduction in the so-called *Reddito di Cittadinanza*.

The non-profit sector plays a decisive role in fighting social inequalities, combating poverty and supporting citizens' free initiative, by promoting participation and social inclusion. UIL deems it necessary to increase support for the most advanced experiences, which may also have an employment potential.

Civil renaissance

In these years of crisis, the Italian society has been hit by deep splits and distress that have weakened the reasons and desire for staying together, for being a community sharing values and goals. We need to promote a genuine civil renaissance of our country.

Italy's civil rebirth should be achieved first of all by re-establishing the principle of legality in all areas of national life, starting with the fight against all forms of Mafia and criminal organisations. It is inconceivable for the State to share the national territory with organised crime. The State must launch a genuine democratic counterattack to re-establish legality.

Institutional reforms

A discussion on institutional reforms must be resumed with the aim of adapting the second part of the Constitution to the needs that have emerged in recent decades. In this context, a reflection must be made on the reform of Title V enacted twenty years ago. UIL believes that the issues of labour protection and safety, active labour policies, large transport networks, energy production and distribution, and foreign trade dynamics must be brought back into the State's exclusive competence. At the same time, we need to tackle the exercise of powers relating to the right to health between the Regions and the State, also in light of the pandemic experience. UIL is opposed to the hypotheses that have emerged in the debate on differentiated autonomy on the part of the Regions.

It is essential to get back on the path of reform and complete administrative and tax decentralisation.

Public Administration

The role played by the Public Administration in Italy's renaissance is fundamental. It is clearly defined in the "Pact for Innovation in Public Work and Social Cohesion" signed with the government on March 10, 2021. The Pact indicates precise objectives: a massive investment in human capital; the streamlining and simplification of decision-making processes; the relaunch of supplementary bargaining; the new remote working regulated in the national collective agreements (CCNL); the right to professional development and updating; young workers' entry into the labour market; the implementation of welfare institutions, supplementary social security and pensions; the tax harmonisation of bonus systems with those of the private sectors.

A change is needed in the school, university, and research sector, which play a strategic role for Italy's growth, through huge investment. The contracts in these sectors must be renewed by bringing salaries into line with what happens in the rest of Europe.

Equal opportunities

UIL wishes to build a society in which men and women have equal opportunities, by removing all the difficulties that have hitherto penalised women. We need to strengthen and enhance women's presence in the political and decision-making processes; to invest in social infrastructure that enable the work-life balance to overcome the problem of women's overburdening and marginalisation; to concretely implement gender policies. Gender-based violence must be strongly opposed by promoting prevention, empowerment and equal pay for women.

Immigration

UIL is in favour of a reform of the citizenship law based on the *ius soli/ ius culturae* to be granted to young foreigners born in Italy or who have completed a school cycle in the country. The immigration issue cannot be tackled by building walls, but by giving proof of solidarity and intervening on the causes of social imbalances and immigration flows, combating the economic and social disparity between the North and the South through international cooperation and economic development.

UIL is committed to contributing to Italy's rebirth with Europe by fighting in all places to make these proposals be turned into reality. UIL will work with determination and passion to build a model of fairer and more equitable society in Italy and Europe. A better future for Italy and Europe is possible. For UIL the hope of achieving this goal is more alive than ever.