

FIRST TRANSNATIONAL WORKSHOP OF THE PROJECT DIRESOC • SEPTEMBER 13, 2018, MADRID

Digitalisation and Restructuring, which role for the Social Dialogue?

The first transnational seminar of the European project Digitalisation and Restructuring, which Social Dialogue? (DIRESOC) was held in Madrid on September 13.

The general aim of the DIRESOC research project, funded by the European Commission, is to provide a better understanding of the ways in which social dialogue helps to shape the processes of restructuring linked to digitization, in eight European countries and four sectors: manufacturing; financial services; postal services & logistics; and tourism.

The project is carried out by a research consortium coordinated by LENTIC- HEC University of Liège (Belgium) and comprising the following partners: Association Travail Emploi Europe Société (France); Fundación 1º de Mayo (Spain); European Labour Institute (Bulgaria); Fondazione Giuseppe Di Vittorio (Italy); Institute for the study of the Societies and knowledge, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (Bulgaria); Instituto de Ciências Sociais da Universidade de Lisboa (Portugal); Gothenburg University (Sweden); and Arbeitsforschung und Transfer e.V. (Germany).

The first transnational seminar of this project was held in Madrid on September 13, with the participation of 40 people from academia, trade unions and business.

The seminar was opened by **Ramón Górriz**, president of the Fundación 1 de Mayo, who first highlighted the difficulties that social dialogue and industrial relations must face today, in a context marked by the lasting effects of the economic crisis, the policies of austerity and the impacts of the labor reforms approved in the last decade. Also, he highlighted the need to promote a balanced approach that favours a just transition to the digital economy for workers.

Next, the general coordinator of the project **Frédéric Naedenoen** (LENTIC - HEC University of Liège), gave a brief overview of its main goals, methodology, work programmes and expected outcomes.

The first session, moderated by **Raquel Boto** (CS-CCOO) began with a presentation by Vassil Kirov (Institute for the study of the Societies and knowledge, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences). In his speech, he presented the preliminary results of the first work program of the project, focused on the national reports addressing the situation in the eight countries covered by the research.

Among other aspects, he highlighted that digitization is an emerging process in the different countries, which also registers an unequal development both nationally and sectorally. He also remarked the diversity that exists regarding to the policy initiatives launched by governments and the role of social dialogue.





The second session, moderated by **Begoña del Castillo** (CS-CCOO) focused on the analysis of the four sectors covered in different countries.

Gernot Mühge (Arbeitsforschung und Transfer e.V.) addressed the situation of the manufacturing industry in Germany. His conclusions highlighted the following aspects: (a) digitalization has led and still leads to an extensive debate about the future of work; (b) change of competencies is a sufficient a key issue for the general debate; (c) furthermore, digitalization does not lead to general workrelated risks. These are dependend from the characteristics of a single digital technology and from the productive model of a sector; (d) there is an unique opportunity for strengthening social dialogue/industrial relations; and (e) works councils need to be enabled to cope with digitalization.

Salvo Leonardi (Fundación Giuseppe Di Vittorio) analyzed the banking sector in Italy, highlighting the following lessons learned: (a) the financial services sector, in Italy, demonstrates how a well-functioning system of industrial relations, based on a strong representativeness of the social partners and an intense social dialogue are key tools to cope with the digital-related restructuring; (b) collective bargaining and workers involvement, together, are the main and better tools for a consensual and socially sustainable management of technological change matching the firm's needs with the rigths of the employees' rights; and (c) in view of the quantitative and qualitative impact of digitalization on employment levels and working conditions, legal and collectively agreed tools of active and passive labor market policy, are required at the same time.

Fernando Rocha (Fundación 1 de Mayo) addressed the situation of the logistics / parce delivery sector in Spain, remarking, the following issues: (a) digitization is an emer-

ging process in the sector, whose development is mainly concentrated in the larger companies and in certain areas of the value chain (commercial and logistics); (b) among the restructuring trends driven by digitalization, the emergence of digital platforms stands out; (c) the business strategy of these platforms has launched a strong debate due to its negative impacts in terms of unfair competition, social dumping and precarious work; (d) digitization is not being addressed so far in the agenda of social dialogue and collective bargaining; and (e) the model of digital work platforms is a major challenge for the traditional foundations of social dialogue.

Ola Bergström (University of Gothenburg) addressed the tourism sector in Sweden. He highlighted the different perspectives and initiatives of both the government and the social partners. He also stressed the need to address the changes in the tasks and professional profiles and the new qualification requirements associated with them. Last, he remarked the challenges posed by the digital platforms.

The next session, moderated by **Francisco González** (CS-CCOO), focused on the views of the social partners in Spain in the four sectors related.

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Ramón Górriz:

"We must promote a transition to the digital economy that is fair to the workers"

Juan Antonio Labat (Federación Empresarial de la Industria Química Española) addressed the digitalization in the chemical industry. Subsequently, he pointed out the role of social dialogue as a central tool for the development of this process, highlighting some of the most relevant contents on this subject of the general collective agreement of the sector.

Mario Martín (FSC-CCOO) analyzed the challenges and problems that arise in the logistics sector. Among other aspects, he highlighted the negative impact on working conditions of new business models based on digital platforms. He also criticized the difficulties in addressing digitization in the framework of social dialogue.



Nuria Lobo (CCOO Servicios) addressed the banking situation, highlighting the intense process of restructuring of the sector during the last decade. Subsequently, she analyzed the development of digitalization and the risks it poses

in terms of loss of jobs, deterioration of working conditions, emergence of new atypical forms of employment and wage inequalities. She also highlighted the impact of the new digital "players" (Fintech) and pointed out the trade union approach to these issues in the next tables of social dialogue.

Gonzalo Fuentes (CCOO Servicios) analyzed the reality of tourism activity in Spain: a sector of considerable weight in economic terms and employment, which also presents important weaknesses such as the high level of precarious work. Subsequently, he addressed the challenges of digitalisation of the sector and the shortcomings that currently exist on this matter. Finally, he highlighted the steps that are being taken to address certain issues, such as those related to platform workers, in the next General Agreement of the Hospitality Industry.



The seminar was closed by **Frédéric Naedenoen** and **Laura Beucker** (LENTIC - HEC University of Liège), who made a brief comment on the main lessons learned in this first phase of the project. Also, they commented the next activities of the project that will include an online survey and the development of company case studies.



Further information and follow up of the DIRESOC: www.diresoc.eu



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