JOIN THE DISCUSSION: Is digitalization the promise of a better future?

Launch of EPSU-CEMR Video

(11 May 2017) Digitalisation seen through the eyes of citizens is a great improvement in their relationship with local and regional governments- faster communication, more transparency in the decision-making process and more involvement in the design of new public services.

However, the scope of the impact that digitalization has on how public services are delivered by local and regional governments had to be fully analysed. Therefore, EPSU together with CEMR launched a joint project, based on the research of available documents and best practices in the framework of EU sectoral social dialogue. Some issues uncovered by the social dialogue have a great impact on the quality of future jobs and services, on restructuring with limited resources and on staff and workers' safety and well-being at work. Thus, the line between the work schedule and private life becomes more blurred, which affects the work-life balance. Some jobs lose their value and workers' direct contact with citizens is diminished and can decrease job satisfaction. Proper and on-going training is fundamental to fill the gap between those who can learn new technologies faster and those who cannot. Furthermore, digitalization of public services needs to consider how to include all citizens, even those without internet access.

The European Commission launched its initiative on the digital single market and a fully-fledged e-government action plan and has so far failed to deliver to address this challenges discussed by social partners in the local and regional government sector, and other sectors discussing digitalization and its impact on workers. The European Parliament and Council of the EU are divided on the digital reforms proposed by the European Commission. More needs to be done to include social partner initiatives into the analysis of digital reforms- including e.g. data protection of employees, “the right to disconnect” , addressing work-life balance and full involvement of workers in digital reform processes. The Estonian Presidency starts it work in the summer and should listen to Social Partners about this relevant issues that will shape the future of work.

A general framework of action on well-being has therefore been elaborated between social partners how EU policy-makers can frame this important developments. In the meantime, watch the animation which highlights the work done on digitalisation in the Social Dialogue Local Government of the past two years.

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