



# 1<sup>st</sup> seminar - “Local, Social, Digital”

## **EU perspectives on the role of social dialogue in the digital transition**

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# 1) Digital transition

Context & evidence

# Context

## *Digitalisation, Covid-19, green & digital transition*

- **Digitalisation** fostered in the context of globalisation, technological progress and twin transition, accelerated by Covid-19 crisis.
  - Increased use of digital tools at work for **40 % of EU workers** vs. pre-pandemic era. (Cedefop – “European skills and jobs survey”)
- **Public administrations** saw a strong shift of their activities to on-line, including for the delivery of public & essential services – bringing increased efficiency, accessibility and inclusivity.
  - Digital Decade targets: 100% of essential public services online by 2030, access to medical records online for all citizens, 80% of citizens with digital ID.
  - More broadly, digitalisation also in the scope of accelerating the **green transition**: e.g. addressing needs for speeding up of permitting process (green energy infrastructures), environmental impact assessments of infrastructures

# Context

## *Opportunities and challenges in the world of work*

- Digitalisation as a **double-edged sword**:
  - **Opportunities**: increased accessibility, flexibility and autonomy, better work-life balance, efficiency and productivity growth.
  - **Challenges**: working conditions (working hours, risk at invasive surveillance, non-transparent use of tools), occupational safety, health (including mental health), gender equality,

Importantly, brings **new needs for adaptation to digital tools uptake & skills acquisition** to address skills and labour shortages in the public administration.

## 2) Digital transformation of work

Digitalisation, telework, right to disconnect (R2D), digital skills

# Telework in the EU

*Before, during COVID-19, and post-pandemic era*

Before the COVID-19  
pandemic

# Digital tools and emerging technologies at work

- Over the last decade, **significant increase in uptake of emerging technologies at work**: including automated tools such as algorithmic management, artificial intelligence, etc.

## Uptake of digital tools shows many benefits & opportunities...

Efficiency and **productivity** gains

**Safer** working environment

Better management of **working time**

Promoting **inclusivity**

Etc.

## ... But also significant challenges/risks

Risk of **biased decision**, particularly in recruitment & selection

Risk of **workers' surveillance** (often without their knowledge)

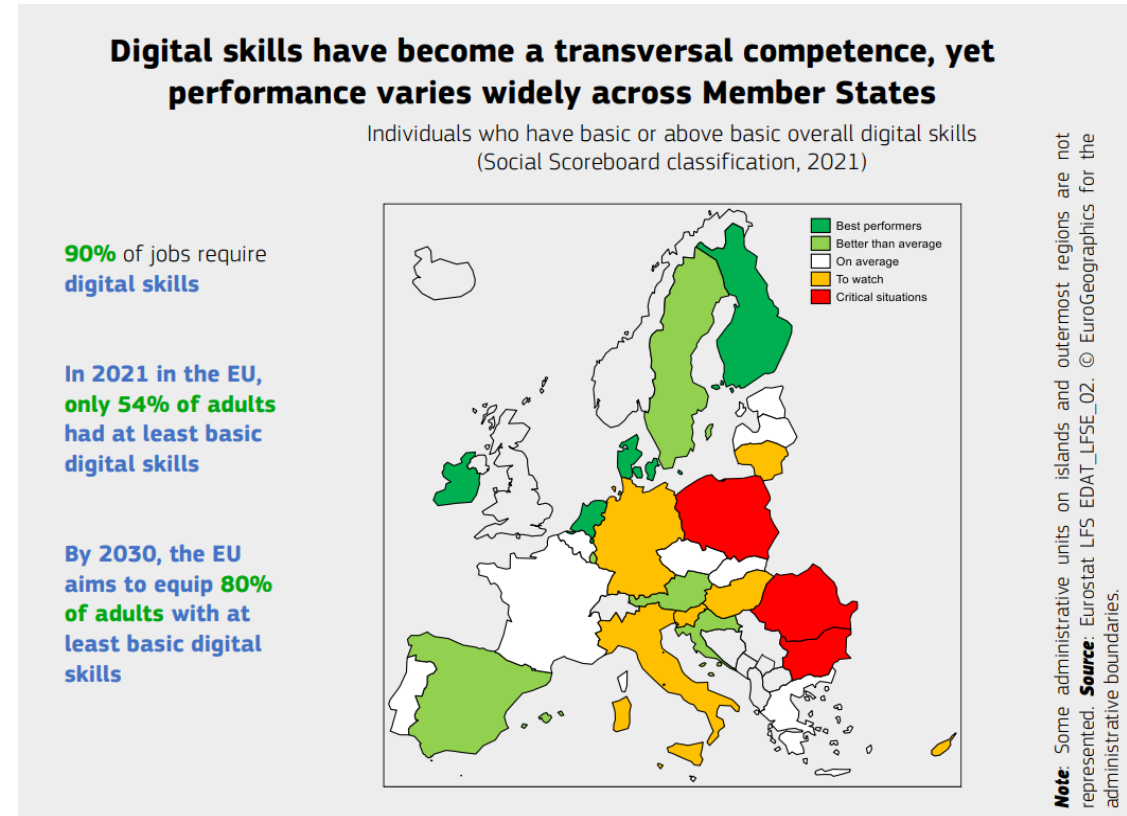
Risk of creating **power imbalances**

Etc.

# Fair digital transition

## *Challenge of digital skills*

- **90% of jobs** require at least basic digital skills; 60 to 70% of workers require basic or moderate digital skills.
- **52% of adult workers** need to develop their digital skills. Only 26% of workers undertook training activities for digital skills in the mid-2020 - 21 period.
- Skills distribution is **uneven**: across Member States, regions/territories, and sectors of activity.



Source: Joint Employment Report, March 2023



# 3) Role of Social partners

Initiatives for social dialogue, collective bargaining, social partners agreements

# EU framework to support social dialogue & collective bargaining

- Social partners have an instrumental role to play in context of digitalisation at **national, regional, local levels & sectoral and company levels**, they know specificities of context and needs on the ground.
- The **EU has a duty to promote their role:**
  - **Commission communication and proposed Council Recommendation on strengthening social dialogue** (January 2023) - objective to strengthen and promote social dialogue, including collective bargaining, to guide Member States on how to ensure an enabling framework.
  - **Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality** (June 2022) - objective to actively involve social partners at all levels, and in all stages of policy-making on fair transition, while respecting their autonomy.

# Social Partners' Framework Agreements

## Review of Framework Agreement on Telework (2002)

- Definition of telework
- Voluntary nature of telework
- Employment status of teleworkers
- Same individual rights apply as to office work
- Rules on monitoring and data protection
- Equipment, health and safety, liability
- Organisation of work, training
- Collective rights

## Framework Agreement on Digitalisation (2020)

Partnership process between employers' and workers' representatives

- Digital skills and securing employment
- Modalities of connecting and disconnecting
- Artificial Intelligence and guaranteeing the human control principle
- Respect of human dignity in surveillance
- Implementation and follow-up

## New Agreement on Digitalisation for Central Governments (2022)

Reinforcing provisions on digitalisation for workers in central or federal governments

- Digital skills and training, qualifications
- Modalities of connecting and disconnecting
- Artificial Intelligence and guaranteeing the human control principle
- Respect of human dignity in surveillance, including protection of personal data
- Health and safety at work

# 4) EU Policy initiatives, research & funding

Right to disconnect, digital rights and principles, working conditions, skills

# EP Resolution on the right to disconnect

**Adopted on 21 January 2021, the European Parliament's legislative resolution on the right to disconnect:**

Calls on the Commission to put forward a proposal for a Union directive on minimum standards and conditions on the right to disconnect.

Calls on the Commission to present a legislative framework establishing minimum requirements for telework across the Union.

Highlights the central role of social partners in the negotiation, application and enforcement of telework and the right to disconnect. Recognizes the need to respect social partners' autonomy and the implementation of their Framework Agreements.

Calls for further research on the evolution of remote work and the right to disconnect.

# Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles

*Endorsed by the EU (co-legislators) in December 2022*

Objective: ensure people are empowered to fully enjoy the opportunities that the digital decade brings

The principles are shaped around 6 themes:

Putting people and their rights at the **centre of the digital transformation**

Supporting **solidarity and inclusion**

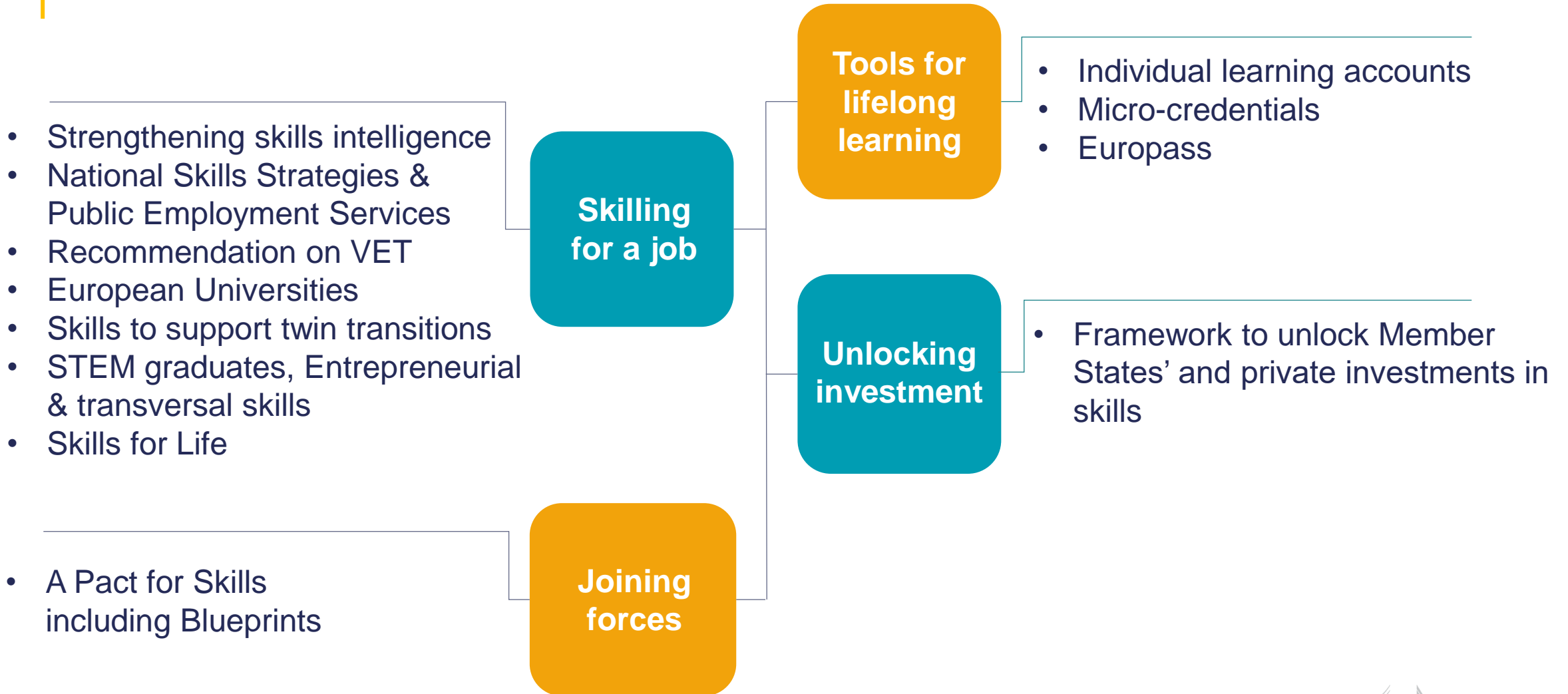
Ensuring **freedom of choice online**

Fostering **participation in the digital public space**

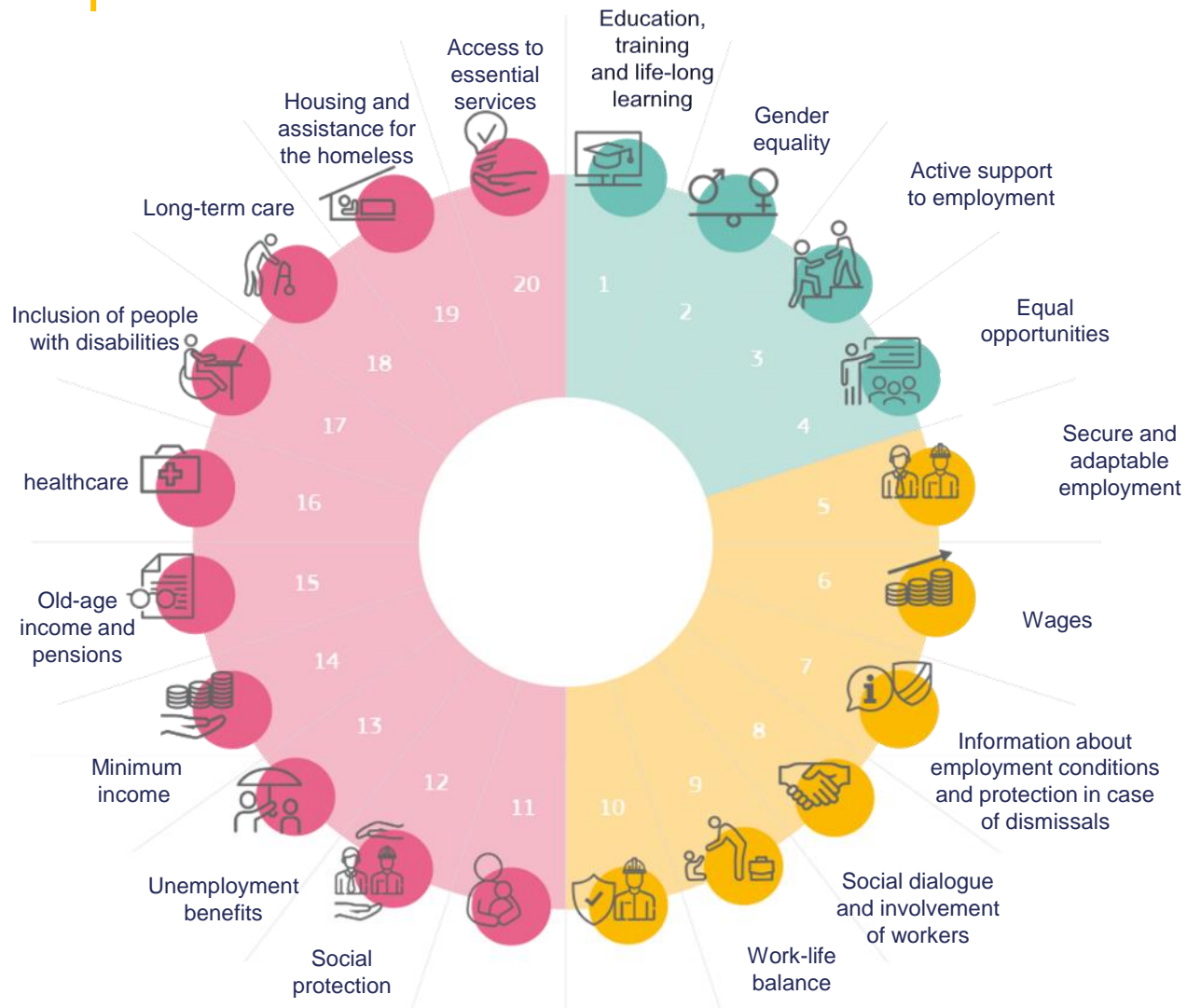
Increasing **safety, security and empowerment of individuals**

Promoting the **sustainability of the digital future**

# European Skills Agenda



# European Pillar of Social Rights



## Targets for skills/training by 2030:

- **80% of adults** equipped with at least basic digital skills;
- **60% of adults** participating in training every year.

## 2 proposals for Council Recommendations

(May 2023):

- On key enabling factors for digital education
- On improving the provision of digital skills in education and training



# EU Funding support

- The **European Social Fund + (ESF+)** – the EU’s main instrument for investment in human capital: **EUR 5.8 bn** (current prices) for upskilling and reskilling. 
- The **Just Transition Fund (JTF)** targeted to regions and territories: **EUR 20bn** (over the 2021-2027 period) for most impacted regions, **EUR 3bn** for upskilling and reskilling.
- The **Recovery and Resilience Facility** to support reforms and investments for recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, to make economies and societies more resilient to future shocks. 
  - **EUR 47 bn** for dedicated support towards the digitalisation of public administration and public services delivery.
  - **Italy’s RRP: EUR 6 bn** dedicated to digitalisation of public administration additional >EUR 20bn for connectivity & digitalisation of businesses.

# Thank you

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