

Digitalisation, Restructuring and Social Dialogue: main findings of a comparative study in 9 countries and 4 sectors

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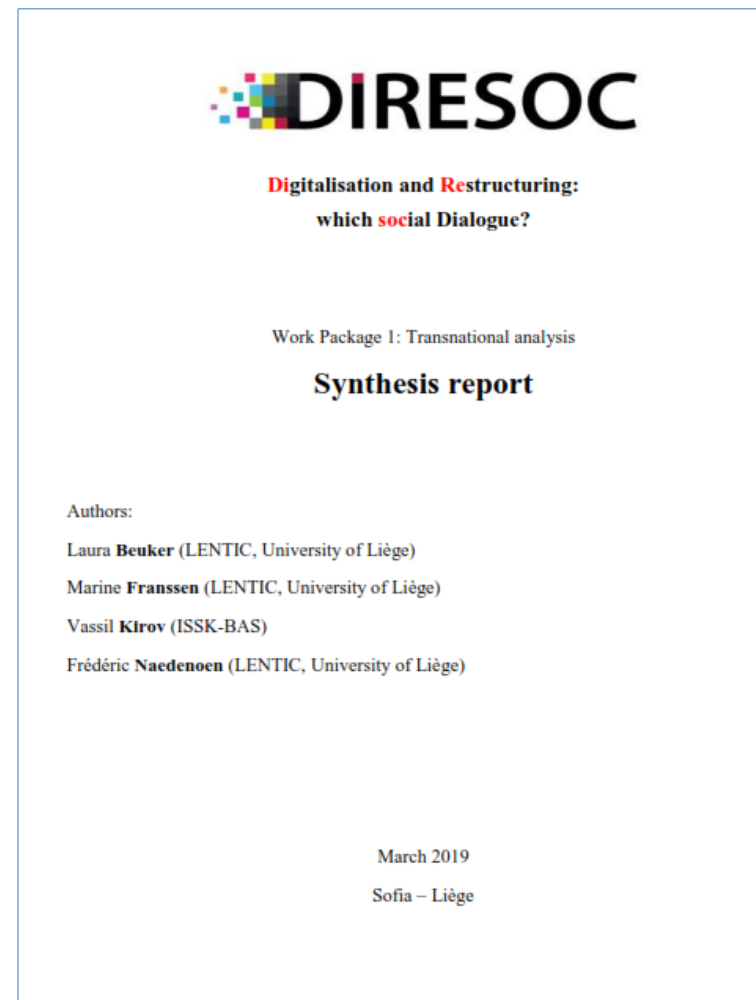
Digitalisation and Restructuring: which role for social dialogue?

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Objective

- To present briefly the main findings from the WP1 Synthesis report of DIRESOC for the eight countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Sweden) and the four sectors (Financial Services, Postal Services, Manufacturing and Tourism)



http://diresoc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Diresoc_WP1_Transversal_Analysis-1.pdf

Initial questions

- What: the main topics of debate and issues of concern around digitalisation and restructuring among social partners and governments?
- Who: actors involved in social dialogue regarding restructuring driven by digitalisation?
- Where: Are the traditional forms of social dialogue still relevant?
- How: how do the relationships among social partners change?
- When: social dialogue practices of anticipation or management of the effects of digitalisation?

Methodology

- Jointly elaborated by ISSK and LENTIC and validated by participants:
 - Collecting national documentation, reports;
 - Conducting interviews with relevant actors for the shaping of the digitalisation of the economy debate & the social dialogue (about 100 interviews carried out, few other scheduled/envisaged) - respondents: unions at cross-sectoral and sectoral levels, employers' organisations at cross-sectoral and sectoral levels, public authorities.
- Comparative analysis, based on the eight national reports and existing literature.

Exploring the role of social dialogue for the shaping of digitalization-driven restructuring in the four sectors

Theoretical framework

Digitalisation is not new as such, but what is new is its pace and scope

Pessimistic vs Optimistic scenarios

Evolution of restructuring regimes

Collective bargaining and social dialogue for anticipation and management of restructuring...

Interviews and country reports from Diresoc Project

The understanding (DIRESOC project)

- “In a broad sense, the digitalisation can be defined as the adoption and the increasing utilisation of information and communication technology and their derivatives (robotics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, internet of things, big data analysis, etc.) by the public authorities, the enterprises, the branches of activity and the people, and the impact of those developments on societal, economic and social evolutions. (Belgium)
- “a general acceleration in the pace of technological change in the economy, driven by a massive expansion of our capacity to store, process and communicate information using electronic devices. In that extent new developments in Robotics (cobots), Internet of Things, 3D printing, but also big data, machine learning and artificial intelligence and the possible combinations of all, are considered as powerful drivers for changes in employment” (France).

Digitalization of production vs. digitalization of work

- The academic literature puts a strong focus on two main technological transformations:
 - the digitalization of production through automation/robotics (also referred to as 'Industrie 4.0', as Germany was first to outline this strategy) and
 - the digitalization of work through the platform economy (also referred to as 'Uberisation').
- Both have the capacity to eradicate jobs: the first by substituting jobs with technology; the second by using technology to replace jobs with micro-tasks. Both can also **make existing skills** as well as tax and welfare systems **ineffective**.

The context

- Several drivers of change and the timeframe context of (e.g. the probability of the massive introduction of some technologies is low in the horizon of 2025 – examples of self-driving cars):
 - Two main technological transformations: the digitisation of production through automation/robotics and the digitisation of work through the platform economy
 - Restructuring of GVC and space – e.g. occupations that might be offshored...
 - The demographic change: ageing population – need for care...
 - Culture and citizens/consumers attitude – what could be accepted and what no – e.g. waiters vs robots...
 - Climate change and greening

EU level social dialogue

- The examination of the European social partners' opinions allows concluding that there are shared concerns about the future of work and employment, but also major differences concerning the perception of opportunities (for employers) and threats (trade unions) and the need of social dialogue to address the digitalisation-related restructuring.

National level **social dialogue**

- Intensive debates in most of the countries – the digital transformation allows to re-position the classical social dialogue debates – about work organization, working time, working conditions, and so on.
- Different levels of social dialogue mobilized – e.g. works councils in Germany vs. National level in other countries.
- Positive opinion on the behalf of employers (new opportunities) vs. criticism on the behalf of unions (social risks, lack of regulations)
- Public authorities preferences for the debates/policies measures

National level **social dialogue** - 2

- Emergence of new actors on both sides (e.g. employers' organizations for the new technological business) as well as organizations representing self-employed
- Specific questions addressed:
 - how to anticipate and to face the evolution of tasks consecutive to digitalisation?
 - how to adapt the volume of workforce in both direction, i.e. the reduction of those workers which tasks are becoming obsolete, and the attraction of new workers with specific skills?
 - how to promote internal mobility?

Sectoral developments

- Financial services: digitalisation in the financial services clearly impacts company business models practices and jobs, but surprisingly the topic of digitalisation is still not among the top agenda of social dialogue in most countries studied;
- Postal services: social dialogue is well developed within the traditional postal operators, but less present in the new arenas. Digitalisation is still not a subject of social dialogue as such, but related developments in working time, work-life balance or management of redundancies are addressed by collective bargaining.

Sectoral developments 2

- Manufacturing: the importance of the topic varies strongly based on the countries/sub-sectors (e.g. less important in those, impacted by the strong economic recession). Collective bargaining has yet to play a major role in tackling the challenges of digitalisation
- Tourism: various degree of the digitalization impact, but strong focus on the platform economy as the new dominant model, (almost outside) social dialogue...

Sectoral developments 3 –financial services

State of social dialogue and importance of the topic of digitalisation	Spotted initiatives related to digitalisation
Italy: Well-developed social dialogue and high unionization rates in the banking sector.	Sectoral fund providing funding and acting as shock absorber. Company level agreements aiming at increasing the efficiency of the bank offices, work-life balance (smart working).
France: Well-developed social dialogue (with specific structures for the anticipation of change)	Few initiatives on skills development at sectoral level and impact of digitalisation on job level and skills at local level.

Sectoral developments 4 – postal services

State of social dialogue and importance of the topic of digitalisation	Spotted initiatives related to digitalisation
Italy: Multi-level bargaining and several consultative bilateral bodies, high unionization rate. SP manage in a consensual way the profound restructuring of the operator.	The last CLA provides I & C rights on a wide range of subjects, including the employment effects of technological innovations.
France: Well-developed social dialogue for La Poste.	Negotiation policy regarding the transformation of the group. Participation in EU level initiatives and projects

Sectoral developments 5 – manufacturing

State of social dialogue and importance of the topic of digitalisation	Spotted initiatives related to digitalisation
<p>Sweden: Important role of the industrial agreement for the entire Swedish economy. Digitalisation is a subject undergoing intense study</p>	<p>Tripartite social dialogue agreement over “smart industry policy” with a focus on digitalisation and climate change.</p>
<p>Spain: Digitalisation induces the renewal of old social dialogue topics: training, working time, anticipation of change, restructuring process, workers reps voice.</p>	<p>Some good examples of collective agreements addressing the effect of digitalisation.</p>
<p>Germany: Growing importance of collective agreements on company level over collective bargaining agreements.</p>	<p>Two trade unions initiatives launched about digitalisation and work councils :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Work and innovation- Working 2020 in North Rhine Westfalia

Sectoral developments 6 – tourism

State of social dialogue and importance of the topic of digitalisation	Spotted initiatives related to digitalisation
Belgium: SMEs dominate; low coverage; Digitalization not a priority	Hotel industry lobbying to ban AirBnB Company level initiative: solutions for reception and concierge services.
Italy: 2 main national CLAs. Main topics: seasonal work, part time work, apprenticeships, flexibility in work shifts.	Workshop and information campaigns organized by a union Union's newsletter : Turismo 4.0
Spain: digitalization not a priority, reskilling as a main topic of SD	Observatory for the Digital Transformation of the Hospitality Industry (Spanish Federation of the Hotel Sector - 2017).

Lessons learned

- Scope and narrative varies deeply, among countries and among social partners and there is a need for further research in sectors and companies.....
- The legitimate role of social dialogue to manage the impact of digitalisation is still consensual in some regions (Belgium, Sweden), but at stake in some countries
 - In most of the countries, employers' consider that it should remain a management issue, out of collective bargaining
- If digitalisation already deeply impacts work content and conditions, it is rarely a subject of social dialogue as such
 - It is always considered in parallel with other processes (cost-cutting strategies, austerity policies, etc.)

Thank you!