



TRADE UNION DIGITALIZATION OFFICERS

Working Session

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Minutes



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Partnership

Beneficiary

All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions – OPZZ - Poland

Partners:

General Workers Union – GWU – Malta

Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey – DISK – Turkey

Fundación Cultural Primero de Mayo – F1M – Spain

Italian General Confederation of Labour – CGIL – Italy

Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia – CATUS – Serbia

Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia – ZSSS – Slovenia

Hungarian Trade Union Confederation – MASZSZ - Hungary

Associated Partners:

European Trade Union Confederation – ETUC

Eurocadres

National Trade Union Confederation – Cartel ALFA – Romania

1 day

Welcome

The participants were welcomed by the project expert – Dominik Owczarek– All-Poland Alliance of Trade Union (OPZZ), Poland and presented the agenda and objective of the Action plan TUDO workshop. The workshop aimed at elaborating recommendations for social partners on how to ensure protection of the workers rights in the context of digitalization processes. The TUDO experts will focus on five thematic areas: implementation of the Framework Agreement of European Social Partners on digitalization, telework and the right to disconnect, platform work, impact of digitalization on working conditions, and digitalization as a subject of collective bargaining and social dialogue. Workshop is planned to be divided into separate working sessions on each of the above topics starting from a brief overview of challenges and presentation of the recent developments. While presenting the challenges, we based on a brief recall of the training programme presented in the first months of 2024, therefore it will not be repeated here in the minutes from the workshop. Then TUDO experts discussed how these challenges could be (or should be) addressed by trade unions or public policy.

Implementation of the European Social Partners Framework Agreement on digitalisation

The TUDOs started with a brainstorming session on recommendations related to better implementation of the European Social Partners Framework Agreement in their countries. In most of the countries covered by the projects - especially in CEE countries - the implementation has not advanced much. The Agreement and its importance is poorly recognized by the social partners. In Italy, there is a stalemate related to the fact that the social partners could not agree on the translation of the text. The comments and recommendations were as follows:

Recommendations:

- Concluding translation of the Agreement in all EU member states and proceeding with implementation of the Agreement
- Implementation of the Agreement should be comprehensive and concrete: covering national, sectoral, regional and company levels in order to bring the agreement to work contexts at ground levels
- Translating the Agreement into concrete measures at national level (or even company level) i.e. introduction of binding regulations on the right to disconnect,
- Access to negotiating AI algorithms - strengthening the capacity of trade unions in order to be reliable partner
- Developing skills curricula in public education and LLL, delivered by employers and supported with public financing
- Developing also relevant training curricula for unions
- Special focus on disadvantaged groups: women, disabled, older workers
- Raising awareness about the Framework Agreement among national-level social partners and its objectives, and what needs to be done in practical terms for unions and employers organisations

Telework and the right to disconnect - further steps at the EU-level after breaking off of the social partners negotiations

The second session was dedicated to the recent developments at the EU-level in regards to the regulations of telework and the right to disconnect after breaking off of the autonomous social partners negotiations on that matter in December 2023. On 30th April 2024, the European Commission launched the first stage of consultations, which was presented and discussed with the TUDO experts. The participants discussed recommendations on the role of social partners in ensuring workers rights in the context of telework.

Recommendations

- Telework should be implemented in line with other public policies ie. family policies, work-life balance policies, non-discrimination policies. These are the civil rights rather than strictly employment rights. This will better protect telework and the right to disconnect and defend these regulations against potential critics.
- Telework policies should align with other policies especially care policies in order to allow partners to fully realise their potential on labour market
- Protection of personal data and against surveillance in private homes of workers should be ensured
- Protection of the digital systems allowing for processing data - regulations clearly stating who is responsible for potential data breaches
- Raising and standardising (at the EU level preferably) the issue of compensation for telework: electricity, internet, rent costs (partial, proportional), equipment
- Introducing of clear European standards or principles on OSH and ergonomics without compromising on health and safety of workers, declaration on complying with OSH principles is not enough, trust needs to play a key role
- Ensuring non-discrimination and counterfeiting various forms of inequalities (women ask more for telework, but men are more often granted the possibility to telework, precarious contracts have less rights in terms of telework)
- Young and new workers have difficulties with gaining experience and engaging in work - mentoring and management (team building) should include adequate measures addressing this issue.
- Young workers with higher qualifications (teleworkable workers) are more difficult to organise by unions, that should create adequate strategies answering the needs of this group. Unions should listen first to the needs and provide relevant support.

Summary of the meeting

The partners discussed the second day of the workshop. Project expert thanked for the fruitful discussion during the meeting.

2nd day

Platform work - EU directive and its implementation

The second day of the Action plan workshop started with brainstorming about protection of platform workers, especially in the context of the Platform Work Directive adopted in 2024. The recommendations were as follows:

Recommendations

- Quick and full transposition of the directive to the national legal systems
- In many countries the principle of employment assumption is not present in the legal system. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to make sure that the principle included in the directive will be fully transposed at national level allowing for full potential of that principle
- Taking the directive as an impulse to fight civil employment as a general labour market challenge
- Avoiding treating platform workers as a separate employment category, these workers should be covered by general regulations
- Enforcement is of paramount importance - member states should put much effort to make sure that the regulations are truly implemented
- Capacity building of platform workers to be prepared for negotiations with digital labour platforms - especially with regards to the content of AI managing working conditions. Trainings should be provided to unions to make them capable in this respect
- Organising platform workers, including cross-national initiatives to reach out to workers from various countries employed by transnational digital labour platforms
- Creation of a database on platform work at national levels including information about court cases, statistics, trade unions initiatives

Impact of digitalization on working conditions

The second topic for the working session on the second day of the workshop was the impact of digitalization on working conditions with the focus on recommendations for trade unions and public policies on how to protect workers rights. The participants proposed the following:

Recommendations

- Progressive legislative proposals proposed by the unions and looking after favorable transposition of the EU legislation
- Organizing digital workers (teleworkers, platform workers) - access to workers' contacts in order to provide them with information on their rights and counseling
- Capacity building and quality trainings for unions in order to prepare workers to negotiate better working conditions,
- Exchange of experiences and best practices, cross-sectorally and transnationally
- Make use of opportunities given by technical advancements to improve working conditions and employability of vulnerable groups: women, older workers, disabled, living in rural areas

- Developing non-discriminatory policies
- Ensuring the human in control principle
- Data should be considered as a public good, should be stored and processed in a protected way, that brings added value to the public

Digitalisation as a subject of collective bargaining and social dialogue

The TUDO experts dedicated their last working session to the place of digitalization in collective bargaining and social dialogue. The recommendations were formulated as following:

Recommendations:

- If human has to be at the centre of decision-making, unions have to be at the negotiation and consultation table
- Unions should not deal only with bread and butter issues but also deal with citizen rights and other fields of public sphere because it impacts directly on workers, working conditions, and socio-economic order. This refers also to the digitalization matters
- Including collective dimension to citizenship rights.

Summary of the meeting

The partners discussed the further steps in the project, namely the Action plan report and networking online meetings.



