

Session 2: Digitalization and Industrial Relations

Digitalization clearly represents a key development challenge in Europe and implies major consequences for working conditions and job quality issues.

The digital transformation is structurally changing the labour market and the nature of work. There are concerns that these changes may affect employment structures, job quality, working conditions at workplace level and income distribution. There are new and far-reaching effects of digitalization, that involve employment contracts (e.g. rise of false self-employment instead of employee legal status), working time (e.g. since workers assigned tasks on just-in-time basis), welfare (e.g. many digital sector employers unwilling to assume welfare/social duties towards workforce) and, not least, worker voice (e.g. challenges for innovative forms of representation and social dialogue).

Some predict that digitalisation generates new risks for individuals - such as a further growth of insecure labour contracts, longer working hours, interference between work and personal life, work intensification and unemployment – and it seems to foster growing wage differentials both at the bottom and at the top of the wage distribution. On the other hand, it is claimed digitalisation may also provide a range of job opportunities, productivity growth and a better balance between work and personal life. Whether the first or the second option - or a mixture of both – will be realised is still a question which this session would like to contribute to find out.

This stream encourages papers, which explore the policy and practices that are emerging in this field in a comparative perspective, both at the national and sub-national level. Specifically, we welcome papers that analyze:

- the quantitative employment effects of digitalization in labour market and the social partners' strategies;
- the qualitative effects of digitalization in labour market (i.e. structural consequences for jobs, skills, quality, organization models) and the social partners' strategies.
- the innovative industrial relations which are responsive and anticipatory to the digital transition in the world of work.
- the role of industrial relations such as trade unions representation strategies and practices on one hand and collective bargaining and social dialogue on the other to promote decent working conditions within a context of digitalisation.
- new forms of social dialogue which include government agencies, civil society organisations, community organisations, etc. This recognises the new challenges for social partners and builds on successful approaches in representing, for example, low-wage workers and workers in precarious jobs within a context of digitalization.

Organizers: Luisa De Vita (Luisa.Devita@uniroma1.it), Sapienza Università di Roma, Silvia Lucciarini (Silvia.Lucciarini@uniroma1.it), Sapienza Università di Roma, Valeria Pulignano (valeria.pulignano@kuleuven.be), Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.