

**ETUI-ETUC Conference, 27-29 June 2016, Brussels**

**Shaping the new world of work – The impacts of digitalisation and robotisation**

**Panel 12: Workplace innovation in the second machine age**

**Participants:**

- Koen Repriels, ACV/CSC
- Tony Murphy, SIPTU IDEAS Institute
- Egoitz Pomares, Sinnergiak Social Innovation (UPV/EHU)

**Discussant:** Pia Mulvad Reksten, LO Denmark

**Moderator:** Frank Pot, Radboud University Netherlands

**Reporter:** Frank Pot, Radboud University Netherlands

What did speakers and participants see as the key challenges that need to be addressed?

- Complementing technological innovation with workplace innovation which is already an element in the policies of DG Growth and DG Employment.
- Getting a place at the organisational design table to implement new technologies. Assuming ‘organisational choice’ instead of technological determinism employees and line managers should be involved to achieve organisational performance and good work simultaneously.
- Utilising the talents of employees for innovation for better use of new technologies and for creating a high level of innovation capability. “*Innovation by all and for all*” is the title of IndustriAll’s Position Paper on Innovation Policy (No. 60/2015) in which ‘workplace innovation’ and ‘employee driven innovation’ are fostered.

What did they identify as the priorities for action to meet these challenges?

- Continuation, respectively initiating programmes for workplace innovation. At European level this means continuation of the European Workplace Innovation Network of the European Commission (2013 – 2016), at national level programmes such as in Finland (Llideri), in Ireland (initiated by SIPTU), in Basque Country. Tony Murphy (SIPTU/IDEAS): “We believe we have developed a proven, robust working model of workplace innovation that has already sustained manufacturing jobs in Ireland.” IndustriAll fosters for “Stronger coordination of social and employment policies (...) by initiating programmes for workplace innovation” to improve productivity and innovative capabilities of companies by using the talents of their staff (p. 8 “*Manifesto to put European industry back to work*” of March 2014).
- Building more tripartite alliances for workplace innovation. “Regional policy on workplace innovation, such as in the Basque Country, pays off.” (Egoitz Pomares, Gipuzkoa Workplace Innovation). The programmes in Denmark and Norway on employee driven innovation are good examples of joint efforts. Pia

Mulvad Reksten (LO, Denmark) emphasizes the need for training of shop stewards in employee driven innovation.

- More research into enablers and barriers for workplace innovation. There were questions from the audience why not all companies apply workplace innovation although the benefits are clear and whether employees have or could acquire rights for employee driven innovation. In spite of the evidence of win – win many companies (and public organisations) government campaigns and research funding is necessary.

What did they identify as the key next step to make progress on this issue?

- Building more tripartite alliances for workplace innovation. This should be done first of all at national level, but can be stimulated in the framework of the EU “New start for social dialogue’ (Statement 27 June 2016). “Social dialogue on all levels is an asset. It adds a social dimension in innovation processes”, says Koen Repriels of ACV, Belgium, that produced a number of tools for workplace innovation. It can also become an important element of the ‘Digital Agenda for Europe’ and the ‘Agenda for new Skills and Jobs’ at EU and national levels.