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

Panel 15: Skills and training in the 4th industrial revolution: what do companies need? What can workers hope?

Participants:

- Konstantin Scheller, European Commission, DG EAC
- Vincenzo Spiezia, OECD
- Wolfgang Greif, ÖGB/GPA-djp and EESC
- Thiébaud Weber, ETUC

Discussant: Marco Ricceri, EURISPES

Moderator: Philippe Pochet, ETUI

Reporter: Ilaria Costantini, ETUI

Things are changing fast and it's difficult to predict the future. Education and training are not only meant to enter a changing labour market, but also world and society, more in general the civic life. But accordingly to Scheller, education and training are changing very slowly, because they are quite conservative. In addition, it's difficult to change things by doing a "copy-and-paste" of good practices. The European Commission supports the "learn from one another" approach, bearing in mind that the role of education and training is to form human beings and they accompany individuals through all their lives. In this sense online training could become an increasingly important tool.

When it comes to the demand of new skills, as explained by Spiezia, a distinction could first be done between ICT specialist skills (how to program ICT), ICT generic skills (how to use ICT) and complementary skills (nothing to do with ICT). The shortage of ICT specialists is probably overrated and the real challenge is to better cover complementary skills. In synthesis: digital skills are not only or mainly about ICTs; many people lack of ICT generic and complementary skills; there's an increased importance of foundation skills and lifelong learning.

As far as the effects of digitalisation on employment are concerned, Greif raises issues from workers' perspective: training opportunities to be matched with tomorrow's

labour market; employability of people; founding of new training structures. Workers need an offer of lifelong learning and upgrade their skills. This has to be founded and available budget should be assured during the EU Semester. At EU level, a framework agreement could give workers the right to have time enough for attending lifelong learning.

Austerity and cuts are barriers for appropriate investments. Weber underlines the importance of recognizing qualifications. ETUC “Skills guarantee” asks also for the workers’ right to training and real opportunities to access courses. Educational leave is a condition for lifelong training.

As summed up by Ricceri, it’s crucial to train citizens with critical minds. Social partners have to be part of the decision making process in defining new training skills, having in mind how digitalisation is changing companies structures. From their side, public institutions should better identify new job profiles.