

## **Report of the National Labour Council on Digitalisation – Executive summary**

In this final report, the National Labour Council (NLC) provides an overview of the actions taken, since the adoption of the framework agreement, in the area of digitalisation by the social partners at interprofessional, sectoral and regional levels, based on the contributions received.

### **Several points of convergence can be drawn from these contributions, mainly:**

- at all levels, but mainly at sectoral and company levels: heightened attention to disconnection and teleworking, as a result of (among other things) the new legislative framework and the Covid health crisis;
- the continuation of previous plans and projects, with adjustments where needed;
- an intensification of the digital transformation and transition of public institutions, companies and society, in particular by strengthening and deploying digital infrastructures and tools and the digital economy. Increased attention to administrative simplification, digital inclusion, support actions, digital skills and training, assistance and awareness-raising, etc.

### **At federal level:**

- the NLC continues its work in order to modernise the collective agreement framework for structural teleworking. It will soon report on the right to disconnect. It begins to reflect on the impact of artificial intelligence and algorithms on work;
- in terms of training, the NLC and the Central Economic Council (CEC) continue their work on the Individual Learning Account, aimed at all persons entering the job market;
- the NLC and the CEC also examine the topics of platform economy and e-commerce;
- the social partners and the National Social Security Office are developing projects aimed at achieving a sustainable digital social security system. In this context, the NLC has updated its guiding principles for the simplification and (digital) modernisation of social administration, and it continues its monitoring;

- the NLC has repeatedly expressed its opinion on the development and/or implementation of digital tools linked to the exercise of social rights (eBox, Mult-eMediatt, TRIO database, etc.), including the general principles to be respected. It has also recalled its concerns regarding digital inclusion, including in the fight against poverty;
- the electronic archiving and sending of social documents as well as (remote) electronic voting during social elections remain points of attention for the NLC.

**At sectoral level:**

- from now on, the sectors (or alternatively companies with at least 20 employees) should provide for modalities for the right to disconnect, and implement a mechanism to regulate the use of digital tools. As a result, an increasing number of sectors have adopted collective labour agreements on that subject.

These collective labour agreements determine their scope, the definition of the right to disconnect, the exceptions to this right, the practical arrangements and instructions to be followed for the application of the right to disconnect, prevention as well as training and awareness-raising actions. Many of these collective labour agreements cover all employers and workers, regardless of the size of the company.

Similarly, an increasing number of sectors have concluded collective labour agreements on teleworking or consider that teleworking should be a subject of discussion in companies.

Furthermore, a number of sectors have adopted training provisions in the area of digitalisation. Several sectors provide facilities to workers representatives in order to allow them to perform their tasks.

**At regional level:**

- In the Brussels-Capital Region, a Digital Appropriation Plan proposes concrete measures to improve the accessibility of digital tools, training from a young age and support for all. Within the framework of the PRR, there are plans to equip schools with digital tools and to establish a skills assessment for job seekers. Brupartners (the Brussels social and economic council) has started a reflection process on AI.

An administrative simplification plan and an innovation plan for the digital transition have been adopted for the Brussels public administrations. Accessibility of the websites and applications of the Brussels public sector is legally guaranteed.

- In Flanders: particular attention has been given to blended and digital learning methods in the training offer. Vulnerable groups are offered skills enhancement and support, aimed at enabling them to access digital technologies.

The contact strategy of the Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB) for its services is now based on the 'digital first' principle. An exchange of information should take place between VDAB and the public welfare centres, and a cooperation agreement with the Walloon Region is aimed at allowing a greater mobility of job seekers between the different regions. VDAB should play a role as 'loopbaanregisseur' (career director) and should be given the possibility to collect and exchange data (on the citizens' careers) with its partners.

Specific digital programmes support career transitions (e.g. in the event of restructuring or collective redundancy) as well as the health sector. Other programmes are aimed at facilitating the digital transformation of companies and/or their employees, including 'maatwerkbedrijven' (sheltered workplaces). Attention is also paid to AI.

- In the Walloon Region, the social partners insist on the importance of the digital transition in companies and the accessibility of quality services within this context. They also have contributed to the implementation of the 'Digital Wallonia' strategy, which is aimed at amplifying the Walloon digital economy. The PRR for Wallonia contains several projects aimed at intensifying the digital transition in Wallonia. Moreover, the Walloon Public Employment Service (Forem) has developed several digital tools and processes as a part of its service offer.
- Various projects are being developed or have been implemented in the German-speaking Community, including: the fibre network rollout, the implementation of a digital strategy, a survey on the digital maturity of citizens, as well as the activities of the Citizens' Committee and the Citizens' Assembly on digital skills.

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