

Report of the National Labour Council on Digitalisation – Executive summary

In this report, the National Labour Council (NLC) provides an overview of the actions taken since June 2022 in the area of digitisation, by the social partners at the interprofessional, sectoral and regional levels, based on the contributions received.

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

- at the federal and sectoral levels, increased attention to disconnection and teleworking;
- the continuation of previous plans and projects, potentially with adjustments;
- an intensification of the digital transformation of public institutions, businesses and society, in particular by strengthening and deploying digital tools and the digital economy, increased attention to administrative simplification through support actions, training, awareness, etc.

At the federal level:

- the NLC continued its work to modernise the contractual framework for structural teleworking. It will soon begin reflections on the impact of artificial intelligence and algorithms on work;
- the sectors, and failing that, companies with at least 20 employees, will have to provide modalities for the right to disconnect and for the implementation of a mechanism to regulate the use of digital tools (see point "At the sector level");
- in terms of training, the NLC and the Central Economic Council (CEC) have given their opinion on a draft law for a Federal Learning Account to record and manage, at the federal level, information on training entitlements and courses taken;

- as for e-commerce, the CEC has issued a report on the issues facing the retail sector as a first contribution to a government strategy. In the course of their work, the social partners identified employment as the main area for reflection;
- the social partners and the National Social Security Office are developing projects aimed at achieving sustainable digital social security. In this context, the NLC has updated its guiding principles for the simplification and (digital) modernisation of social administration;
- 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 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 the sector level: 29 (sub)sectors have submitted a CLA on the subject of disconnection. These CLAs determine their scope, the definition of the right to disconnect, the exceptions to this right to disconnect, the practical arrangements and instructions to be followed for the application of the right to disconnect, analysis and prevention as well as training and awareness-raising actions. Many of these CLAs cover all employers and workers, regardless of the size of the company.

In addition, 340 company Collective Labour Agreements on the right to disconnect have been submitted. The available data on work regulations does not allow precise analysis, although there has been a significant increase in the number of work regulation changes over a short period of time.

Furthermore, a number of sectors have adopted training provisions in the area of digitalisation and several sectors are encouraging the use of teleworking.

At the regional level:

- In the Brussels-Capital Region, the social partners in Brupartners have issued an opinion on the Digital Appropriation Plan put in place by the government of the Brussels-Capital Region. This Plan, based around four areas (Raising awareness - Uniting - Equipping - Supporting), proposes concrete measures to improve the accessibility of digital tools, training from a young age and support for all Brussels residents for the period 2021-2024;

In addition, an administrative simplification plan is being led by Easy.Brussels, the agency in charge of the digital transition and administrative simplification of administrations.

- In Flanders, the social partners and the Government of Flanders concluded, on 14 December 2020, the 'Alle Hens aan Dek' ('All Hands on Deck') agreement in which several initiatives involving digitisation were taken, such as competence checks; a personalised digital career platform; digital job fairs and events; the digitisation of Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB)'s partner work; the strengthening of the digital skills of job seekers and a digital language offer; a digital training platform; a renewed employer approach by VDAB, WSE digitisation initiatives for employers, citizens and partners; a learning and career account; and the roll-out of the vision document 'Naar een leer- en loopbaanrekening in Vlaanderen' ('Towards a learning and career account in Flanders').

In response to the coronavirus crisis, VDAB continued its efforts to renew and produce existing and new modules in its digital training offerings.

Finally, VDAB adopts a service delivery model using the 'digital first' principle where the contact strategy consists of 3 layers. In the digital layer, VDAB offers an online account and digital tools to get started yourself. In the human-digital layer, VDAB offers clients telephone or online support in using the online tools. For those who need more support, VDAB provides face-to-face service offerings to guide job seekers to appropriate jobs.

- In the Walloon Region, the social partners in the Social, Economic and Environmental Council of Wallonia (CESE) have highlighted the digital divide in their opinion A. 1490 of 23 May 2022.

They also have contributed to the implementation of the "Digital Wallonia" digital strategy, which was updated in 2022 to integrate the digital priorities of the European Union and the resources made available under the Recovery and Resilience Plan.

- Various projects are being developed in the German-speaking Community, including the introduction of a new job portal open to job seekers and employers, and the realisation of a survey by the Economic and Social Council of the German-speaking Community (WSR), in close collaboration with the Digital Agency of Wallonia, on the digital maturity of the citizens of the German-speaking Community.

The full report is available in French and Dutch under the following links:

- <https://cnt-nar.be/sites/default/files/documents/fr/Rapport-131-FR.pdf>
- <https://cnt-nar.be/sites/default/files/documents/nl/rapport-131-N.pdf>