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EDITORIAL



Dear readers, dear friends of EZA,

“The only thing that is constant is change.” This quotation is ascribed to Heraclitus of Ephesus, who lived about 540–480 BC. This statement also applies to labour relations. Because of societal and economic change – enhanced by digitalisation – we are currently observing very specifically the change in the traditional one-to-one labour relationship between employer and worker and the emergence of so-called “atypical” forms of employment. Representative expressions include temporary and agency work, crowd work, job sharing, and IT-based mobile forms of employment. ETUI and EZA addressed this phenomenon in a joint seminar in Gdansk in early September.

The first question that arises is: how do we differentiate between typical and atypical employment? Is any employment that does not meet the criteria of full-time, permanent, working for an extended period of time for the same employer, regular working hours, regular income, “atypical”? Do new forms of employment have the potential to create new jobs? Will today’s “atypical” jobs be tomorrow’s “typical” ones? Is every atypical job to be regarded as negative and precarious per se?

Some of the new forms have advantages for the worker, such as greater flexibility or more variety in the job. Conversely, others bear the risk of

exploitation, the pay is not a living wage, social protection of the worker is not at all guaranteed. Many, especially those forced from a permanent job into pseudo-self-employment, are not covered by collective wage agreements. The increase in such forms of employment will have serious consequences for social security systems.

The new forms of employment mean a paradigm shift not only for workers, but also for trade unions. We must move away from the familiar idea of the “typical trade unionist” and put out feelers for the “unknown entity” called the crowd worker or similar. New inventive strategies are required to assert the rights of those atypically employed, to inform them of their rights, and to enable them to join a trade union.

There will not be one answer to the many questions arising. Differences within Europe are also too big for that. Whereas voucher work is common practice in Italy, it would give rise to considerable irritation in other countries. Whilst, for instance, trade unions in Scandinavia already offer membership and new services for the self-employed, Poland and Serbia will first have to amend their labour legislation for this.

One thing that applies throughout Europe is that still much more knowledge of the new forms of employment will be required to shape the change enough to protect employees.

Sigrid Schraml, Secretary-General

The EZA network's focus on the digitalization of the world of work

There has not only been talk of and research into the digitalization of the world of work for some years now; digital technology is already being introduced in many areas, profoundly changing society, the economy and the world of work:

Countless sensors are being installed in no end of machines, engines and technical devices, measuring running times, wear and tear, and reporting them over the Internet to enable servicing to be carried out more easily and with greater precision.

Flows of goods are being recorded and managed throughout the world; they can be tracked everywhere at any time.

Gigantic quantities of complex data can be gathered, evaluated and used commercially at breakneck speed. This phenomenon is referred to as "Big Data". Data, as described for example by the Austrian Centre for Workers' Education (ÖZA), are the raw material of the 21st century.

Transformation in the world of work

All of this is transforming the world of work. Occupations are disappearing, many activities are changing, and new occupations are being created. But also the way workers are operating in an increasingly digitized world of work is subject to varied changes. A lot is happening in labour relations: crowdworking, whereby workers offer their labour via Internet platforms at the lowest possible price in competition with other workers, is one such form. Numerous other forms of employment differing from traditional labour relations are becoming increasingly important in this. Although some of them were already used prior to the latest wave of digitalization, there is now greater focus on them. There are other new forms of employment: for instance, there are now companies that "share" one or more workers with other employers.

EZA project coordination

All these developments and trends are also discussed in the EZA network, and a number of initiatives are in the pipeline. In several projects, 16 EZA partners are addressing various aspects of digitalization – more than double that of the previous year. Hence, the EZA has initiated two series of co-ordinated projects, helping the respective partners to network and to pass on the results.

Two basic lines can be observed when it comes to the effects of digitalization:

Firstly, digitalization has arrived in the everyday lives of workers; it is visible and palpable in the workplace of a growing number of workers. This throws up many questions with regard to labour relations, pay, working conditions, health and safety, and the safeguarding and representation of workers' rights. One of the two series of co-ordinated projects is grappling with all these questions under the heading "Digital world of work – technological developments and changes at the workplace".

Secondly, it is becoming increasingly clear how much the use of digital technology is also changing the daily life of the individual and is impinging on society as a whole. The widespread use of smartphone and Internet is transforming not only working life, but also family life, leisure patterns, mobility, education and training. A major societal challenge throughout Europe is to come up with a more comprehensive definition of the value of human work, and to consider new possibilities of generating incomes for those people whose jobs are being totally eliminated by digitalization. The other EZA series of co-ordinated projects is addressing this issue under the heading "Impact of the digital working environment on the lives of workers and their families – socio-ethical considerations".

Academic-practical education and training project

In an academic-practical education and training project in the 2016/2017 education and training year, EZA together with the research "Institute for Advanced Studies" (IHS) commissioned by ÖZA, along with five education partners from the EZA network, had already incorporated academic findings in related seminars and enhanced this knowledge with experience from the practice of workers' organisations. The upshot was a research report EZA published with the title "Digital world of work". This work provides an insight into the most important digitalization phenomena, describes the fundamental research on the issue and the basic academic premises and approaches applied, and makes recommendations, especially for the activity of workers' organisations.

Although the "Digital revolution" is already in full swing and exercising a massive influence on us, the use of this technology will also make rapid advances in the next few years and challenge workers' organisations. EZA will continue to accompany this process with its education and training work.

Norbert Klein ■

Modern working time policy in view of digitalisation from the DGB affiliates' perspective

In recent years, there has been lively debate on the question of what work will look like in the future. The focus has been on the options, impact and requirements for shaping change arising from digitalisation in particular.

The German Trade Union Confederation (DGB) and its affiliated trade unions are conducting this debate in an open and proactive manner. The often quoted opportunities and risks for future work do not co-exist unconditionally. Our mission is to take advantage of the opportunities for workers and minimise the risks. We want good work for employees in the digital age, making it clear that there will still be work in the future.

We do not work on the assumption that worst-case scenarios predicting a loss of 47 percent of jobs will turn out to be true. As in every structural change hitherto, jobs will be lost, but new ones will be created.

Although labour research is still needed, there is one thing of which we can be sure: the increasing use of technology and re-organized work processes will change job profiles and demands on workers. Whether advantage can be taken of the opportunities for higher quality jobs and better working conditions depends on how the key success factors of collective bargaining coverage and co-determination work out for flexibility, skilling, and health & safety at work.

At the heart of the debate are working hours and resources. More than anything, flexibility and working hours, from the employer angle the weakening of working time laws, are major conflicts of interest between employers and workers which we must resolve.

There will only be good work in the digital age if flexibility – especially with working time – benefits both sides: employers and workers. So far, though, flexibilisation has tended to result in longer working hours. Full-time employees work 43.5 hours – nearly five hours more than the average collectively agreed weekly working time. Altogether employees work nearly two billion hours of over-



Elke Hannack

Elke Hannack, born in Gladbeck in 1961, studied protestant theology in Münster, and whilst a student worked as a packer and shop assistant in retail. At that time she joined the Union of Retail, Banking and Insurance Workers (HBV), became involved as the Chair of the Works Council and Chair of the Group Works Council, and was a member of the HBV's large collective bargaining committee.

Elke Hannack has been Deputy Chair of the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB) since 1 June 2013, Federal Vice Chair of the Christian Democratic Employees' Association (CDA) since 2011, and member of the CDU Federal Executive Board since December 2014.

At the DGB she is responsible for the public service and civil service policy, women, gender equality and family policy, youth and youth policy, education & training policy and education & training work, as well as the organising policy, services and IT.

time a year; almost half of that is unpaid. That is why the DGB and its affiliates are demanding that every hour worked is paid or compensated with time off. Work must not be devalued.

Work in the evening and at weekends has also increased. More than a quarter of employees often work at unfavourable times. Shift work has risen to 20 percent. Nearly one in ten employees regularly works at night; almost as many are on

call. Digitalisation also means that employers' expectations of availability are greater. Almost a quarter of employees must often be contactable in their leisure time as well. Hence, psychological stress is also on the rise. However, the technical possibilities of greater flexibility in time and place of work are used only to a limited extent in the interest of workers. Although they frequently have to be "always on", they have only limited possibilities to work on the move or in the home office. That is why it is our intention and obligation to regulate mobile work. For us, the entitlement to work on the move is on a par with a right to switch off.

Another aspect of the working time debate is that many workers often cannot switch between part-time and full-time employment or have no say in designing the start and end of working hours. Many would like to reduce their working time, while others – especially women working part time – would gladly work longer

hours. There is still a big gap between wish and reality.

Besides the question of a better balance between job and family, research shows that the arrangement of working time has a considerable influence on health. Long and precarious working hours along with a lack of co-determination have a negative impact. The massive increase in psychological stress and illness among workers indicates that the status quo is not at all satisfactory.

The DGB and its affiliates want to strengthen the working time sovereignty of workers. Problems of compatibility and health issues do not suddenly vanish into thin air just because digitalisation offers greater opportunities for flexibility. Greater sovereignty – i.e. more freedom – requires a stronger negotiating mandate for trade unions, works and staff council members, and of course for the individual as well.

What is therefore needed is a new legal framework to enable new room for manoeuvring. Greater self-determination is best achieved through better rights, collective bargaining solutions, and working time arrangements co-determined by the management and workers' representatives in companies and public authorities. This means, though, that we not only strengthen our participation rights but also have to strengthen and modernise them to be assertive for the future world of work.

At the same time, health and safety at work should be updated. This will ensure that flexibility benefits both sides. For the DGB and its affiliated trade unions, decent work and good working conditions are and always will be crucial areas of action for the work of the future.

Elke Hannack ■

New ways in the education work – EZA/NBH seminar in Herzogenrath

The seminar entitled "Go new ways – use new methods effectively in education work" saw delegates responsible for education in EZA member organisations from nine countries gather at the Nell-Breuning-Haus in Herzogenrath/Germany in late June 2017.

The course first addressed theoretical foundations for education, its historical development, sense and purpose, stakeholders and forms. An overview was given with the aid of social scientist Prof. Ulrich Deller from the Catholic University of Applied Sciences of North Rhine-Westphalia, and the seminar also took a special look at the changes in learning and teaching caused by the Internet and smartphone. Both in learning and teaching, these new technologies expand the possibilities in formal education (school/university), in non-formal (extra-curricular) and also informal (individual, unguided) education.

The workshop part of the course with the Head of the Academy for Scientific Further Education at the Cologne University of Applied Sciences, Ilona



Participants from Bulgaria, Macedonia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, Slovenia, Germany and Belgium attended the "Go new ways – use new methods effectively in education work" seminar held in Herzogenrath, Germany, in June 2017.

Matheis M.A., dealt with creating education measures in such a way that the course content interrelates well and is designed in such a way that acquired knowledge can subsequently be used and applied effectively. Given the specific conditions of European seminars with different languages, origins of participants and learning needs, this requires particular attention. The course also presented activating methods and techniques that can

bring about new dynamics for learning and apply this easily in European education activities, too.

In a planning simulation, the participants were also able to contribute their own seminar projects with content, programmes and aims, and to select appropriate methods. The plans presented were then discussed with the expert, and further suggestions put forward.

In the seminar it became clear that it is often possible to trial innovations and apply activating methods without having to completely ditch seminar concepts tried and tested for this purpose.

Other learning topics EZA is looking at for its range of courses will be the question of participant profiles and acquiring seminar-goers, as well as moderator training. *Norbert Klein* ■

Professor Jozef Pacolet from HIVA given emeritus status



Prof. Dr. Jozef Pacolet during his farewell lecture on "Growth and distribution. The Luke option" in Leuven, Belgium, on 18 September 2017

Macro-economists championing the maintenance of our welfare state tend to be thin on the ground. That is why the European Centre for Workers' Questions (EZA) and its member centres have been very glad to use the knowledge and research of Prof. Dr. Jozef Pacolet from the Catholic University of Leuven's HIVA Institute – Onderzoeksinstituut voor Arbeid en Samenleving – in their education and training work on a European level.

It was 25 years ago that, as part of the EZA "European Social Dialogue" education programme, Pacolet initiated a project aimed at examining the development of the welfare state in Europe and to conduct an academic stocktake on this every five years. To do so he set up a pan-European network of research institutes and experts to analyse in the conferences organised by HIVA with EZA current changes in social security systems in Europe, and thereby to study major factors of influence such as the enlargement of the European Union, demographic shifts and the cuts produced by the aus-

terity policies in the aftermath of the financial and economic crisis. In EZA's current education year, Pacolet is overseeing a series of seminars on "Strategies of European institutions – the European Pillar of Social Rights", focusing on the status quo of social security in Europe.

In his farewell speech at the emeritus status award ceremony on 18 September 2017, Pacolet addressed the issue of "The affordability of pensions". His speech concentrated on the Luke option: "Give, and it shall be given to you". The background to this is the current intense debate on the retirement pension in Pacolet's native land, Belgium. Professor Pacolet proposes a re-evaluation of the first pillar of pension as a solution for the unstable second and third pillar. And he is not afraid to say that workers will have to pay in greater contributions and work longer. However, he also warned employers of their responsibility to keep older workers longer in employment.

EZA thanks Jozef Pacolet for the decades of outstanding and fruitful co-operation,

and hopes that it will continue in spite of the new emeritus status!

*Esmeralda Van den Bosch
and Matthias Homey* ■

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EZA
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Johannes-Albers-Allee 2
53639 Königswinter
Tel. +49 - 22 23 - 29 98 - 0
Fax +49 - 22 23 - 29 98 - 22
E-mail: eza@eza.org
www.eza.org

Editorial team

*Sigrid Schraml (editor-in-chief),
Matthias Homey, Norbert Klein,
Victoria Znined, Esmeralda Van den
Bosch*

Design and composition

*HellaDesign, Emmendingen
E-mail: helladesign@web.de*

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