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"Prediction is very difficult, especially if it's about the future." --Nils Bohr

Digitalisation is not just a technological or market issue, it is also about transition of traditional jobs to digital jobs in the industrial and service sectors; it is a question of future society and its cohesion. There is potential for opportunities, but for major risks too, with the extension of precarious work. The European Commission finally recognises that the digital transformation is structurally changing the labour market and the nature of work and may affect employment conditions, levels and income distribution.

The ETUC demands that digitalisation be based on quality work and the transition to be anticipated and managed in close cooperation with trade unions, EWCs, and workers' representatives. In 2015, it asked for a **permanent European Forum on digitalisation** to shape the future of digital work.

(<https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/document/files/en-digital-agenda-of-the-ec-preliminary-etuc-assessment.pdf>). This demand is supported by the European employers' organisations.

In reaction, the EC proposes:

- a) a bi-annual, high-level roundtable of representatives of Member States' initiatives, industry and social partners; and
- b) a yearly European stakeholder forum for wider consultation.

The ETUC welcomes this step in a positive direction.

The European Social Partners have started to work on the issue. They agreed to work on skills needs in digital economies as part of the EU Social Dialogue Work Programme 2015-2017 and presented a joint statement on digitalisation at the last tripartite social summit on 16 March 2016 (annexed). The Social Partners believe that digital skills should be a key priority in the upcoming EU skills agenda.

The ETUC is examining how the world and nature of work and employment is being changed radically by the digital revolution. One of the major events, a conference organised together with the European Trade Union Institute, *Shaping the new world of work: the impacts of digitalisation and robotisation*, will be held on 27-29 June 2016 in Brussels. The full programme is available on the [ETUI website](#).

Contrary to similar conferences, this event will not only focus on the quantity of work ('will robots destroy our jobs?') but also on the quality of work (working conditions, work-life balance, autonomy versus precarious jobs, impacts on social dialogue, health and safety in the workplace, etc.) and the challenges of these trends for trade unions and workers. It will try to answer the question as to how trade unions and civil society can help define **a path to a 'social digitalisation of work and the work place'** which will support and even strengthen the overall well-being of Europe's workers.