CESI
ALL WORKERS COUNT

DIWORK
DIGITALISING PUBLIC SERVICES
Making it work for citizens, business and workers

RESEARCH IN THE FRAMEWORK OF CESI'S PROJECT "DIWORK - DIGITALISING PUBLIC SERVICES: MAKING IT WORK FOR CITIZENS, BUSINESS AND WORKERS"

FINAL REPORT:

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, LOCAL AND REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS

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VISIONARY ANALYTICS

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List of Abbreviations

ADS	**Automated Decision Support –** the process that involves the use of data, machines and algorithms to make decisions and automatically provide solutions to repetitive management problems. The process involves processing data from databases, text, social media, sensors, images, speech via computer software, algorithms, machine learning, natural language processing, robotics, artificial intelligence and augmented intelligence.
AI	**Artificial Intelligence –** software that is developed with one or more of the techniques and approaches (such as machine-learning, logic- and knowledge-based approaches, some statistical approaches), and can, for a given set of human-defined objectives, generate outputs such as content, predictions, recommendations, or decisions influencing the environments they interact with.
ANPE	**National Association of Teachers in Spain** (ES: ANPE Sindicato Independiente); CESI member organisation.
AR	**Augmented Reality –** interactive experience of a real-world environment where the objects that reside in the real world are enhanced by computer-generated perceptual information.
BLC	**German Federation of Food Chemists in Public Service** (DE: Bundesverband der Lebensmittelchemiker/-innen im öffentlichen Dienst); CESI member organisation.
CPD	**Continuous Professional Development –** long-term career development, learning activities for professionals to periodically develop and enhance their abilities required for their job.
CSEN	**French Trade Union Confederation of National Education** (FR: Confédération Syndicale de l'Education Nationale); CESI member organisation.
CSIF	**Spanish Central Independent and Public Employees' Trade Union** (ES: Central Sindical Independiente y de Funcionarios); CESI member organisation.
DBB	**German Civil Service Federation** (DE: Beamtenbund und Tarifunion); CESI member organisation.
DESI	**The Digital Economy and Society Index –** a summary of indicators on Europe's digital performance, coordinated by European Commission.
EC	**European Commission**
EFTA	**European Free Trade Association**
EHR	**Electronic Health Record–** electronic version of a patient's medical history that is maintained by the provider of healthcare services and include all of the key administrative clinical data relevant for persons care, including demographics, progress notes, medications, etc.
EI	**Education International-** a global union federation of teachers' trade unions which has 401 member organisations in 172 countries.
EMPL	**European Parliament's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs**
EP	**European Parliament**
ERP	**Enterprise Resource Planning**
EU	**European Union** (EU-27)
EUPAN	**European Public Administration Network**
EUROFEDOP	**European Federation of Public Services Employees**; CESI member organisation.
FAQ	**Frequently Asked Questions**
FCG/GPF	**Austrian trade union of postal and telecommunications employees** (DE: Die Gewerkschaft der Post- und Fernmeldebediensteten)

FWA	**Flexible Working Arrangements –** work environment and schedules that do not have normal constraints of a traditional job, allowing employees to choose particular hours of work, as well as work location.
GDP	**Gross Domestic Product**
GDPR	**General Data Protection Regulation**
GIS	**Geographic Information System –** a system that creates, manages, analyses, maps all types of data. It is used to make maps that communicate, perform analysis, share information, and solve problems.
GP	**General Practitioner –** a medical doctor who treats all common medical conditions, refers patients to hospitals and other medical services for urgent and specialist care, and provides preventive care and health education to patients of all ages.
GPS	**Global Positioning System –** a satellite-based radio navigation system that allows land, sea and airborne users to determine their exact position.
HE	**Higher Education**
HEI	**Higher Education Institution –** organisations providing higher, postsecondary, tertiary, and/or third-level education, e.g., universities, research universities, specialised higher schools, colleges, professional schools.
HIE	**Health information exchange –** the mobilisation of healthcare information electronically across organisations within a region, community, or hospital system, allowing health professionals and patients to access and securely share medical information
HR	**Human Resources**
ICT	**Information and Communication Technology–** computers and other digital technologies that aid individuals or institutions in handling or using information
ID	**Identification –** an official document proving a person's identity
ILO	**International Labour Organization**
IMCO	**European Parliament Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection**
IoT	**Internet of Things –** the network of physical objects that are embedded with sensors, software and other technologies for the purpose of connecting and exchanging data with other devices and systems over the Internet.
ISCED	**The International Standard Classification of Education –** the reference international classification for organising education programmes and related qualifications by levels and fields. ISCED 1 refers to primary education, ISCED 2- lower secondary education, ISCED 3- upper secondary education.
IT	**Information Technology –** computers, elaborate networks, computer software, and other digital or electronic devices that are used to help attain an efficient method for the management of information.
JRC	**Joint Research Centre –** the European Commission's science and knowledge service.
LAN	**Local Area Network –** a series of computers linked together to form a network within a limited area (e.g., a school, university campus, office).
LMS	**Learning Management System –** a software application or web-based technology used to plan, implement and assess a specific learning process. It is used to administer, document, track, report, automate, deliver educational courses, training programs, learning and development programs (e.g., Moodle, Edmodo, Blackboard, etc.).
MEP	**Member of European Parliament**
MKKSZ	**Hungarian Civil Servants and Public Employees Trade Union** (HR: Magyar Köztisztviselők, Közalkalmazottak és Közszolgálati Dolgozók Szakszervezete); CESI member organisation.
ML	**Machine Learning –** the use and development of computer systems that are able to learn and adapt without following explicit instructions, by using algorithms and statistical models to analyse and draw inferences from patterns in data.

MOOC	**Massive Open Online Course –** an online course made available over the internet aimed at unlimited participation and open access; a model for delivering learning content online to anyone who wants to take a course.
MS	**Member State** of the European Union
NGO	**Non-Governmental Organisation**
NLP	**Natural Language Processing –** the ability of a computer program to understand and respond (with text or speech of their own) to human language as it is spoken and written (text and voice).
OECD	**Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development**
OSH	**Occupational Safety and Health**
PA	**Public Administration –** civil employed by a government department or agency for public sector undertakings
PHR	**Personal Health Record –** a collection of health-related information that can be generated by healthcare providers (e.g., physicians, hospitals, pharmacies) but is controlled by the patient.
RFID	**Radio-frequency identification –** a form of wireless communication that uses electromagnetic fields to automatically identify and track tags attached to objects.
RJPS	**General Trade Union of the Republic of Lithuania** (LT: Respublikinė Jungtinė Profesinė Sąjunga); CESI member organisation.
RPA	**Robotic Process Automation –** technology based on software robots or on artificial intelligence that emulate human actions interacting with digital systems and software, and automating the repetitive processes usually conducted by humans.
RRF	**Recovery and Resilience Facility –** a temporary recovery instrument coordinated by European Commission, aimed to help Member States to implement reforms and investments to recover from the coronavirus pandemic.
SATSE	**Spanish Trade Union of Nursing Professionals** (ES: Sindicato de Enfermería); CESI member organisation.
SDG	**Sustainable Development Goals**
SDMCG	**Montenegrin Trade Union of Physicians** (ME: Sindikat Doktora Medicine Crne Gore); CESI member organisation.
SLFS	**Serbian trade union of Doctors and Pharmacists** (SR: Sindikat lekara i farmaceuta Srbije); CESI member organisation.
SPELC	**French free catholic education professional trade union federation** (FR: Syndicat Professionnel de l'Enseignment Libre Catholique); CESI member organisation.
STEM	**Science, technology, engineering and mathematics**
UK	**United Kingdom**
UN	**United Nations**
UNI	**UNI Global Union –** global union federation for the skills and services sectors, gathering national and regional trade unions in 150 countries representing 20 million workers.
USA	**United States of America**
USLIP	**Romanian Free Trade Union in Pre-University Education** (RO: Uniunii Sindicatelor Libere din Învățământul Preuniversitar (USLIP) Iaşi); CESI member organisation.
USP	**Universal service provider –** in postal sector – a public or private entity providing a universal service or parts thereof within a country, not specifying whether required by license, authorization or another legal instrument.

VET	**Vocational Education and Training –** training in skills and teaching of knowledge required in particular occupations or more broadly on the labour market.
VLE	**Virtual Learning Environment –** educational technology, a set of teaching and learning tools, a virtual classroom that allows students and teachers to communicate online, providing class information, learning materials and assignments via the Web.
VPN	**Virtual Private Network –** an encrypted connection over the Internet from a device to a network, creating a secure, private network to ensure that sensitive data is safely transmitted.
VR	**Virtual Reality –** an experience where the user's visual and auditory senses are cut off from the real world.
WEF	**World Economic Forum**
WZZ	**Polish Free Trade Union "Forum – Education"** (PL: Wolny Związek Zawodowy "Forum – Oświata"); CESI member organisation.

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Introduction

This study was commissioned by the European Confederation of Independent Trade unions (CESI) and carried out by Visionary Analytics. CESI connects 40 national and 4 European trade union organisations, who collectively represent over 5 million employees, mostly in the four sectors of central government, regional and local administration, education and training, healthcare, and postal services.[1] Responding to the increasing importance of digitalisation of the public sector, further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, CESI finds it necessary to support its members in their efforts to understand and address digital transformation of work. To this end, this report aims to provide CESI members with a better understanding of the key developments of digitalisation in their sectors, and their implications for workers they represent.

Chapter 1 begins with an overview of **digitalisation trends** in the public sector, and the associated benefits and risks. Firstly, the chapter shows how the nature of the digital transformation itself has evolved over time to enable a better understanding on what is happening today. Next, the report overviews the drivers behind digitalisation today, showing that digitalisation is a way for public sector organisations to better respond to citizens' needs by benefiting from new technological developments. The chapter also overviews the overall risks associated with digitalisation of the public sector.

Chapter 2 looks at the **barriers** to digitalisation and **the role of trade unions in addressing them**. Greater focus is given to two barriers that are especially important for trade unions. The first section shows how **workers' attitudes** can impact the process of digitalisation, explaining that workers' resistance to digitalisation can act as a key barrier and suggesting how trade unions could shape workers' attitudes. The second section addresses the barrier of **digital skills gap**, explaining that digital skills have become an essential prerequisite for successfully participating in the labour market and that the demand for digital skills is likely to only increase. The section encourages trade unions to steer their efforts towards strengthening and consolidating digital skills of workers they represent.

Chapter 3 is an overview of how **work organisation** has changed due to digitalisation. Namely, it sheds more light on the effects of teleworking, automation, creation of new jobs, new forms of worker management and changes in human-machine interaction. It shows trade unions how workers can benefit from these developments, but also raises awareness about the associated risks, including on their occupational health and safety (OSH) and working conditions.

Chapter 4 provides a **sectorial view** and allows the readers to gain a deeper understanding on what digitalisation means for the central government, regional and local administration sector:

- The chapter starts with an overview of key developments specific to the sector. In order to streamline the information, only developments that are more important for workers are discussed. It allows the readers to understand what exactly is happening in workplaces and to grasp the extent of digitalisation in the sector.
- It is followed by an overview of the opportunities of digitalisation in the sector. Digitalisation has the potential to bring multiple positive outcomes for employers, citizens, workers and society in general. The section explains that these potential positive effects drive digitalisation further.
- The third part of the chapter presents the specific barriers and risks of digitalisation in the sector. Specific attention is paid to two barriers that trade unions can have most impact on, namely, workers' attitudes and digital skills gap. The first part of subsection looks at how workers in the sector approach digitalisation by evaluating their attitudes towards it. The second part of the subsection explains what kind of digital skills are in demand and shows that workers in the sector lack competences that are expected to be required of them in a digital age. The last part of the subsection focuses on trade union responses, discussing the role that trade unions can play in addressing the barriers to digitalisation and

[1] In addition, large shares of CESI's affiliates are also employed in security and justice, defence and transport sectors.

supporting workers. In addition, it overviews the attitudes of CESI members from the sector towards digitalisation. This allows trade unions to compare the way they approach digitalisation with the attitudes of their peer- organisations.
- The last part of the chapter presents key positive and negative effects of digitalisation on work organisation. It allows trade unions to gain a better understanding on how workers they represent can benefit from digital technologies (e.g., it can mean their work is less physically straining, they perform their tasks more efficiently, they are more satisfied with their jobs, they have more autonomy, etc.). Moreover, it also sheds light how digitalisation can make workers' working conditions worse (e.g., by expanding their working time, subjecting them to constant performance monitoring), and induce poor health outcomes (e.g., high levels of stress and anxiety, physical health problems, etc.).

Chapter 5 overviews the **key EU initiatives** that cover the topic of digitalisation (especially in the public sector) and its impact on workers. The chapter is useful for trade unions to understand the political importance of digital transition and to be informed about the key policy developments of consequence to them and the workers they represent.

The report ends with practical **recommendations** for CESI members on the ways they can effectively support workers in the times of digital transformation of work. In addition to the recommendations, trade unions can draw inspiration and advice from **good practice examples** in blue boxes that they can find throughout the report. These good practices present exemplary actions and efforts of CESI members and other trade unions (as well as workplaces) that seek to actively address the challenges and reap the benefits of digitalisation. Similarly, green boxes contain **practical examples** on how digital tools are applied in workplaces. These examples illustrate the ways that digitalisation manifests itself in public sector.

The report is complemented by **Annexes I-III** that focus on **defence, security and justice**, and **transport sectors** respectively. These chapters summarise the results of the survey and interviews with CESI members from respective sectors. **Annexes IV and V** provide additional information on the applications of **specific digital tools in the education and training and health** sectors respectively. Finally, **Annex VI** presents **methodological information** and **Annex VII** provides **the list of literature** used in the report that readers can consult for further information.

The assignment was very comprehensive in its scope; therefore, **each chapter can be read as a stand-alone piece of information**. Readers can for example use this report to only gain an understanding of the drivers, benefits and risks of digitalisation of the public sector, to understand the implications of digitalisation, to zoom in on the developments in a particular sector, or to learn about key legislative or financial initiatives.

The report is based on the following data:
- **Data from academic and grey literature** (including reports by international organisations, European Union agencies, private consultancy companies) and statistical data from OECD, Eurostat, relevant national and international surveys.
- Statistical data and comments from the **survey of CESI members**. The survey was tailored for 6 focal sectors and contained questions that would help to understand trade unions' attitudes towards digitalisation, including the perceived effect it has on their workers and their working conditions. The survey was carried out in September-December of 2021. Invitations were sent out to 42 CESI members. Twenty out of 42 CESI members (47%) provided complete answers to the survey. The sectorial distribution of responses is as follows: 12 for central government, local and regional administrations sector; 10 for education and training sector; 7 for health services sector; 1 for postal services sector; 3 for defence sector, and 3 for security sector.
- Information gathered through **interviews with CESI members**. Throughout November 2021-January 2022 7 interviews[2] were carried out with representatives of CESI member organisations. Interviewees were selected based on the good practices identified through their survey responses and guidance of CESI.

[2] Out of which 2 provided written answers.

1. Digitalisation trends

1.1. From e-Government to Digital Government

Key takeaway:

- The public sector has started adopting ICT in the 1990s with the goal to increase efficiency of specific tasks. Public sector is now moving towards a much more holistic approach to digitalisation. Importantly, this shift implies a change of working practices in public sector.

Enthusiasm to introduce new digital technologies within the public sector already existed throughout the 1990s. With the dawn of the digital age, bureaucratic and slow public sector institutions became less capable to meet the expectation of citizens to receive more effective, efficient and better public services. Therefore, the public sector resorted to the adoption of ICT that could transform organisational structures, documents, service provision, policy and governance systems with a view to meet these needs of citizens.[3] It is expected that digitalisation can make public sector institutions more cost-efficient, effective and transparent in service delivery, making the service provision more citizen-centric, as well as supporting public decision-making, improving trust in government and eventually contributing to better quality of life for citizens.[4]

The public sector went through several stages of digitalisation.[5] The first critical shift occurred between 1990s and early 2000s as the public sector went through a transition from traditional (face-to-face, bureaucracy-oriented) service provision to **eGovernment,** with the main goal of increasing efficiency of specific tasks by adopting ICT tools. Paper transactions were to be replaced by the application of World Wide Web technology, service provision was to take place online, and governments set up websites and IT systems within public administrations. Government web portals provided information for citizens, enabled service providers to receive requests by users (e.g., make a doctor's appointment), and store data (e.g., health records, information on students' performance, etc.). Since the late 2000s the public sector has been undergoing a shift from eGovernment initiatives to **Digital Government**, which goes beyond the use of ICT tools to merely improve efficiency of certain tasks. Digital Government refers to open, smart and transformed government, fostering participation of and collaboration with citizens, by facilitating interaction with them. It is also a "smart" government that uses open and big data, administrative and business process management innovations, Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to make better decisions and optimise resources.[6] It is a transformed and citizen-driven government, the goal of which is to meet the needs and expectations of citizens, business and other stakeholders, making exchanges interactive, accessible and personalised.[7]

Today digitalisation aims to address the growing need for a holistic approach rather than work in vertical silos. Governments are therefore moving from targeted e-government projects towards a 'whole-of-government' approach, which means that all government services are provided in a more integrated way and facilitated by digital technologies. The shift goes beyond digitalisation of services and includes improving internal processes, structures and

[3] Barcevičius, E., Cibaitė, G., Codagnone, C., Gineikytė, V., Klimavičiūtė, L., Liva, G., Matulevič, L., Misuraca, G., Vanini, I., 2019. Exploring Digital Government transformation in the EU - Analysis of the state of the art and review of literature. Joint Research Centre. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 10.

[4] Williams, M., & Valayer, C., 2018. "Digital Government Benchmark. Study on Digital Government Transformation." DG Joint Research Centre, European Commission; Barcevičius et al., 2019; Dunleavy, P., Margetts, H., Bastow, S., Tinkler, J., 2005. "New Public Management Is Dead—Long Live Digital-Era Governance", *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory 16(3),* 478.

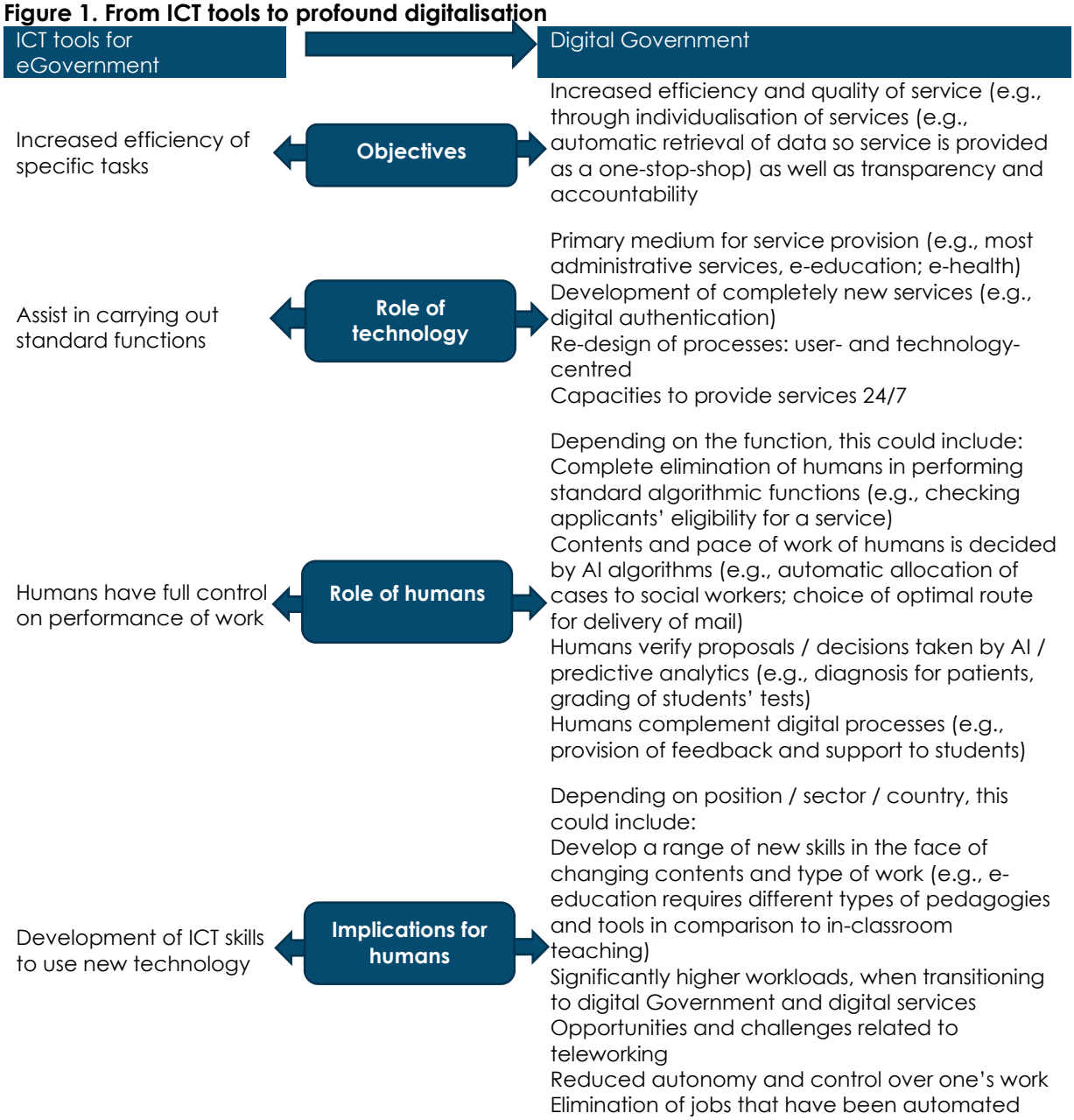
[5] See Barcevičius et al., 2019, 10-11 for the following account.

[6] *Internet of Things (IoT)* refers to the network of physical objects that are embedded with sensors, software and other technologies for the purpose of connecting and exchanging data with other devices and systems over the Internet. *Blockchain* is a digitally distributed, decentralized and often public ledge that exists across a network and consists of records called blocks; these blocks record transactions across many computers which cannot be altered easily after they are created.

[7] Viderity, 2018. "The Future of Digital Government". *Viderity.* Available: http://viderity.com/2018/10/09/the-future-of-digital-government/

working practices in public administration.[8] The characteristics of transformation from e-government to Digital Government are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. From ICT tools to profound digitalisation

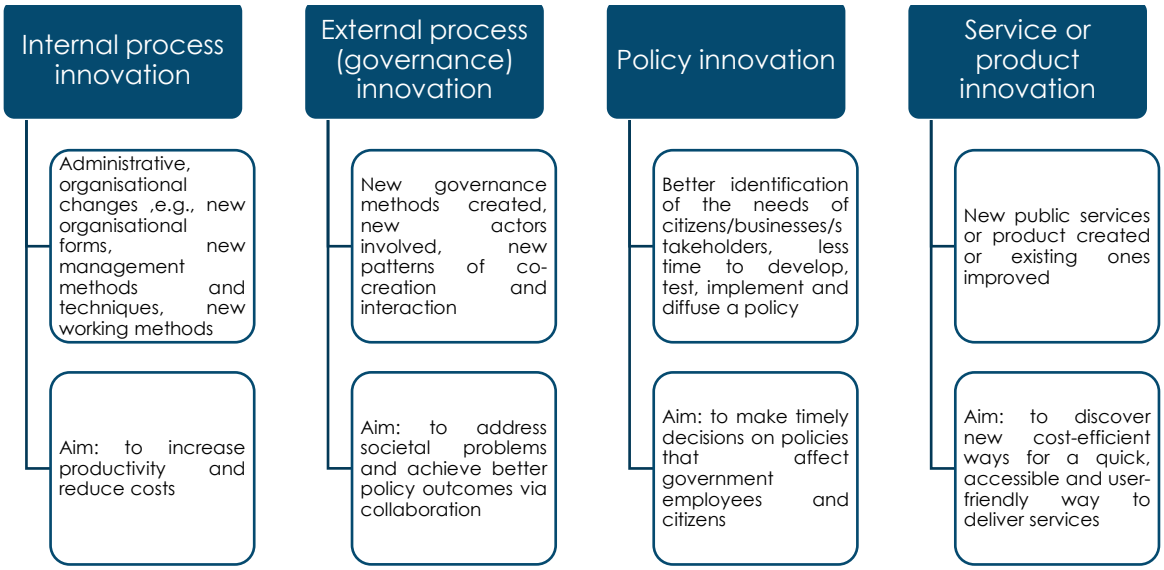


Source: Visionary Analytics, based on a synthesis of multiple sources.

There are generally four types of government innovations enabled by digital technologies: internal process, external process, policy and service or product innovation (see Figure 2). As this study focuses on the impact of digitalisation on workers, internal process innovation appears to be the most important. Therefore, only the most important internal process innovations will be discussed in the following chapters.

[8] Janowski, T., 2015. "From electronic governance to policydriven electronic governance- evolution of technology use in government". In *Communication and Technology*, Layne, K., and Lee, J., 2001. Developing fully functional E-government: A four stage model. *Government Information Quarterly*18(2), 122-136.

Figure 2. Types of digital innovations in government



Source: JRC, 2019: 20

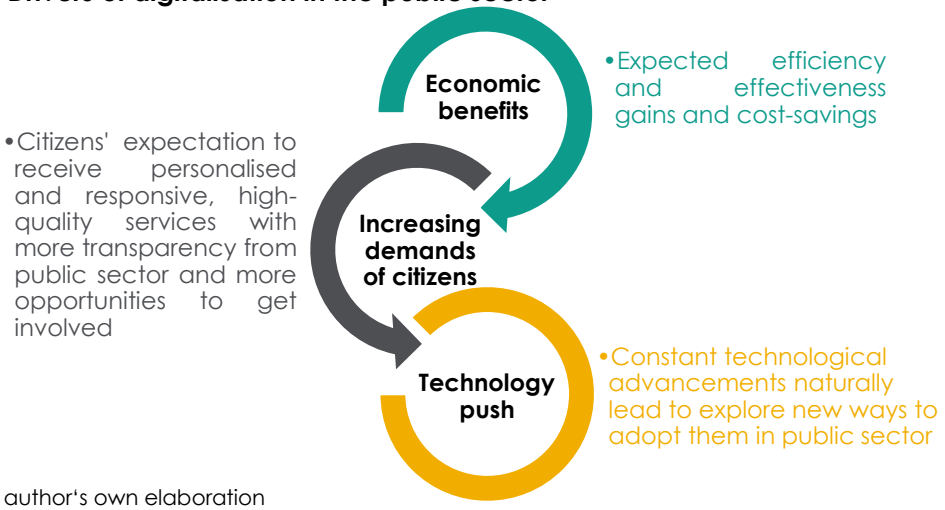
1.2. Drivers of digitalisation in public sector

Key takeaways:

- Public sector digitalisation is driven by the expected economic benefits (i.e., improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, cost savings), the need to respond to citizens' demands (i.e., offer personalised and responsive services and more transparency), as well as new technological advancements (i.e., artificial intelligence, robotics, Internet of Things, geo-spatial data, blockchain, virtual reality, etc.).
- International institutions see digital transformation as a way to make public services more accessible, efficient and of higher quality, in addition to improving working conditions, reducing OSH risks and improving work-life balance.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly accelerated digitalisation trends in central governments, local and regional administrations, education and training sector, health services, and postal services. Lockdowns and limited face-to-face interactions highlighted the importance of organisations and workers being able to provide digital services and maintain a functioning economy during a crisis.

Digitalisation in the public sector is driven by strong external drivers (see Figure 3). These drivers allow to understand the importance and inevitability of digitalisation.

Figure 3. Drivers of digitalisation in the public sector



Source: author's own elaboration

Expected economic benefits is a key driver of digitalisation of the public services. Public sector institutions seek to improve their service delivery to be more efficient (e.g., provide services faster) and effective (e.g., reduce human error and improve accuracy), as well as to increase cost savings (e.g., reducing labour costs via automation).[9]

Digitalisation is also driven by the push to keep up with the private sector and the demands of citizens. Innovation in the private sector is centred on improving the experience of customers (e.g., Netflix suggesting content based on user history and ratings, Amazon reducing the purchase process to one-click), who have become accustomed to simple digital services, personalisation, and feedback in real time. Such constant development and adoption of digital technologies by individuals and businesses puts pressure on public administration to follow suit.[10] Personalised and responsive services offered by private sector has increased citizens' demands to receive the same high-quality services from the public sector. Indeed, one of the expected benefits of digitalisation of public sector is increased user satisfaction, more accessible and higher-quality public services. In addition to better services, citizens also want more transparency from public sector and expect to be more involved in decision-making. More interactions with citizens, one of the characteristics of digitalisation, can improve transparency, accountability, trust and legitimacy of governments. However, public services have not caught up with this yet. In a 2015 study on digitalisation of the public sector, 70% of surveyed officials, leaders and experts believed they were behind the private sector.[11]

Technology push also drives digitalisation of the public sector. The public sector is currently focused largely on the application of technologies that fall within the concept of Artificial Intelligence (AI, including machine learning (ML) and predictive analytics), robotics (including collaborative robotics and chatbots), IoT, geo-spatial data, blockchain and open government data, cloud solutions.[12] Other digital innovations that are applied in public sector organisations are Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR) applications, 3D and 4D printing, bio printing, autonomous vehicles such as drones, to name a few (see Box 1). Figure 4 summarises key technological innovations and their application in the public sector.

[9] Barcevičius et al., 2019, 55.

[10] Lemke, F., Ehrhardt,K., Popelyshyn, O., 2021. "Support and Resistance of Public Officials Towards Current eGovernment Initiatives – A Case Study on Ukraine and Germany." *dms – der moderne staat – Zeitschrift für Public Policy, Recht und Management,* 14(1).

[11] Deloitte, 2015. The journey to government's digital transformation. Deloitte University Press. https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/digital-transformation-in-government/DUP_1081_Journey-to-govt-digital-future_MASTER.pdf

[12] Tuomi, I., 2018. The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Learning, Teaching, and Education. Luxembourg: Publications office of the European Union; Barcevičius et al., 2019, 21.

Figure 4. Key digital technology developments utilised in the public sector

Predictive and behavioural analytics
Based on AI, predictive and behavioural analytics are applied in public sector with a hope to improve resource management, provide faster and better service delivery, and allow governments to predict problems before they occur, facilitating better problem-solving. Predictive analytics are used in policing, defence, transportation, education and health sectors, to name a few. They also have great potential for use in policy-making by government agencies in order to assess problems more precisely and come up with clear policy measures to address them (see Chapter 4).

Robotic process automation (RPA)
Process automation technology based on software robots or AI, used in digital government to automate government operations (e.g., entering data into systems, communicating with citizens), with an expectation to reduce human errors, cut operational costs and let civil servants focus on higher-value tasks. In the public sector, RPA is mostly associated with chatbots, conversational bots and intelligent agents that replace traditional ways of communicating with public sector institutions. In some countries and public services (e.g., healthcare), this has been advanced by deploying physical robotics to assist civil servants with service provision.

Internet of Things (IoT)
IoT describes the network of physical objects that are embedded with sensors, software and other technologies for the purpose of connecting and exchanging data with other devices and systems over the Internet. IoT has great potential to benefit public sector by informing it about major trends. IoT can improve planning and forecasting, make enforcement of regulation more efficient, empower citizens, improve government transparency, reduce costs, improve efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility of service provision, to name a few. Nevertheless, its application in public sector is not sufficiently studied yet.

Data-based innovations
Geo-spatial and location data provides geographic and location information of different data objects that can help governments to provide better location-based services and make better complex policy decisions (i.e., understand specific challenges faced by different communities in the country). Governments have also opened up their data and made it available to all via **Open Government Data (OGD**) initiatives to foster transparency, accountability and citizen engagement. In relation to that, public organisations are increasingly using **Application Programming Interfaces (APIs),** which allow them to share data across the public sector and with citizens and businesses.

Blockchain
Blockchain is a digitally distributed, decentralised ledger that exists across a network and consists of records called blocks which record transactions across many computers, allowing the participants to verify and audit transactions independently. It can be used to perform tasks of registration, identification, verification, and authentification of digital transactions. Extension of blockchain application can reasonably be expected in healthcare, and central government administrations, local and regional administrations (see Chapter 4). Reduced errors, costs, increased transparency and trust of government data and transactions are examples of benefits public sector.

Source: author's own elaboration based on multiple sources.

Box 1. AI applications in the public sector

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to any machinery devices that can observe their environment, learn and take intelligent action based on the information they have and their experience.[13] For this they need data (which is abundant in the digital age) and the rules on how to use it.

Public sector is data-intensive, and the adoption of AI to process this data is expected to improve decision and policy making. A study mapping AI applications in the public sector found 85 different AI-implementations across European countries.[14] Most AI applications are used in general public services and are not linked to any specific policy area. AI is used to support re-design of internal service delivery processes, as well as policy-making mechanisms and to improve quality and engagement

[13] Barcevičius et al., 2019, 21.
[14] Misuraca, G., van Noordt, C. Boukli, A., 2020. "The use of AI in public services: results from a preliminary mapping across the EU." In *Proceedings of the 13th International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance. Athens*, 2020, 90-99. New York: Association for Computing Machinery.

with citizens. 15 Most common types of AI used in public administration in Europe are natural language processing (NLP) (29%), pattern recognition (25%), image recognition (20%), unclassified (16%), robotics (6%), robotic process automation (4%).[16] Moreover, 16% of AI implementations in the public sector in the EU were unclassified, i.e., it was not clear what kind of AI-technology was used.

NLP technologies, the most common application of AI in public administration can be illustrated as the use of chatbots which provide information about various administrative procedures or automatic translations of documents or the transcription of political debates using speech recognition.[17] Other studies show that AI application in public sector ranges from AI predicting the award prices for projects, AI used for medical diagnosis and treatment, to AI used to transform government's workforce.[18] The current adoption of AI in public sector remains at early stages as it is mostly used to automate processes and for predictive analytics.[19] It is used to answer questions, fill out and search documents, deal with routing requests, translation and drafting of documents.

Most of the AI initiatives in the public administration in the EU are implemented with the aim to increase efficiency (49%) and only a few are aimed at improving inclusion of service delivery to make organisations more open to the public. Generally, application of AI in government is expected to solve such governmental problems as resource allocation, managing large datasets and diverse data, shortages of experts/specialists, performing procedural routine processes, scenario building and prediction, customer relation management.[20] For example, chatbots are expected to improve user-centricity of services by delivering support, information and simplifying service provision.[21] Similarly, ML is expected to improve transparency of eGovernment services by estimating the duration of the service delivery.[22]

Source: Misuraca, G., van Noordt, C., Boukli, A., 2020; Barcevičius et al., 2019.

International institutions are encouraging the digital transformation of public sector (e.g., United Nations, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the European Commission), which see it as a way for public services to become more accessible, efficient and of higher quality. Those promoting digitalisation in public services also believe that it can improve working conditions, reduce OSH risks and improve work-life balance.[23] International organisations perceive and promote digitalisation of central government and administration as the only way to modernise government.[24]

Most recently, in order to facilitate a successful digital transformation of Europe, as well as a transition towards a climate neutral, circular and resilient economy, the European Commission (EC) has adopted an EU digital strategy *'A Europe fit for the digital age'* which sets out targets related to digitalisation to be achieved until 2030.[25] One of the four focus areas and goals of the strategy is digitalisation of public services, as the EU aims to ensure that 1) 100% of key public services are provided online, 2) 100% of citizens have access to medical records and 3) 80% of citizens use digital identity.[26] According to the EC, effective e-government can lead to more efficiency and savings for governments, businesses and citizens, as well as increasing transparency and openness.[27] The EC ran a *public consultation on a set of European Digital Principles* in May-September 2021 in order to develop the principles for designing digital rules

[15] Misuraca, G., van Noordt, C., 2020. Overview of the use and impact of AI in public services in the EU. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
[16] Misuraca, G., van Noordt, C., 2020.
[17] Misuraca, G., van Noordt, C., 2020.
[18] Barcevičius et al., 2019, 23.
[19] Tinholt, D., Carrara, W., & van der Linden, N., 2017. Unleashing the potential of Artificial Intelligence in the Public Sector. Capgemini Consulting.
[20] Mehr, H., 2017. Artificial Intelligence for Citizen Services and Government. *Harvard Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation.*
[21] Capgemini, DG CNECT, IDC, Politecnico di Milano, Sogeti, 2020. eGovernment Benchmark 2020. European Commission. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 37.
[22] Capgemini et al., 2020, 37.
[23] Voss, E., Rego, E., 2019. Digitalisation and Public Services: a Labour Perspective. Public Services International.
[24] Voss, E., Rego, E. 2019
[25] European Commission. "Europe's Digital Decade: digital targets for 2030". https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/europes-digital-decade-digital-targets-2030_en
[26] Other three priorities of the strategy evolve around 1) skills, i.e., ensuring that at least 80% of population has necessary skills to thrive in the digital age, and cultivating 20 million ICT specialists,2) digital transformation of private sector business, i.e., achieving the targets of 75% of EU companies using Cloud/AI/Big Data, and more than 90% of SMEs to reach at least a basic level of digital intensity, as well as growing scale ups and financing double EU Unicorns, 3) Secure and sustainable digital infrastructures, i.e., providing gigabit for everyone and 5G connection everywhere, doubling EU share in global production of semiconductors, producing 10 000 climate neutral highly secure edge nodes, and develop first computer with quantum acceleration.
[27] European Commission, 2020a. Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2020. Thematic chapters.

and regulations of digitalisation. The results of the consultation are feeding into EC's proposal for a joint interinstitutional declaration on digital rights and principles which would be signed by EC, EP and the Council.[28] In addition, the EU has established a new funding programme *'Digital Europe' (DIGITAL)* and allocated €7.5 billion to fund digital transformation of businesses, citizens and public administrations.[29] The European Parliament has also been focusing on the topic of digitalisation of public services (most recently, the EP organised a public hearing of experts on costs and benefits of digital public administration in December 2021[30]). See Chapter 5 for a more detailed overview of key EU initiatives on digitalisation of the public sector.

Other international institutions that are paying more attention to digital transformation include the OECD, which adopted a *Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies (2014)*[31] to support the development and implementation of digital government strategies that bring governments closer to citizens and businesses. The OECD has also developed a *Digital Government Toolkit* where good practices on innovative, transparent and efficient public sector digitalisation are presented. [32] As part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations are embracing the spread of ICT to advance and transform public institutions and their service delivery capabilities.[33] The UN advocates for digitalisation of the public sector as it is deemed important for reaching Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. For this reason, every two years the UN conducts an *E-Government Survey* to assess global and regional e-government development, as well as a *research on Open Government Data*, among other initiatives.

The digitalisation was further intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic in an unexpected and rapid way. Out of 230 million jobs in EU-27 and the UK, 59 million (26%) of jobs were found to be at risk because of the pandemic, as workers faced reduced hours or pay, furloughs or permanent layoffs.[34] 24 million (40%) of those jobs at risk from COVID-19 were also found to be at risk of displacement from automation, showing a large overlap between jobs at risk due to the pandemic in the short term and jobs displaced by automation in the longer term.[35] These jobs include wholesale and retail, accommodation and food services, and jobs in construction sector.

As an essential part of the economy, the public sector was especially affected by the health crisis-induced lockdowns. The global crisis not only required the public sector to continue functioning at the same pace, but to provide services in a different manner, adapting to an unprecedented situation while trying to avoid any disruption of services. It showcased the importance of governments providing information and services to citizens online in order to ensure the continuation of governmental activities in times of crisis. Regarding the health sector, researchers and practitioners stress that the pandemic has put employers in health sector in a situation where they had to complete years of anticipated digital transformation in a few weeks.[36] Similarly for the education and training sector, the crisis has highlighted the necessity of digital skills when educators needed to effectively use digital solutions for distance learning.[37]

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[28] European Commission, 2021. "Consultation results: European express strong support for proposed digital rights and principle." https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/consultation-results-europeans-express-strong-support-proposed-digital-rights-and-principles

[29] European Commission. "The Digital Europe Programme". https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/digital-programme

[30] European Parliament Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, 2021. "Digital public administration in covid-19 era". https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/digital-public-administration-in-covid-1/product-details/20211208CHE09825

[31] OECD, Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, 2014. Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies.

[32] OECD. "OECD Digital Government Toolkit". https://www.oecd.org/governance/digital-government/toolkit/

[33] United Nations. "Digital Government". https://publicadministration.un.org/en/ict4d

[34] McKinsey Global Institute, 2020a. The future of work in Europe. Discussion Paper.

[35] McKinsey Global Institute, 2020a.

[36] McKinsey Global Institute, 2020b. McKinsey Quarterly. https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/five-fifty-the-quickening; Cornerstone, 2020. A License to Skills: Embracing the Reskilling Revolution. https://hr.cornerstoneondemand.com/reskilling-revolution

[37] European Commission, 2020a.

Teleworking was introduced as the main way of work during the crisis, which meant that the public sector had resorted to using digital tools for continuing providing their services. Switching to telework was a shift which highlighted the importance of the digital skills necessary for the future. Changes to work organisation induced by the pandemic confirmed that public sector workers can work remotely. These changes are likely here to stay, highlighting the need for the public sector to invest in technological infrastructure to support them in the long run. According to a Cornerstone survey of 500 business leaders and 1 000 employees across the globe carried out at the very beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, 76% of employees believed the challenges their organisation was facing due to the crisis will significantly alter their work and experiences in the future; 88% of HR leaders and 91% of non-HR executives share the same belief. Indeed, Member States had dedicated around 40% of the budget for digital investments available from the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility to foster the digital transformation of public services (see Chapter 5).[38]

1.3. Risks of digitalisation in public sector

Key takeaway:

- Some of the key risks related to digitalisation of the public sector are job losses for some workers, and risks of technological bias and discrimination, as well as issues related to accountability for the technologies introduced and threats to data privacy.

Researchers stress that some research overestimates or over-emphasizes the positives of digital transformation.[39] In any case, it is important to acknowledge that digitalisation can also bring negative effects to all stakeholders involved.

Technology, especially algorithms, can be biased and discriminative.[42] As an example, these risks have been relevant for a long time for operations in police departments, where algorithms have been proven to be flawed and biased, e.g., making incorrect facial recognition matches or physical characteristics matches. However, algorithms are increasingly more often used for other purposes such as recruitment in various sectors.[43] With algorithmic recruitment comes the risk for certain groups of labour force (e.g., women, black people) to be discriminated against and excluded from the recruitment process.[44] In addition, AI is also used for worker management practices, such as performance monitoring and evaluation, where it can also disadvantage certain employees. Policies and interventions designed based on biased predictions and suggestions can have discriminatory consequences.

For example, some speech recognition systems have been proven to discriminate against African Americans, when these systems were deployed to evaluate workers' performance in customer service jobs.[40] Moreover, governments are using Automated Decisions Systems (ADS) to identify policy target groups (e.g., predict the likelihood of children in danger), which can disregard important nuances and skew results to the disadvantage of the most vulnerable populations.[41]

There is a growing accountability gap between public and private sectors in terms of who is responsible for how new technologies work and their effects on citizens and workers. As private companies often have a lead in digitalisation, they are consulted or even leading digitalisation efforts in governments.

An illustration of accountability gap comes from a private company "CityTec", which manages smart city projects across the Netherlands, collecting data on residents, which they refuse to share with municipalities because it is "*competition-sensitive information*".[45]

Increasingly more citizen data is fed into multiple digital systems that help public sector organisations to enhance their service delivery. This causes data privacy concerns and risks of personal information being mined and used for private purposes.[46] Multiple cases of leak of populations' data or failure to ensure confidentiality of personal data have occurred in the public sector, underlining the importance of adequate security and safety systems to ensure that digitalisation does not invade peoples' private lives.[47]

More specific risks on workers in the sector are discussed further in Chapter 4.

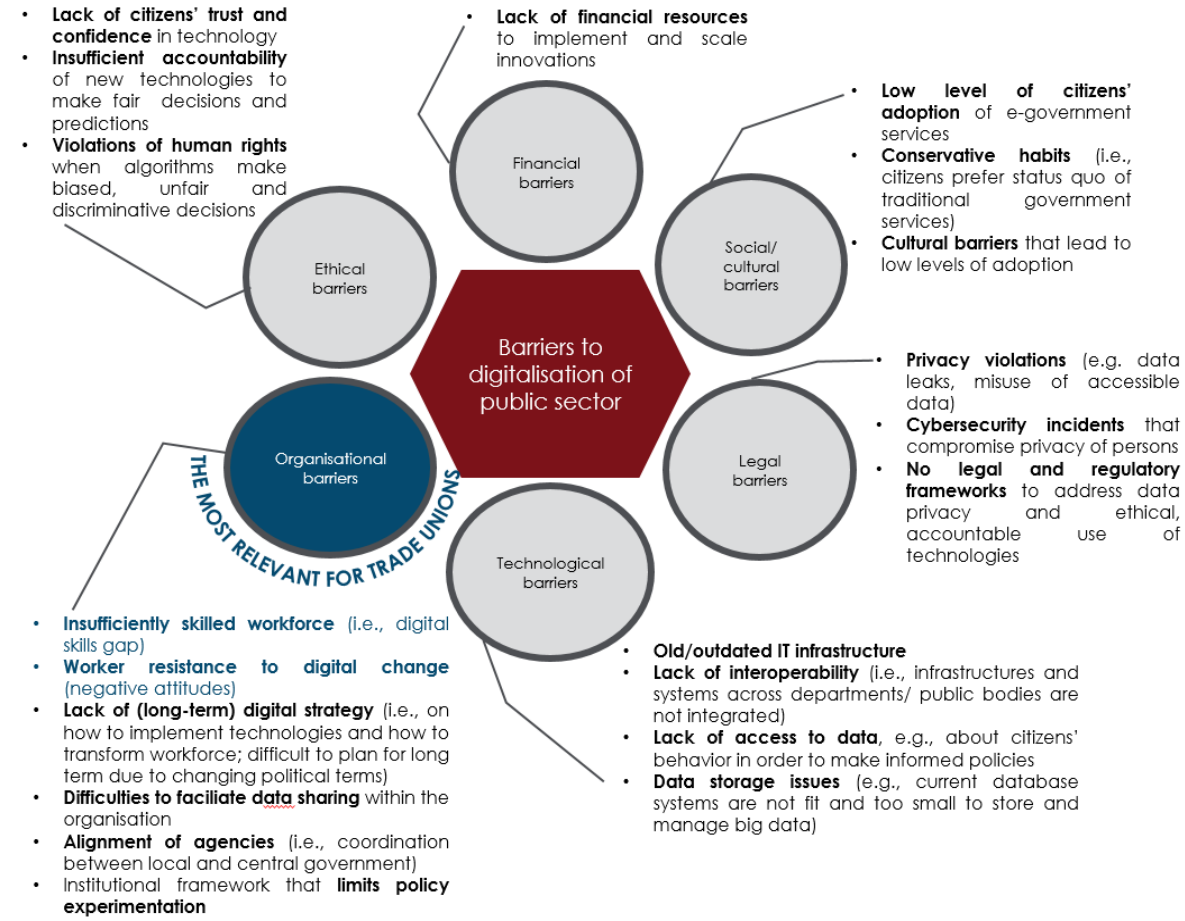
2. Barriers to digitalisation in public sector and remedies

The public sector has not caught up with the potential of digitalisation yet. In a 2015 study on digitalisation of the public sector, 70% of surveyed officials, leaders and experts believed they were behind the private sector. [48] Digitalisation occurs differently in the public sector as compared to the private sector, because it includes political ideas, ambitions and interventions that aim to fundamentally reshape organisations.[49] Therefore, **public sector encounters multiple obstacles that hinder its digitalisation** (see Figure 5).

Barriers that are of the most relevance to trade unions relate to workers' capacities and attitude towards digitalisation. While trade unions have limited capacity to impact such barriers as lack of technological equipment or lack of financial resources, they can impact workers' attitudes and their readiness for digitalisation. Hence, the following two subsections discuss the selected two barriers, namely workers' attitudes and digital skills gap in greater detail. In addition, the subsections explain how trade unions can respond to these challenges and support workers.

[38] Capgemini, DG CNECT, IDC, Politecnico di Milano, Sogeti, 2021. eGovernment Benchmark 2021. Entering a New Digital Government Era, 7.
[39] Fischer, C., Heuberger, M., & Heine, M., 2021. The impact of digitalization in the public sector: A systematic literature review. *der moderne staat - dms: Zeitschrift für Public Policy, Recht und Management*, *14(1);* Barcevičius et al., 2019.
[40] Koenecke, A. et al., 2020. Racial disparities in automated speech recognition. *PNAS*, 117(4), 7684-7689.
[41] Barcevičius et al., 2019, 51.
[42] Pencheva, I., Esteve, M., & Mikhaylov, S. J., 2018. Big Data and AI–A transformational shift for government: So, what next for research?. *Public Policy and Administration*, 35(1), 24-44.
[43] Brione, P., 2020. My boss the algorithm: An ethical look at algorithms in the workplace. ACAS; Vedapradha, R., Hariharan, R. Shivakami, R., 2019. Artificial Intelligence: A Technological Prototype in Recruitment. *Journal of Service Science and Management*, 12(3), 382-390; Fernández-Martínez, C., Fernández, A., 2020. AI and recruiting software: Ethical and legal implications. *Paladyn, Journal of Behavioral Robotics*, 11(1), 199-216.
[44] Dastin, J., 2018. "Amazon scraps secret AI recruiting tool that showed bias against women". *Reuters,* October 8, 2018. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-amazon-com-jobs-automation-insight/amazon-scraps-secret-ai-recruiting-tool-that-showed-bias-against-women-idUSKCN1MK08G; Feloni, R., 2017. "I tried the software that uses AI to scan job applicants for companies like Goldman Sachs and Unilever before meeting them — and it's not as creepy as it sounds." *Business Insider*, August 23, 2017. https://www.businessinsider.com/hirevue-ai-powered-job-interview-platform-2017-8
[45] Naafs, S., 2018. "'Living laboratories': the Dutch cities amassing data on oblivious residents." *The Guardian*, March 1, 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/mar/01/smart-cities-data-privacy-eindhoven-utrecht
[46] Scassa, T. 2014. Privacy and open government. *Future Internet 6(2)*, 397-413.
[47] Hillenius, G., 2017. "Following security breach, Sweden shores up outsourcing rules." *Joinup*, August 2, 2017. https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/egovernment/news/following-security-breach-sw ; Monteiro, M. A., 2019. "First GDPR fine in Portugal issued against hospital for three violations." *IAPP*, January 3, 2019. https://iapp.org/news/a/first-gdpr-fine-in-portugal-issued-against-hospital-for-three-violations/
[48] Deloitte, 2015.
[49] Plesner, U., Justesen, L., Glerup, C., 2018. The Transformation of Work in Digitized Public Sector Organizations. *Journal of Organizational Change Management,* 31(5), 1176-1190.

Figure 5. Barriers to digitalisation of public sector



Source: Barcevičius, E., et al., 2019; 57; Riedel, 2021; Lemke et al., 2021; UN, 2020; Ostroff, 2006.

2.1. Workers' attitudes

Key takeaways:

- Amongst the key barriers to digitalisation, much attention is paid on workers' resistance and negative attitudes towards digital change. Workers may resist digitalisation because of the belief that their organisations are not prepared for it, fear of change, or lack of involvement in the process of change.
- A few CESI members noted that workers fear digitalisation and would like to avoid it, that they believe that their organisations are not ready for digital change (especially in the education and training sector), or that they feel like they do not have a choice in and influence over how their work is being transformed (especially in health sector). However, these negative sentiments do not seem to be widespread and the attitudes of workers towards digitalisation are rather positive to the most part.
- Digitalisation requires a long-term vision and plan on behalf of employers, who should have a clear purpose for the change and strategies to help workers to adapt to the change. Such approach should be promoted and supported by trade unions as well in order to prepare workers for digital change.
- Trade unions can shape workers' attitudes towards digitalisation in order to help them cope better with the change. For this trade unions need to be aware of the drivers and purpose of digitalisation as well as potential benefits for workers, and share this knowledge with workers.

2.1.1. Workers' resistance to digitalisation

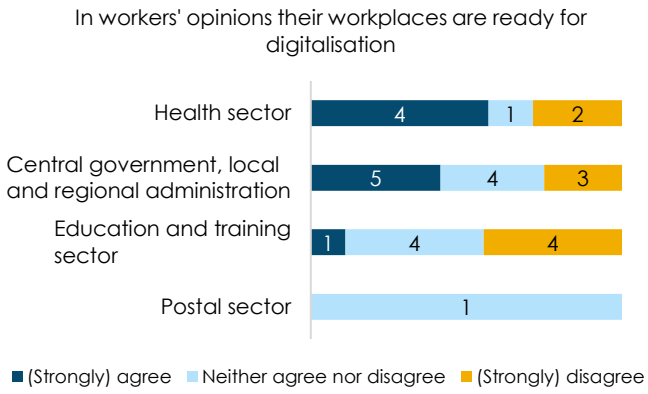
A foundational barrier to digitalisation of the public sector is workers' resistance.[50] Firstly**, civil servants may resist organisational changes because they do not think their organisations are**

[50] Hofmann, S., Ogonek, N., 2018. Different but still the same? How public and private sector organisations deal with new digital competences. *Electronic Journal of e-Government*, 16(2), 127-135; Visionary Analytics, 2020. CESI members' survey on digitalisation in public sector

ready for it. [51] Managers have a central role in this regard, as organisational readiness is mostly associated with their dedication to change and ability to get employee buy-in for structural changes. [52] Workers perceive their organisation as not ready for changes if managers do not provide sufficient communication and if they experience adverse repercussions of the change.[53] To this end, it is important that managers and middle management convey the importance of digital change and create accommodating environment to prevent negative attitudes of public sector workers.[54]

In terms of organisational readiness, CESI members believe that workers in healthcare and central, local and regional administrations tend to think that their workplaces are ready for digitalisation (see Figure 6). However, four out of nine trade unions indicated that in workers' opinion workplaces in the education and training sector are not ready for digitalisation. In addition, organisational unpreparedness has been chosen as one of the key barriers to addressing changing work organisation practices by high shares of trade unions from different sectors (see Figure 7).

Figure 6. Workers' perception of organisational readiness for digitalisation in the public sector, according to CESI members



Source: Visionary Analytics, 2021. DiWork survey on digital transformation of public sector. N= 12 for central government, local and regional administrations, N=9 for education and training sector, N=7 for health sector, N=1 for postal sector.

Figure 7. CESI members' perception of organisational readiness for digitalisation in the public sector

Source: Visionary Analytics, 2021. DiWork survey on digital transformation of public sector. N= 12 for central government, local and regional administrations, N=8 for education and training sector, N=6 for health sector.

Secondly, **workers resist digitalisation because they fear organisational change**. Research has shown that civil servants are more risk averse towards any organisational change.[55] The fear of change can stem from habits, fear of the unknown, fear of negative economic impact, or seeing only adverse outcomes of the change.[56] There is legal uncertainty workers have to face when dealing with digital documents (e.g., when an employee has to decide if an e-mail can be considered as an official document).[57] This is related to workers' fear of radical transparency enabled by digital technologies which allows to trace who is responsible for mistakes, fear of making the wrong decision and ultimately fear of losing their job. Although a few of CESI members agree that workers fear digitalisation and would like to avoid it, most of them disagree, suggesting that the responding trade unions do not think that workers they represent resist digitalisation out of fear (see Figure 8).

[51] Armenakis A., Harris, S.G., Mossholder, K.W.,1993. Creating readiness for organizational change. *Human relations*, 46(6), 681-703 ; Cinite, I., Duxbury, L. E., Higgins, C., 2009. Measurement of perceived organizational readiness for change in the public sector. *British Journal of Management*, 20(2), 265-277.
[52] Cinite et al. 2009
[53] Cinite et al.,2009
[54] Lemke et al., 2021
[55] Wirtz, B. W., Pistoia, A., Ullrich, S., Göttel, V., 2016. Business models: Origin, development and future research perspectives. *Long range planning*, 49(1), 36-54; Dur, R., Zoutenbier, R., 2015. Intrinsic motivations of public sector employees: Evidence for Germany. *German Economic Review*, 16(3), 343-366.
[56] Kotter, J.P., Schlesinger, L.A., 2008, Choosing strategies for change, *Harvard Business Review*, 86(7),130-139.
[57] Hoffman, S., Ogonek, N. 2018.

Figure 8. Fear of digitalisation among public sector workers according to CESI members

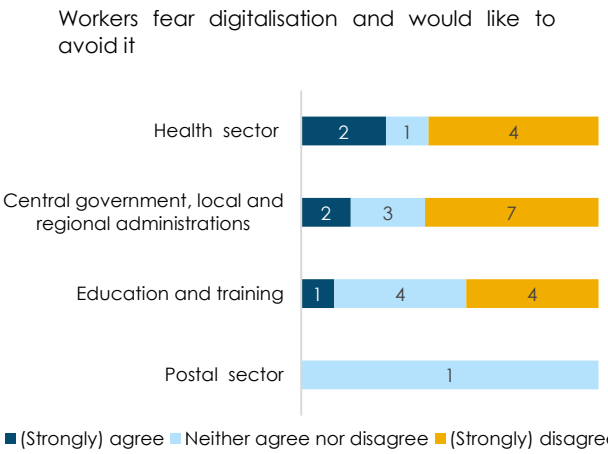
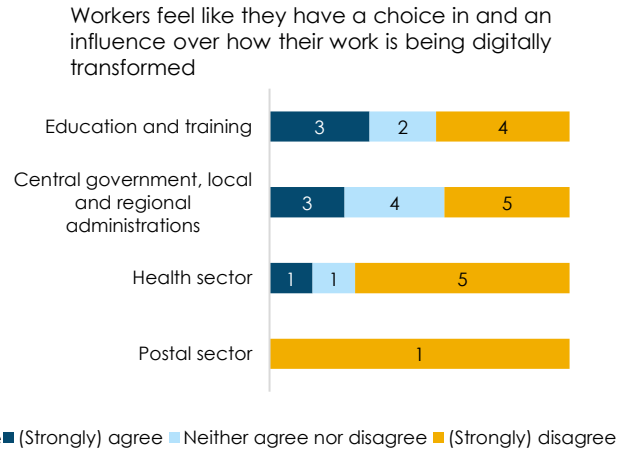


Figure 9.Workers' involvement in the process of digitalisation according to CESI members



Source: Visionary Analytics, 2021. DiWork survey on digital transformation of public sector. N= 12 for central government, local and regional administrations, N=9 for education and training sector, N=7 for health sector, N=1 for postal sector.

Thirdly, **workers are not sufficiently involved in the process of digitalisation, which makes them more likely to resist it**. Digital transition requires not only engagement from employees but also a participatory approach, which would enable and encourage workers to be active participants in the change.[58] Workers or their representatives are rarely consulted when it comes to introducing new digital tools or systems in their workplaces. This can make workers feel like they have no choice in the matter and can in no way influence the process of digitalisation. Research has shown that compared to workers from other sectors, civil servants are less confident that their employers would involve them in decisions about introduction of new technology.[59] Indeed, most of the CESI members representing workers from the health sector believe that employees feel like they do not have a choice in and an influence over how their work is being digitally transformed (see Figure 9). Trade unions remain more positive when it comes to workers' involvement in and influence over digitalisation in the education and training sector, as well as central, regional, and local administrations.

Nevertheless, public servants do not always resist digitalisation. The survey of German and Ukrainian public sector officials showed that 93% of respondents were willing to contribute to the digital initiatives at their workplace.[60] The results of the CESI members' survey also reveal that workers in the public sector hold rather positive attitudes towards digitalisation. Figure 8 shows that most of the CESI members believe that workers do not fear digitalisation, and, on the contrary, are eager to take part in it (see Figure 10). An exception can be seen in the central government, local and regional administration sector, where seven out of twelve trade unions indicate that workers they represent are not personally invested in driving digital transformation.

2.1.2. Remedies to negative workers' attitudes towards digitalisation

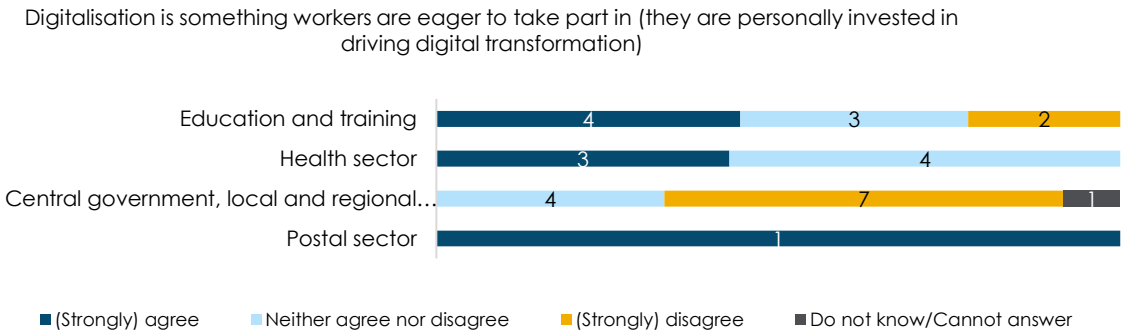
To counter workers' resistance as the foundational barrier to digitalisation of the public sector it is essential to **support a change of the organisational culture**.[61] Digital transformation cannot be approached in a vacuum, as a standalone process that can be facilitated by simply investing in digital tools and implementing various digital systems in organisations. It is necessary to approach digitalisation with regard to its impact on the whole organisation (especially

[58] Gupta, S., 2018. Organizational Barriers to Digital Transformation. KTH Royal Institute of Technology School of iNdustrial Engineering and Managemnt.
[59] For example, in the recent survey of the public service workers in the UK, even 73% of them indicated that they are not sure if their employer would involve them in decisions about introduction of new technology. Source: https://prospect.org.uk/news/technology-can-be-beneficial-to-the-civil-service-but-not-if-we-forget-about-the-humans-involved/
[60] Lemke et al. 2021.
[61] OECD. Digital talent for a transformative public sector culture. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/245a6748-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/245a6748-en

workers) rather than focusing on how it makes operations and service provision more efficient.[62]

To this end, in order to facilitate a successful digital transformation, employers in the public sector must approach digitalisation as a change that requires a long-term vision and plan. The clear purpose would explain the necessity of digitalisation for workers, which would then be less likely to resist change. Moreover, employers should have a strategy on how to help workers adapt to this change, including supporting their skills development and ensuring safe and healthy work conditions. Organisational shift should be guided by professionals with strong leaderships and change management skills, who would "nurture a culture of experimentation, curiosity and learning from failure".[63]

Figure 10. Workers' willingness to take part in digitalisation process, as seen by CESI members



Source: Visionary Analytics, 2021. DiWork survey on digital transformation of public sector. N= 12 for central government, local and regional administrations, N=9 for education and training sector, N=7 for health sector, N=1 for postal sector.

Trade unions can also shape workers' attitudes to digital change. Among other factors, workers' attitude towards digital change depends on whether they are informed about the purpose of digitalising their work practices, whether they are consulted on the implementation of digital tools and if they are aware of the benefits it can bring them. To this end, trade unions can do the following to shape workers' attitudes:

- Be aware about what drives digitalisation and share this knowledge with workers. It is important that trade unions and workers understand that digitalisation is an inevitable process driven by technology push as well as increasing citizen expectations and expected economic benefits (see Chapter 1.2).
- Encourage employers to put in place digitalisation strategy, which would explain to workers the purpose of digitalisation and include measures on how to support them through organisational change.
- Be aware and raise awareness among workers of the potential benefits that digital change can bring to them (e.g., see Chapter 3). It is important that workers see evidence on what digitalisation means for their work in practical terms. Understanding that digital tools can help them in their daily tasks can shift workers' attitude from negative to positive. Nevertheless, it is as important to be aware of the potential disadvantages of digitalisation for workers, so as to avoid creating an impression that digitalisation is an inherently positive development and overlooking important risks.

2.2. Digital skills

Besides workers' attitudes, another important barrier to digitalisation is their **lack of digital skills.**

Key takeaways:

- Structural transformations of the labour market due to digitalisation increases the demand for digital skills, including specific hard skills (e.g., programming, ability to solve technical problems), as well as soft skills (e.g., non-cognitive, interpersonal, self-leadership skills).

[62] Logical Design Solutions, 2019. Organizational Change: A Crucial Component of Digital Transformation.https://www.lds.com/pov/organizational-change-crucial-component-digital-transformation/

[63] OECD, 2020. The OECD Framework for digital talent and skills in the public sector. OECD Working Papers on Public Governance No. 45, 20.

- Demand for medium-skilled workers is decreasing and higher-skilled jobs experience most gains. Workers with higher levels of skills are more secure in the digitalised labour market, with higher likelihood of employment and higher levels of income.
- Almost half (42%) of EU27 and the UK citizens, and 34% of workers lack at least basic digital skills. Older people, those with lower levels of education, retired or inactive are less digitally literate. Countries in Southern Europe and Central and Eastern Europe demonstrate lower levels of digital literacy. Public sector is doing rather well in terms of basic digital literacy as most workers (77%) have at least basic digital skills. However, the above-discussed trends indicate that basic digital skills are certainly not enough for successful adaptation to the future of work.
- Changing skills requirements have multiple implications on workers: workers might find themselves in need to develop new or different skills, and some of their current skills might become obsolete.
- Public sector workers are usually offered traditional offline training that cover judicial topics, specific programmes and procedures, soft skill development, and basic IT tools. However, these efforts are not sufficient.
- Generally, workers should be aware of digital technologies and the specific need for digital skills in their works, as well as given access to training. Trade unions can contribute to closing the digital gap by building partnerships, raising awareness and facilitating training opportunities.

2.2.1. Digital skills are a combination of technical and creative skills

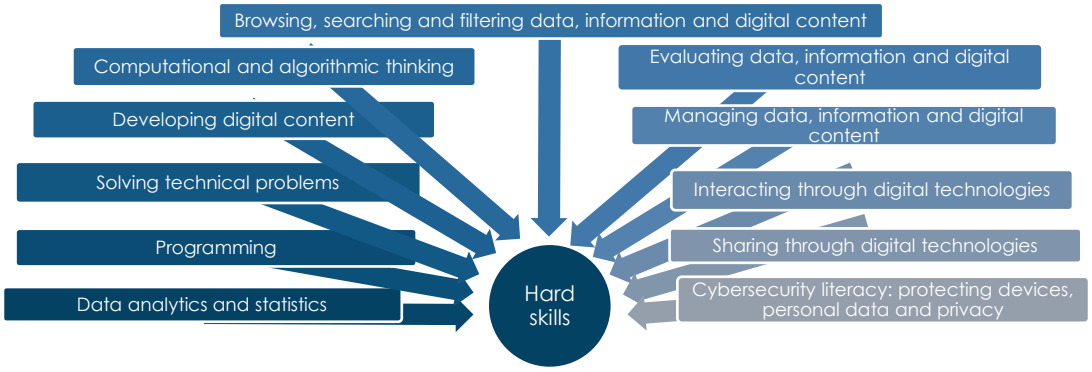
The labour market is undergoing structural transformations driven by digitalisation.[64] Digital transformation is redesigning existing jobs, processes of service provision, creating new means to provide services and creating new services and jobs altogether (see Chapter 3). Such change is significantly transforming the demand for skills that workers must have to participate in the labour market. Reconfiguration of jobs makes some skills obsolete and highlights the importance of others.[65] The set of certain skills required for the future of work are referred to as "digital competence", "digital skills" or "new skills". Highlighting the importance of these skills, the European Commission names digital skills as the backbone of the digital society.[66]

Due to the dynamic and constant technological and societal change, and different research interests and aims, different terms have been used over time to define the skills that will be in high demand due to digitalisation.[67] These terms include computer or ICT literacy, digital competence, information literacy, digital literacy, e-skills including ICT-user skills, ICT-practitioner skills, e-business or e-leadership skills, among many.[68] Despite the variability of terms, they usually cover very similar sets of abilities that are deemed necessary for the future of work. They include two sets of skills: **1) hard skills** or technological/technical/ICT skills, cognitive skills and STEM knowledge**, and 2) soft skills,** or non-cognitive skills.

At the beginning of the 4th Industrial evolution, defining the skills for the future of work meant focusing mainly on the demand for "hard" skills and STEM knowledge, stressing the ability of workers to conduct data analytics and program.[69] The key factor behind this reasoning was the fact that at first digitalisation (particularly computerization and automation) was largely confined to routine tasks.[70]

[64] Berger, T., Frey, C.B., 2016. Digitalization, jobs and convergence in Europe: strategies for closing the skills gap. European Commission.
[65] Warhurst, C., Hunt, W., 2019. The digitalisation of future work and employment: Possible impact and policy response. JRC Working Papers Series on Labour, Education and Technology. No. 2019/05, European Commission, Joint Research Centre (JRC).
[66] European Commission, 2020a.
[67] Curtarelli, M., Gualtieri, V., Jannati, M.S., Donlevy, V., 2016. ICT for work: Digital skills in the workplace. European Commission, 16.
[68] See Frailon, J., Schulz, W., Ainley, J., 2013. International Computer and Information Literacy Study; European Council, 2018. Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning (2018/C 189/01); The European E-Skills Forum, 2004. E-skills for Europe: Towards 2010 and Beyond. Brussels: European Commission.
[69] Cornerstone, 2020.
[70] Acemoglu, D., and Autor, D., 2011. Skills, tasks and technologies: Implications for employment and earnings. *Handbook of Labor Economics* 4.

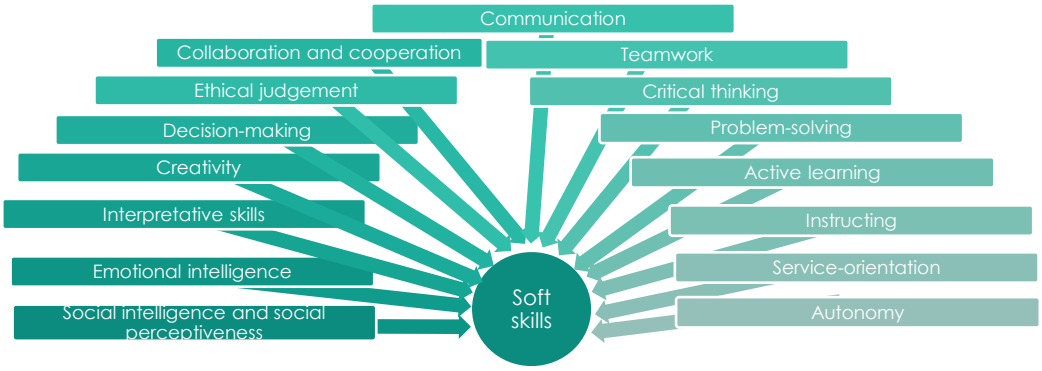
Figure 11. Examples of hard skills in demand



Source: based on Dondi, M., Klier, J., Panier, F., and Schubert, J., 2021; Carretero Gomez, S., Vuorikari, R. and Punie, Y., 2017.

However, more recently non-routine tasks have been transformed into well-defined problems that could be automated using NLP, pattern recognition and machine perception technologies.[71] In this context where technologies are able to solve STEM problems without the assistance of human workers, researchers highlight that workers need more than "hard" technical ICT or STEM knowledge.[72] Therefore, the discourse on the skills needed for the digital age workforce has shifted from focusing on solely "hard" skills **towards a mix of hard and soft skills, and a convergence of technical and creative ability**.[73]

Figure 12. Examples of soft skills in demand



Source: based on JRC, 2019; WEF 2018; Baldwin, 2019; Frey and Osborn, 2013; Voss and Rego, 2019, OECD 2018

Soft skills are interpersonal characteristics related to personality, temperament, attitude and intuition rather than acquiring knowledge, making them more difficult for algorithms to internalise (see Figure 12).[74] These skills are related to integrity and motivation, and enable a person to interact effectively with others. Since machines cannot yet substitute jobs that require to simultaneously use a wide range of skills and address unpredictable scenarios[75], workers with strong unique human capacities who can anticipate changes, be resilient, and flexible are the safest in an increasingly digitised labour market.

Examples of key soft skills include the following:

- ***Creativity*** refers to workers' ability to develop innovative ways to solve a problem, come up with unusual clever ideas on a given topic, knowledge of theory and techniques needed to compose, produce, perform works of music, dance, visual arts, drama and sculpture.[76]
- ***Social intelligence*** (including social perceptiveness, negotiation, persuasion, assisting and caring for others) is also in demand, as workers need to be able to bring people together and reconcile differences, persuade others to change their minds or behaviour, provide personal assistance, medical attention, emotional support, other personal care to co-workers, customers or patients.[77]
- ***Social perceptiveness*** is important for workers to be aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.[78]

- ***Critical thinking*** is necessary to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems. [79]
- ***Active learning*** is an important skill to understand the implications of new information for current and future problem-solving and decision-making. [80]
- Workers also need certain skills that would enable them not to only conduct their work tasks, but to *manage their own workloads* in healthy and safe manner.[81] They will need to be ***self-reliant, flexible, adaptable, resilient, culturally sensitive*** and *competent to work across multiple disciplines*, as well as have *interpersonal skills* for collaborating virtually.[82]

Employees and employers alike acknowledge the importance of both hard and soft skills. Employers surveyed in the Cornerstone study reported their wish to develop employee skills in STEM areas and provide them with technical training, but they also prioritise development of such soft skills as leadership, seek to improve learning in the flow of work and social learning.[83] These goals reaffirm employers' wish to develop skills related to technology (46%), leadership (43%), communication (35%), data analysis (30%), and mental and emotional health (27%). Employers rate workers' ability to adapt to change and being able to learn as equally important as being able to use a computer.[84] This all suggests that non-cognitive (soft) skills are as important to employers for the future of work as are advanced numeracy, literacy and technical skills.[85]

2.2.2. Increasing demand for digital skills

Since the beginning of the 4th Industrial Revolution, research on the requirements for the workforce in the future of work had suggested that work activities and therefore skill requirements for workers will be significantly different.[86] As digital technologies modify job content and work organisation, employers need workers that have digital skills (both hard and soft skills) to respond to these changes.[87] Growth of employment in knowledge-intensive sectors dictates that demand for digital skills is increasing.[88]

Around 90% of occupations in Europe require at least some kind of digital skills.[89] The most required skills in all occupations (especially for high- and medium-skilled jobs) are basic digital skills (i.e., using a word processor, creating a spreadsheet, searching for, collecting and processing information using ICT, communicating through ICT using email, social media, video calls).[90] 90% of employers reported that such occupations as professionals, technicians, clerical

[71] Berger, T. and Frey, C.B., 2016.
[72] Hunnius, S., Paulowitsch, B. and Schuppan, T. 2015. "Does E-government Education Meet Compe-tency Requirements? An Analysis of the German University System from International Perspective", in Bui, T.X. and Sprague, R.H. (Eds.), 48th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS), HI, USA, IEEE, Piscataway, NJ; Cordella, A. and Tempini, N., 2015. E-government and organizational change: Reappraising the role of ICT and bureaucracy in public service delivery. *Government Information Quarterly (32)3*; Hartley, J. 2017. The Uses of Digital Literacy. New York, NY: Routledge; Deloitte, 2018. 2018 Deloitte and The Manufacturing Institute skills gap and future of work study.
[73] Cornerstone, 2020, 2.
[74] Servoz. M., 2019. The future of work? Work of the future! On how artificial intelligence, robotics and automation are transforming jobs and the economy in Europe. European Commission, 62; ACT, 2014. Cognitive and noncognitive skills. https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/WK-Brief-KeyFacts-CognitiveandNoncognitiveSkills.pdf
[75] Gonzalez Vazquez, I., et al., 2019. The changing nature of work and skills in the digital age. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union; Harari, Y. N., 2018. *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*. Israel: Spiegel & Grau, Jonathan Cape.
[76] Frey, C. B., and Osborne, M. A., 2013. The Future of Employment: How Susceptible are Jobs to Computerization?, Oxford Martin Programme on Technology and Employment,.
[77] Frey, C. and Osborner, M.A, 2013, 30-31.
[78] OECD, 2018. Based on O*NET26.1 Database https://www.onetcenter.org/database.html#individual-files
[79] OECD, 2018. Based on O*NET26.1 Database.
[80] OECD, 2018. Based on O*NET26.1 Database.
[81] EU-OSHA, 2018. Foresight on new and emerging occupational safety and health risks associated with digitalisation by 2025. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 63.
[82] EU-OSHA 2018, 63.
[83] Cornerstone, 2020.
[84] Gonzalez Vazquez, I., et al., 2019, 42-43 based on Cedefop's Skills Online Vacancy Analysis Tool for Europe (Skills-OVATE)
[85] Gonzalez Vazquez, I., et al., 2019, 42.
[86] Rotarori, D. Lee, E.J., Sleeva, S., 2020. The evolution of the workforce during the fourth industrial revolution. *Human Resource Development International,* 24(1), 92-103; Berger, T., Frey, C.B., 2016; Hüsing, T., Korte, W.B, Dashja, E., 2015. E-skills and e-leadership skills 2020. Trends and forecasts for the European ICT professional and digital leadership labour market. Empirical Working Paper.
[87] Gonzalez Vazquez, I., et al., 2019, 29.
[88] McKinsey, 2020a.
[89] Servoz, M. 2019, 17; Curtarelli, M., et al., 2016; ET 2020 Working Group on Vocational Education And Training (VET), 2020. Innovation and Digitalisation: eight insights for pioneering new approaches, 23.
[90] Curtarelli, M., et al. 2016, 8.

workers, skilled agricultural workers were required to have at least basic digital skills. While advanced digital skills were less required, they were most in demand for professionals and technicians (advanced digital skills refer to using software for design, calculation or simulation, programming and using computer numerical control machines and robots.[91] Such estimates suggest that digital skills have become transversal skills and they are required of every worker.[92]

The phenomenon of "hollowing out" of the labour market further increases the demand for digital skills:[93] In recent years in most advanced economies, *employment has grown in knowledge-intensive sectors*, such as telecommunications, financial services, real estate, education, human health and social work, where workers require *a higher level of digital skills* (i.e., a combination of use of ICT and non-cognitive skills such as communication and teamwork)[94]. At the same time employment has *declined in agriculture and manufacturing sectors,* where workers perform *manual, low-skills tasks, with no need for digital skills* and/or social interaction and emotional capacities[95]. Looking to the future, generally, activities requiring mainly physical and manual skills (e.g., craft and technician skills, fine motor skills) will decline by 18% by 2030 across Europe, while activities requiring basic cognitive skills (e.g., basic literacy and numeracy, basic data input/processing) will decline even by 28%.[96] Similarly to low-skill occupations, middle-skills and middle-wage employment is eroding as well, as growth of such lower middle-skill occupations as bank tellers has stagnated.[97]

Possession of digital skills leads to higher likelihood of employment, pointing toward the importance of these skills. Workers lacking basic digital skills are more vulnerable and encounter difficulties in finding jobs. Technological change is skill-biased, reducing the demand for unskilled labour compared to skilled labour.[98] Some of the largest employment sectors in Europe are also those the most at risk of job losses due to automation (e.g., manufacturing, administration and support services, distributive trades).[99] This means that large proportions of workers are vulnerable in the face of digitalisation if they do not possess skills that could help them find employment in other sectors. According to McKinsey, having 'self-leadership' skills correlates with higher likelihood of employment as those proficient in adaptability, coping with uncertainty, synthesizing messages, and achievement orientation are more likely to be employed in the digital age.[100]

Digital skills are also linked with better income prospects. Lack of digital literacy severely impairs wage prospects.[101] Workforce lacking digital skills is at greater risk of unemployment and poverty.[102] Conversely, the probability to have a high-paying job is greatest for workers who perform non-routine tasks requiring non-cognitive skills and also use of ICT.[103] According to McKinsey, the four abilities and behaviours most strongly linked to high incomes were "work-plan development", "asking the right questions", "self-confidence", and "organisational awareness", signalling the importance of different skills across different categories (not only hard skills).[104] These findings correspond with the fact that one commonality between the best-paid young professionals is that they are employed in jobs where the use of non-cognitive

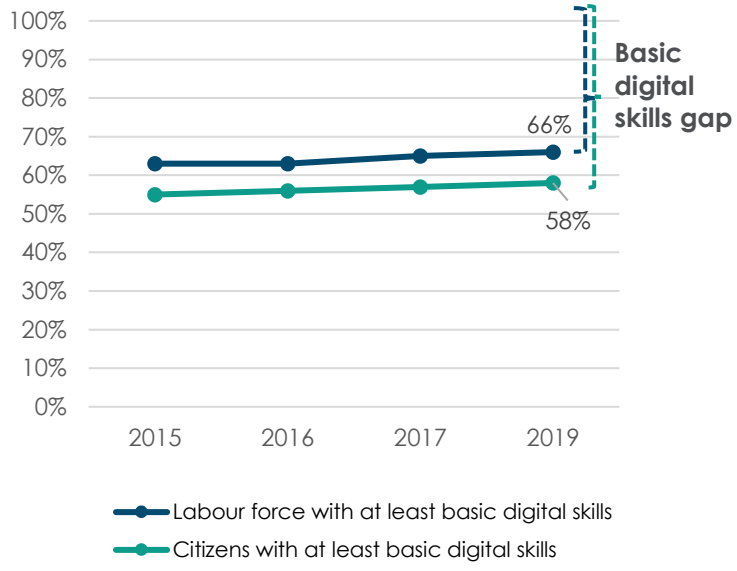
[91] Curtarelli, M., et al. 2016, 7.
[92] Curtarelli, M., et al. 2016, 5.
[93] EU-OSHA 2018, 24; Smit, S., Tacke, Lund, S., Manyika, J., 2020. The future of work in Europe Automation, workforce transitions, and the shifting geography of employment. The McKinsey Global Institute.
[94] Smit, S. et al., 2020; Gonzalez Vazquez, I., et al., 2019, 29-31.
[95] Gonzalez Vazquez, I., et al., 2019, 29.
[96] Smit, S. et al., 2020, 23.
[97] Smit, S. et al., 2020, 9.
[98] Pastore, F., Gausas, S., Styczynka, I. et al., 2019. EU and ILO: Shaping the Future of Work. Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies Directorate-General for Internal Policies.
[99] EU-OSHA, 2018, 24.
[100] Dondi, M., Klier, J., Panier, F., and Schubert, J., 2021. Defining the skills citizens will need in the future world of work. McKinsey & Company.
[101] Falck, O., Heimisch, A., Wiederhold, S., 2016. Returns to ICT Skills. IEB Working Paper N. 2016/05; Lane, M., Conlon, G., 2016. The Impact of Literacy, Numeracy and Computer Skills on Earnings and Employment Outcomes. OECD Education Working Papers No. 129.
[102] ESF Transnational Platform, 2018. https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en/transnational-cooperation-platform
[103] Gonzalez Vazquez, I., et al., 2019, 29.
[104] Dondi, M., et al., 2021.

(soft) skills (i.e., problem solving, communication, team working and planning/organisation) is considered important.[105]

2.2.3. Digital skills gap

Knowledge and skills is one of the pre-conditions determining workers' readiness for digital transformation. **Today, still a large part of the citizens and workers in the EU lacks at least basic digital skills,** despite the fact that most jobs require such skills.[106] That is one of the key barriers to digitalisation. According to the European Commission's Digital Scoreboard, the share of EU27 and the UK citizens who have basic or above basic overall digital skills increased from 55% in 2015 to only 58% in 2019.[107] These increases are relatively small and signal that in 2019 still a large part (42%) of EU citizens did not have basic digital skills. More specifically, in terms of workers, around 34% of the active labour force (employed and unemployed) of EU-27 and the UK lacked basic digital skills (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. Basic digital skills in the EU27 and the UK (2019)



Source: European Commission, Digital Scoreboard.

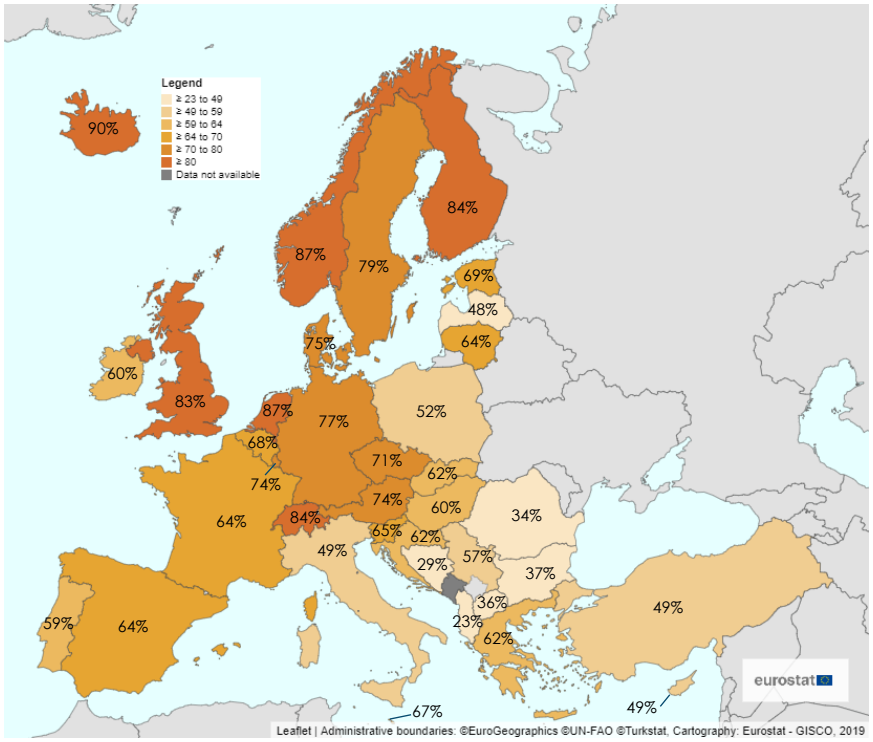
The following briefly discusses a few key trends related to the lack of digital skills in Europe:

- 61 million of adults in Europe have poor literacy and numeracy skills, which hinder their chances of being digitally literate and successfully integrated in the labour market.[108]
- The level of skills possessed by European workers strongly depends on socio-demographic factors. Research shows that digital proficiency is lower among older people.[109] In 2019, 82% of people aged 16-24, 66% of people aged 25-54, and 35% of people aged 55-74 had at least basic digital skills in EU27 + UK, showing a decrease in digital proficiency with age.[110]
- Individuals that attained higher levels of formal education are more likely to have at least basic digital skills than those with lower levels of education.[111] In 2019, the share of individuals in EU-27 + UK with higher levels of formal education that had at least basic digital skills was 84%, while the number stood at 32% for those with no or low formal education.[112]
- According to DESI in 2014-2017, Southern Europe and Central and Eastern Europe were behind the Western and Norther Europe in terms of share of workers with digital skills (see Figure 14)·. This trend remains true for both basic and more advanced digital skills, and for labour force and citizens generally, according to Eurostat data from 2019.

[105] Gonzalez Vazquez, I., et al., 2019, 41 based on Cedefop's European Skills and Jobs Survey, 2016.
[106] European Commission. Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2020 Questions and Answers. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_1022
[107] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/isoc_sk_dskl_i/default/table?lang=en In broad terms, an individual has a basic level of skills when he/she is able to perform at least one activity in at least one in four skills areas of DigComp (i.e., information skills, communication skills, problem solving skills, software skills or digital content creation skills). An individual has above basic level of digital skills when he/she can perform more than one activity in all four skills areas. For more detailed explanation please see: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/tepsr_sp410_esmsip2.htm
[108] Servoz, M., 2019, 69-70.
[109] Dondi, M., et al., 2021; DESI, 2020; Curtarelli et al. 2016, 9.
[110] Eurostat. Individuals' level of digital skills (until 2019). https://tinyurl.com/yppusrwh
[111] Dondi, M., et al., 2021; DESI, 2020;
[112] Eurostat. Individuals' level of digital skills (until 2019).

The share of public sector workers with basic digital skills is higher than the European average, which means that **the public sector has a narrower digital skills gap in comparison to other sectors** considered in the Eurostat's estimations. Statistics from 2019 show that 77% of workers in public administration, defence, education, human health or social work activities in EU27 and the UK had at least basic digital skills: 32% had basic digital skills, and 42% had an above basic level of digital skills.[113] For comparison, the share of workers with at least basic digital skills in the business services (private sector) is only 2 percentage points higher (79%).[114] Other sectors that report more workers who have digital skills are real estate activities (80%), financial or insurance sector (88%) and information and communication (92%). On the other hand, multiple sectors have less digitally proficient workers than the public sector, namely, mining or quarrying, manufacturing, or other industry (60% of workers have at least basic digital skills), wholesale, retail trade, transport, accommodation, or food services (58%), construction (49%), forestry or fishing (30%). A more precise analysis of the kind of skills workers have in the public administration, defence, education, human health or social work activities (sectors in the focus of this study) reveals that workers are more proficient in information skills, communication skills and problem-solving skills than in software skills.[115]

Figure 14. Active labour force with at least basic digital skills (2019)



Source: Eurostat (2019). Available at: https://tinyurl.com/3bnr7j8t

Although the effects of digitalisation on workers' skills may be multi-directional, all of them lead to a digital skills gap. Workers might find themselves in need to develop higher skills (upskilling), or different types of skills (reskilling), and some of their current skills might become unnecessary or obsolete (deskilling) (see Box 2).

Box 2. Examples of how changing skills needs may affect workers' skills in multiple directions

- **Deskilling** occurs because the knowledge required to perform some of the tasks in a job is embodied within technology or technology itself performs these tasks. For example, postal workers equipped with digital routers no longer need to know the neighbourhood or plan their routes, AI-based computer, perform an increasing number of diagnostic tests in healthcare, and matching algorithms tend to increasingly successfully "allocate" unemployed to vacancies or further learning.
- **Upskilling** is associated with the need to develop, manage, and operate advanced digital technologies. Design and continuous improvements in the digital systems requires broad understanding of the processes of service provision, key quality parameters, potential bottlenecks, etc. – this span significantly beyond narrowly conceived digital skills. Operation of digital technologies, likewise, may require broad set of skills and knowledge. For example, doctors validating AI-based diagnoses in addition to relevant medical knowledge, need to understand how the algorithm functions, so that they could identify potential biases or errors in the generated diagnoses.

[113] Eurostat. Individuals' level of digital skills (until 2019).
[114] Eurostat. Individuals' level of digital skills (until 2019).
[115] 88% of EU-27 and the UK had above basic information skills, 78%- above basic communication skills, 75%- above basic problem solving skills, but only 56% had above basic software skills. Source: Eurostat. Individuals' level of digital skills (until 2019).

- **Reskilling** is needed when workers need to perform tasks different from those they did before (as a result of automation and changes in occupation). As routine tasks are increasingly automated and performed by computers, workers increasingly need social skills in order to carry out tasks that are beyond the reach of computer.

Source: author's own elaboration based on Acemoglu, D. and Autor, D., 2010. Skills, Tasks and Technologies: Implications for Employment and Earnings, NBER Working Paper No. 16082; Martinaitis, Ž., Christenko, A., Antanavičius J., 2020. Upskilling, deskilling, or polarisation? Evidence on change in skills in Europe, *Work, Employment and Society* (35)3.

The speed at which workers are expected to renew their skills has intensified. Estimates suggest that decades ago workers needed to update their skills every 10 to 15 years, while now they must upskill and then reskill at least every decade.[116] For certain groups of workers, who experience a rapid change of the knowledge required to perform their job, this process needs to be continuous and regular – monthly or bi-weekly (e.g. professionals in STEM-related industries, health professionals and technicians, teachers).[117] McKinsey estimates that by 2030, around 21 million (or 9%) of workers in EU-27, the UK and Switzerland will need to change their occupations because their current roles will not exist.[118] At the same time, almost five times as many workers (94 million or 40% of the workforce in the EU27, the UK and Switzerland in 2018) might not need to change their occupations but will need to acquire new skills, as one fifth of their current activities could be handled with the help of technology. This need for workers to adapt their skill sets to the changing labour market has resulted in what some call a 'reskilling revolution', where the skills gap should be closed through lifelong learning and upskilling, deeming skills development as one of the most critical priorities for the next decade.[119]

2.2.4. Remedies to the digital skills gap

Equipping society (and the labour force) with digital skills remains one of the greatest challenges of digitalisation. The special Eurobarometer survey from September-October 2021 revealed that difficulty in learning new digital skills is a top concern for 26% of the surveyed.[120] 77% of workplaces in EU that reported they are aware of the digital skills gap in their workplace had not taken any actions to address it, according to data from 2015.[121] In addition, constantly evolving technology makes it difficult to predict what kind of specific skills workers will need in the future, making it more difficult to develop these skills.[122] In the face of job automation and creation of new jobs that involve new activities, initial education and further training of workers play a paramount role. Research highlights the importance of addressing the digital skills gap by transforming education systems so that they focus on developing transversal skills rather than preparing people for specific jobs.[123]

Lifelong learning becomes essential for workers to keep up with digitalisation. Most of the workforce are no longer students learning in education institutions, which are the primary facilitators of learning. Therefore, continuous adult learning is important to ensure that the workforce is ready for digital transformation. Older people are less likely to be proficient in digital skills, which illustrates the need for and importance of adult learning. ILO has prioritized the recognition of universal entitlement to lifelong learning for people to acquire skills, upskill and reskill throughout their life course.[124]

Employees mostly acknowledge the need for upskilling or reskilling, creating the demand for training. For example, in 2020, 72% of the respondents of the public sector employees in Ukraine and Germany indicated they saw the need to improve their technical skills and learn new

[116] Kasriel, S., 2017. "Skill, re-skill and re-skill again. How to keep up with the future of work." *World Economic Forum,* July 31, 2017. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/07/skill-reskill-prepare-for-future-of-work/

[117] Cornerstone, 2020; McGuinness, S., Pouliakas, K., Redmond, P., 2021. Skills-displacing technological change and its impact on jobs: challenging technological alarmism? *Economics of Innovation and New Technology*, 1-23.

[118] Smit, S. et al., 2020, 30.

[119] World Economic Forum, 2020. "The Reskilling Revolution: Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Education for a Billion People by 2030." January 22, 2020. https://www.weforum.org/press/2020/01/the-reskilling-revolution-better-skills-better-jobs-better-education-for-a-billion-people-by-2030; Cornerstone, 2020.

[120] Misheva, G., 2021. Eurobarometer 2021: the difficulty of learning new digital skills is a top concern for Europeans. https://digital-skills-jobs.europa.eu/en/latest/news/eurobarometer-2021-difficulty-learning-new-digital-skills-top-concern-europeans

[121] Curtarelli, M., et al. 2016, 8.

[122] Servoz, M., 2019, 43.

[123] Servoz, M., 2019, 57.

[124] International Labour Organization (ILO), 2021. Shaping skills and lifelong learning for the future of work. International Labour Conference 109th Session.

processes.[125] In the Cornerstone study, 20% of 1,000 surveyed employees from around the world expressed concern that their role in the next few years will be filled by more qualified candidates, and 21% indicated that their role will become too digitally technical and they will not be able to keep up with the requirements. Employers also report that a rather large share of workers are not prepared to respond to the increasing demand for digital skills. For example, 15% of employers in a European Commission study from 2016 reported that some of their employees are not fully capable to use digital technologies at work.[126] However, despite the apparent demand for skill development, as of 2020, only around 20% of enterprises in the EU-27 provided ICT training to their employees, the share ranging from 7% in Romania to 38% in Finland.[127]

There is a myriad of ways workplaces can address digital skills gap. Out of the 12% workplaces in the European Digital Skills Survey that had taken any action to do so, most addressed the digital skills gap by training (on-the-job training & development programmes, as well as external training).[128] In the public sector, workers obtain digital skills by participating in traditional offline trainings and rarely in e-learning.[129] Most of the trainings in the public sector cover judicial topics, specific programmes and procedures, soft skill-related trainings and training on basic IT tools such as Microsoft Office. Public sector employees follow traditional training and then teach their peers on the job. According to a Cornerstone study from 2020, the most popular avenues for skills development chosen by workplaces is the use of learning management systems (LMS) and workshops and instructor-led training (however, those are less popular in Europe as compared to North America or Asia). Additional ways employers prioritise skills development include investing in external consultants, expanding Learning and Development staff (i.e., team members that aim to support workers' personal and professional development, especially popular in Europe), and implementing mentorship programs.

One of the most important obstacles to addressing the digital skills gap is difficulties in forecasting what kind of skills will be required for future jobs. Rapid advancements of technology make it hard to predict what activities workers can be expected to do in the future. Identification of emerging new skill needs is key to the reskilling revolution. Currently, according to the Cornerstone (2020) study, employees identify which skills they need for their current jobs or jobs they are applying to by asking their managers (46% of respondents), using career resources (43%), reading job descriptions (38%), and consulting colleagues (29%). However, it is more difficult to understand what kind of skills workers will need for the future jobs that do not exist yet. The technology itself can serve in this regard, as ML and AI technologies can spot patterns from large amounts of data and therefore predict the skills of the future.[130]

LinkedIn's Economic Graph, a digital representation of the global economy based on all the data in LinkedIn is an example of how technology can be used to predict the skills of the future. It spots trends such as talent migration, hiring rates, in-demand skills by region.

Trade unions can contribute to addressing the changing skills needs by: [131]

- Raising awareness on digital technologies and the need for digital skills.
- Promoting access to training, e.g., disseminating information about existing training initiatives and how to access them. That is where trade unions and other professional associations can play an essential role.
- Facilitating training. Trade unions can organise training on the use of specific software or hardware tools implemented in workplaces.
- Building multi-stakeholder partnerships based on effective social dialogue to increase the availability of digital skills. An exemplary type of partnership could be between educators

[125] Lemke et al., 2021.
[126] Curtarelli, M., et al. 2016,
[127] Eurostat, N/A. Enterprises that provided training to develop/upgrade ICT skills of their personnel. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/74967b58-05a9-4a0c-b514-01f59e0fd33a?lang=en
[128] Curtarelli, M., et al. 2016,
[129] Hoffman, S. & Ogonek, N., 2018.
[130] Servoz, M., 2019, 59
[131] Curtarelli et al 2016, 9-11.

and employers aiming to design career-relevant curricula.[132] Trade unions are important agents that can contribute to the development of the schemes to develop skills and train workers that would be relevant for workers, would meet their needs and would be in line with vocational programmes and qualifications.[133]

Box 3. Good practices of addressing digital skills gap in public sector

- **The Portugal Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition** is preparing a nationwide program which will develop digital skills of approximately 100 thousand teachers in the country.[134] In addition, it has implemented a program to create and teach courses in the areas of Information, Communication and Electronic Technologies (TICE) in Public Administration (PA) to promote use of technologies in all public bodies in order to modernise central, local and regional government administrations.[135] These courses were on the introduction to artificial intelligence, and innovation and big data.
- In Luxembourg, the **National Institute of Public Administration (INAP)** acts as a partner of the administrations and services of the central government and municipalities in terms of initial and continuing professional training. Its actions are aimed to facilitate systematic development of the professional skills of public officials. Since 2018 INAP is offering hundreds of continuing education courses and seminars to public officials working in national and local administrations. Its' most recent initiative is the Digital leadership program which targeted senior officials in the public service.[136] They were given the opportunity to follow different programs (a business, technology and creativity), be introduced to relevant digital subjects and receive personalised coaching.

Source: https://www.incode2030.gov.pt/atividades/educacao; https://www.incode2030.gov.pt/destaque/ina-promove-novos-cursos-e-learning-no-ambito-da-formacao-tice-na-ap-do-incode2030; https://inap.gouvernement.lu/fr/actualites.gouvernement%2Bfr%2Bactualites%2Btoutes_actualites%2Bcommuniques%2B2021%2B09-septembre%2B20-digital-academy.html

3. Implications of digitalisation on work organisation

At the early stages of digitalisation, the most important implication for workers was the need to develop ICT skills to be able to conduct processes and provide services using ICT devices. Those processes and services themselves remained largely the same. However, with the emergence of Digital Government, new processes to provide public services were designed, including new management methods and techniques and new working methods which had a wider range of implications for workers. However, up to date there is insufficient research on the implications digitalisation has for workers in the public sector, as most of the studies are theoretical, and focusing mostly on the impact of digitalisation on governments in a broad sense, and especially citizens. Moreover, most of these studies focus on the positive implications of digitalisation, pointing to the importance to raise awareness about the possible risks that digitalisation can bring, especially for workers, who are in the middle of the change.

A key implication of digitalisation for workers is related to how technology replaces manual labour and drives work organisation changes. Work organisation refers to division of labour, coordination, and control of work. More specifically, it entails questions such as how work is divided into job tasks, how tasks are bundled into jobs and assignments, what are the interdependencies between workers, how work is coordinated and controlled, organised and managed within companies in terms of designing work processes, allocating responsibilities and tasks, scheduling work, setting work pace, rules and procedures and decision-making processes.[137] Digitalisation transforms how work is organised as adoption of ICT changes the equipment, tools and technical systems used to organise, manage and deliver products and/or services.[138] Such transformations mean that workers experience changes in their work environments.

[132] McKinsey 2020a, 40.
[133] Curtarelli et al 2016, 10.
[134] Portugal INCoDe. Education and Professional training. https://www.incode2030.gov.pt/atividades/educacao
[135] Portugal INCoDe, 2020. INA PROMOVE NOVOS CURSOS E-LEARNING NO ÂMBITO DA "FORMAÇÃO TICE NA AP" DO INCODE.2030. https://www.incode2030.gov.pt/destaque/ina-promove-novos-cursos-e-learning-no-ambito-da-formacao-tice-na-ap-do-incode2030
[136] The Luxembourg Government National Institute of Public Administration. 2021. Digital Academy: a first hackathon for senior positions in the Civil Service https://inap.gouvernement.lu/fr/actualites.gouvernement%2Bfr%2Bactualites%2Btoutes_actualites%2Bcommuniques%2B2021%2B09-septembre%2B20-digital-academy.html
[137] Eurofound, 2022. Work organisation. https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/topic/work-organisation
[138] EU-OSHA, 2018, 46.

In this chapter four key trends in work organisation due to digitalisation are discussed, namely 1) flexible working arrangements, 2) automation, 3) new forms of worker management, and 4) changes in machine-human interaction. In addition, the implications of these changes on working conditions, including occupational safety and health (OSH) of workers are overviewed in each sub-section.

Key takeaways:

- The main opportunities that digitalisation offers for workers across all sectors include working time reduction, increased work autonomy, new forms of collaboration and cooperation between workers & machines, and better ergonomics. On the other hand, digitalisation also poses the risk working-time extension, increased surveillance, competition and inequalities between workers. In addition, while digitalisation can create new jobs and job functions, on the other hand it can also destruct existing jobs due to automation.
- The prevalence of workers using flexible working arrangements (e.g., telework) is increasing, especially because of the pandemic, although they remain less popular in the public sector. Depending on how well it is implemented, telework can either increase or decrease workers' OSH protection, make them either more or less autonomous, reduce or increase levels of stress, result in better or worse work-life balance.
- Around 22% of jobs in Europe (including the UK and Switzerland) could be automated by 2030. Jobs most at risk are those consisting of manual tasks, highlighting the importance of soft skills for future-proof jobs. In the public sector, postal and courier activities are the most likely to be automated, health sector employees are expected to be affected less, and the education sector is the least likely to be automated. Automation can lead to job loss, cause psychosocial risks related to the fear of job loss, and may lead to deskilling. However, it also creates new jobs (e.g., open data coordinators, data scientists, professionals providing technical support, workers able to explain and supervise the outcomes of digital systems), allows better service provision, and reduces the risk of arduous and dangerous work.
- New forms of worker management expose workers to increased levels of surveillance and monitoring. It can improve OSH protection, work efficiency and result in fairer work organisation, although it has the risk of intensifying work, invading workers' privacy, stripping them of autonomy, increasing levels of stress, and exposing them to discrimination.
- Digitalisation has changed the dynamics of machine-human interaction, where workers are no longer controllers of digital devices, but are also supervising their work. This can make workers feel less valued and increase the risk of social isolation due to de-personalisation of work.

3.1. Flexible working arrangements

The broader use of ICT in the economy leads to new flexible working arrangements (FWAs) and new forms of employment that alter traditional work organisation and patterns of work. FWAs have emerged in Europe since 2000 and have become increasingly important over time.[139] These new forms can be characterized by irregular provision of work, unconventional working space and time patterns.[140] There are nine new forms of employment identified by Eurofound, ICT-based mobile work (or telework) being the most predominant one in European labour market, as well as the most relevant for the public sector. [141] It is worth mentioning that another form of employment, platform work, has experienced a tremendous growth in recent years and is a focus of policymakers and researchers.[142] However, considering the nature of occupations in the public sector, it can be assumed that growth of platform work is a less relevant development for workers in this sector.

A subcategory of remote working, **telework** refers to work carried out remotely while using personal electronic devices.[143] According to JRC calculations, in 2019 around 11% of

[139] Eurofound and the International Labour Office, 2017. Working anytime, anywhere: The effects on the world of work. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, and Geneva: the International Labour Office.
[140] Eurofound, 2015. New forms of employment. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union
[141] New forms of employment are: employee sharing, job sharing, voucher-based work, interim management, casual work, platform work, portfolio work and ICT-based mobile work. Source: Eurofound, 2015. New forms of employment https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2015/working-conditions-labour-market/new-forms-of-employment
[142] European Commission, 2018. Flash Eurobarometer 467: The use of the collaborative economy. http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S2184_467_ENG.; Gonzalez Vazquez, I., et al., 2019.
[143] Sostero M., Milasi S., Hurley J., Fernández-Macías E., Bisello M., 2020. Teleworkability and the COVID-19 crisis: a new digital divide?, JRC Working Papers Series on Labour, Education and Technology No. 2020/05. Seville: European Commission, 7.

employees (excluding self-employed) in EU-27 were working from home at least *occasionally*, an increase from less than 8% in 2008. [144] 3.2% of them worked from home *usually*, a share that has not significantly changed since 2008.[145] The average share of all workers working from home in the EU is relatively higher than 11% (19% of the workforce in 2015[146]) because teleworking is more popular among self-employed, who are not included in JRC calculations and less relevant for the public sector too. The share of teleworking employees ranged from 2% to 35% across different EU MS in 2019: it was more common in Northern and Western Europe and less common in Southern and Eastern Europe (see Figure 16).[147]

Figure 15. Prevalence of telework by occupation in EU-27, 2018

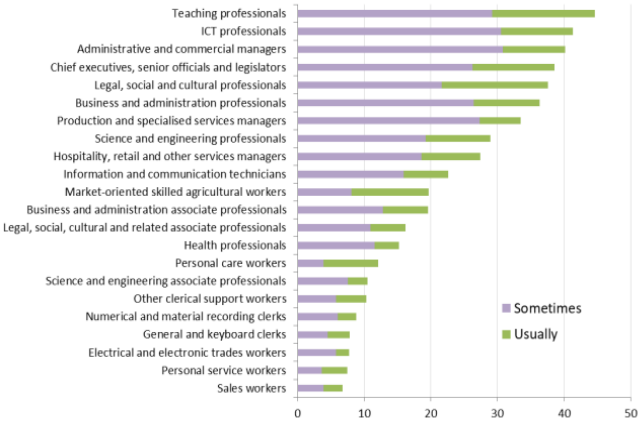
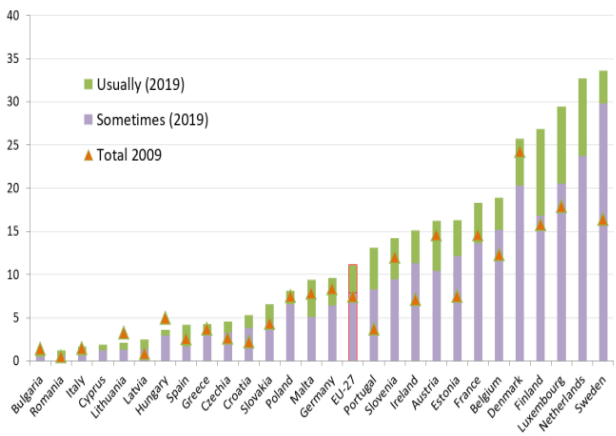


Figure 16. Prevalence of telework across EU MS

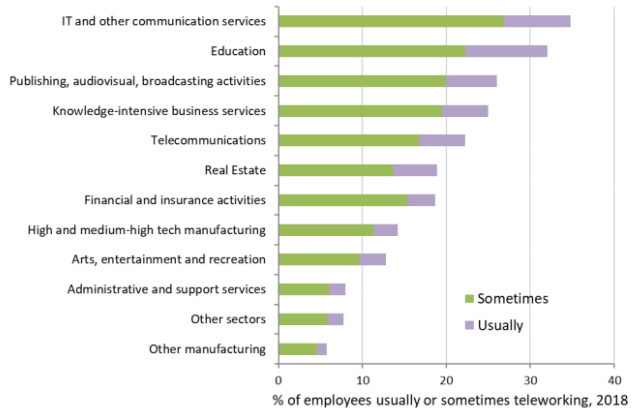


Source : Sostero, M. et al. 2020. Teleworkability and the COVID-19 crisis : a new digital divide ? JRC Working Papers Series on Labour, Education and Technology No. 2020/05. Seville: European Commission.

Telework has spiked due to the COVID-19 pandemic as 40% of those working in the EU-27 started to telework full time – almost three times as many as before the pandemic.[148] The share of employees regularly working from home increased anywhere from 3-5% to a third or more at the EU level.[149] Importantly, employees more than the self-employed experienced the largest increase in teleworking because of the pandemic and are more likely to experience long-lasting changes to their work organisation.[150] This is important considering that most of the workforce in the public sector are dependent employees and not self-employed. Looking forward, the number of teleworkers and therefore the importance of flexible working arrangements is expected to increase as it is predicted that 73% of any organisation's departments will have remote workers by 2028.[151]

[144] Sostero, M., et al., 2020, 8. Based on EU-LFS and matching the results of EWCS 2015.
[145] Sostero, M., et al., 2020, 8.
[146] Eurofound and the International Labour Office, 2017.
[147] Eurofound, 2020. Living, working and COVID-19. COVID-19 series, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 7.
[148] Eurofound, 2020, 7-8.
[149] Sostero, M. et al., 2020, 5-6.
[150] Sostero, M. et al., 2020, 5.
[151] Dragomir, S., 2020. The Ultimate List of Remote Work Statistics. Small bizgenius 2020 Edition.

Figure 17. Prevalence of telework by sector in EU-27, 2018



Source: Sostero et. al. 2020: 11-12

Sector-wise, in EU-27 in 2018 the prevalence of telework was highest in IT and other communication services (i.e., Computer Programming, Consultancy and Related Activities-Information Service Activities) (around 35% of the employees in the sector teleworking), and education sector (32%) (see Figure 17). The high levels of teleworking in the education sector are unexpected considering that teaching is largely place-dependent occupation. However, they could be explained by the fact that teachers grade the papers and prepare for classes at home. In terms of occupations, teaching professionals, ICT professionals, administrative and commercial managers have teleworked the most in EU-27 in 2018.[152] On the other side of the spectrum, teleworking was least prominent among personal service workers and sales workers (see Figure 15).

The amount of telework among sectors and occupations is impacted by their "teleworkability". It is estimated that around 36% of employment in the EU is currently teleworkable and the ultimate determinant of teleworkability is the lack of physical handling tasks.[153] This means that teleworking is naturally more prevalent in high-skilled, white-collar occupations (e.g., professionals and managers), whereas low-paid blue-collar workers are exempt from the chance to telework and therefore from any labour market advantages related to it (discussed below). However, only 13% of employment in Europe can be carried out remotely with a minimal loss of quality, whereas for 24% of such teleworkable occupations require social interactions and thus cannot be fully conducted remotely.[154] Besides the high levels of teleworking in the education sector, other public service sectors do not seem to be so prone to teleworking: administrative and support services sector, and occupations of health professionals, clerical support workers, general and keyboard clerks exemplify significantly lower teleworking levels compared to other sectors and occupations as seen in Figure 15 and Figure 17.

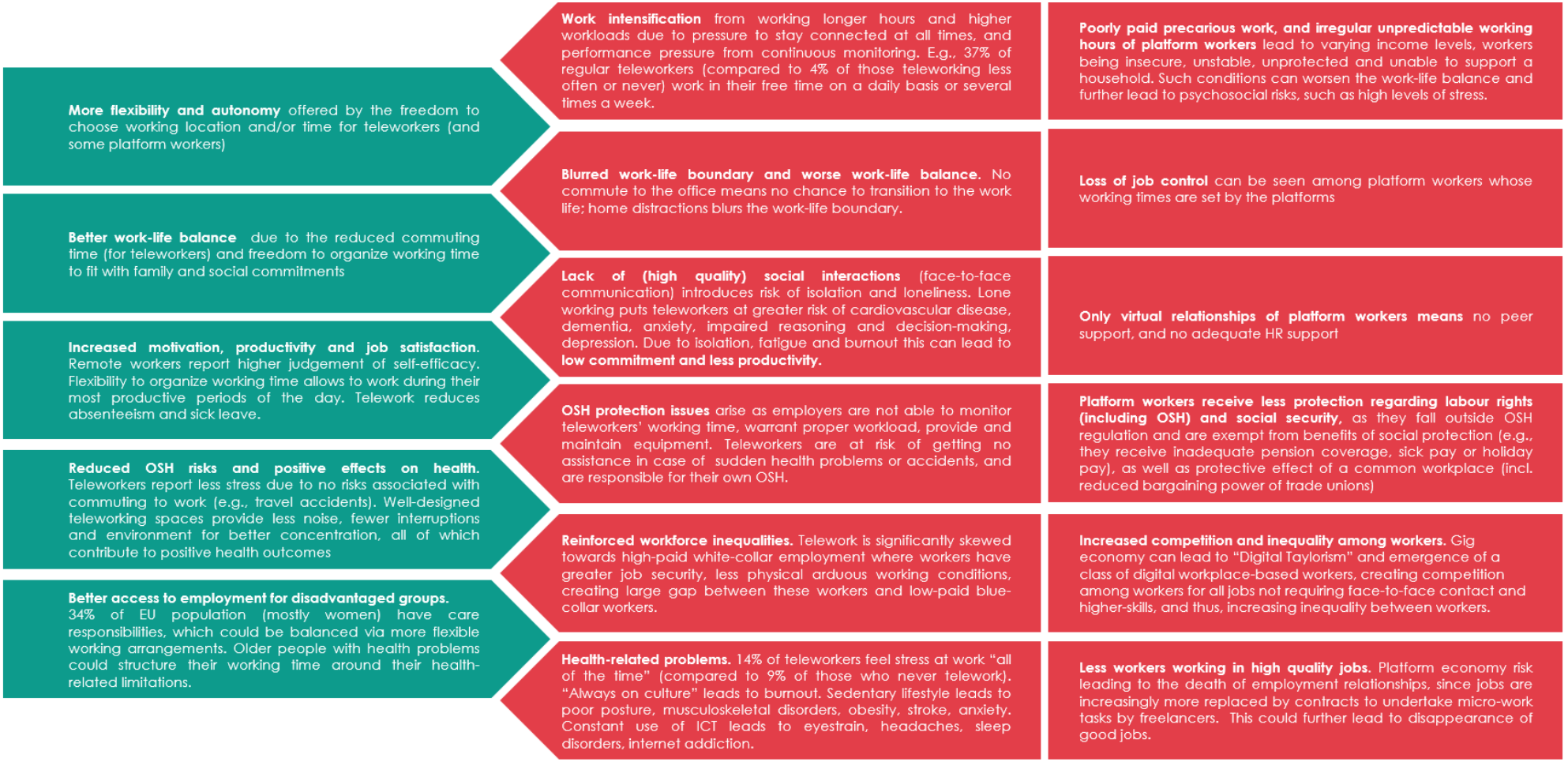
There are a lot of challenges in implementing telework in the public sector. [155] Teleworking in the public sector is not easy to implement considering the many security and privacy concerns. A challenge is to connect trusting devices that teleworkers could work with to a government network. Furthermore, telework requires various ICT tools, technology, servers and various equipment, and the public sector might face financial difficulties to set up such IT infrastructure. In addition, challenges related to implementing regulation to legislate telework in the public sector is a significant obstacle. Importantly, outbreak of the COVID-19 was an important factor that removed (at least partially or temporarily) some of these barriers that prevented workers (including those in the public sector) to telework before the pandemic.[156]

Telework has the potential to be beneficial and disadvantageous depending on how well it is facilitated. To prove the case in point, Eurofound and ILO study on telework has shown that same individuals experienced both positive and negative effects of teleworking on their work-life balance, for example.[157] Similarly, although teleworkers report higher levels of stress, they also appreciate the positive effect telework has on their health.[158] Such dichotomies make it difficult to arrive at a solid conclusion on whether telework has more positive and negative

[152] Sostero, M. et al., 2020, 11-12.
[153] Sostero, M. et al., 2020
[154] Sostero, M. et al., 2020
[155] Fraij, J., Aburumman, N., 2021. How Does Telework Act As A Solution To The Public Sector In The Time Of Pandemic?. *Network Intelligence Studies*, 9(17), 13-24.
[156] Sostero, M. et al., 2020, 5.
[157] Eurofound and the International Labour Office, 2017.
[158] Sostero, M. et al., 2020, 20.

implications for workers. It also highlights the importance of ensuring that the practice of telework is implemented in an adequate way to maximise the positive effects and minimise the potential risks, both discussed below and outlined in Figure 18.

Figure 18. Key implications of flexible working arrangements on workers



Source: author's own elaboration based on multiple sources.[159]

[159] Eurofound and ILO, 2017; Caillier,J. B., 2011. The Impact of Teleworking on Work Motivation in a U.S. Federal Government Agency. *The American Review of Public Administration 42(4)*; Butler, E.S,, Asgeim, C., Rebstock Williams, S., 2007. Does telecommuting improve productivity? Communications of the ACM 50(4): 101-103.; Cohen, S., Janicki-Deverts, D., Miller, G.E. 2007; Uglanova, E. and Dettmers, J., 2018; Tavares, A.I. 2017; Sostero et al 2020: 19-20; Eurofound, 2020; EU-OSHA, 2018: 7,48, 49, 55, 58, 59, 61; Mandl, I. et al., 2015; Messenger, J. 2017; Greer T. & Payne, S. C. 2014. Overcoming telework challenges: Outcomes of successful telework strategies. *The Psychologist-Manager Journal 17(2)*; Nygren, K. G., 2012; Fariweather, N. B.1999; Suh, A. and Lee, J. 2017; Ruth, S. and Chaudhry, I. 2009; Voss, E., Rego, E. 2019; OECD, 2016; Montreuil, S. and Lippel,K., 2003; Eurostat, 2018; Vanajan, A., Bültmann, U., Henkens, K., 2020; Shin, B. Sheng, O. R. L., Higa, K. El Sawy, O., 2000; Konradt, U. et al., 2003; Weinert, C. Laumer,S. Maier, C. & Weitzel, T., 2016; Knowledge at Work, 2017; Eurofound 2017 update of EWCS; Horton, J. et al., 2018; WHO, 2022; Adams-Prassl, A., Boneva, T., Golin M. and Rauh C. 2020. Inequality in the Impact of the Coronavirus Shock: Evidence from Real Time Surveys. ZA DP No. 13183; Broughton et al., 2018. The experiences of individuals in the gig economy; Lethbridge, 2015; European Parliament, 2016; Eurofound, 2019; Valenduc, G., Vendramin, P. 2016; ILO, 2016; Warhurst and Unt, 2019; Wright, A.D., 2015.

3.2. Automation of tasks and jobs

Automation is one of the key features of the 4th Industrial Revolution. Technological advancements allow technologies to replace workers in conducting their tasks or even their whole jobs, making the work processes increasingly more complex, interconnected and autonomous so that they can self-organise, self-learn and self-maintain.[160] Around 20% of jobs in Europe can be expected to be automated in the future, most of them being routine jobs that consist of physical manual tasks.

Different approaches to measuring the extent of expected automation offer a wide range of estimates on how many jobs are likely to be automated in the future. The pioneering study of automation of jobs predicted that almost half (47%) of jobs in advanced economies will be automated. [161] More recent studies had also arrived at similar conclusions.[162] However, there are studies suggesting that only a relatively small share (around 10%-15%) of jobs will be automated and thus eliminated.[163] In terms of Europe, in their survey of over a thousand local economies across EU-27, the UK and Switzerland in 2020, **McKinsey estimated that by 2030, 22% of current work activities (equivalent to 53 million jobs) could be automated.[164]**

Routine jobs that can be defined by a mathematical equation and consist of physical manual tasks remain the most at risk of being automated.[165] Besides consisting of routine tasks, these jobs usually demand less specific, transversal and interpersonal skills, as well as less training, and can also be characterised by a higher worker-machine interaction.[166] This has caused fears of job loss among medium- or lower-skilled workers employed in routine occupations, e.g., transport, building, craft, trade, plant and machine operators, clerical jobs, sales and market services, food preparation jobs, elementary or personal service occupations.[167]

However, multiple studies have demonstrated that the **negative impact of automation is exaggerated**.[168] Research suggests that occupational attributes that most estimates associate with a greater risk of automation (i.e., routine and repetitive tasks) only have a weak link to actual changes and warn to approach projections of massive job destruction with scepticism.[169] Moreover, it should be considered that jobs are rarely automated at their entirety. While routine tasks within jobs can be more prone to automation, the share of whole jobs that can be fully substituted by technological devices is low: by one estimate, only about 9% of jobs across 21 OECD countries have at least 70% of tasks that could be fully automated. [170] Other estimations suggest that only around 9% of the workforce in EU27, the UK and Switzerland will need to change occupations because their current roles will no longer be needed.[171] To take this argument further, evidence in facts suggests that in the long-run digitalisation will create as many as or even more jobs than it destroys. [172] In 2018, the World Economic Forum (WEF) has reported that the ratio between newly created jobs and displaced jobs is increasing: WEF estimated that between 2018 and 2022 digitalisation will create 133

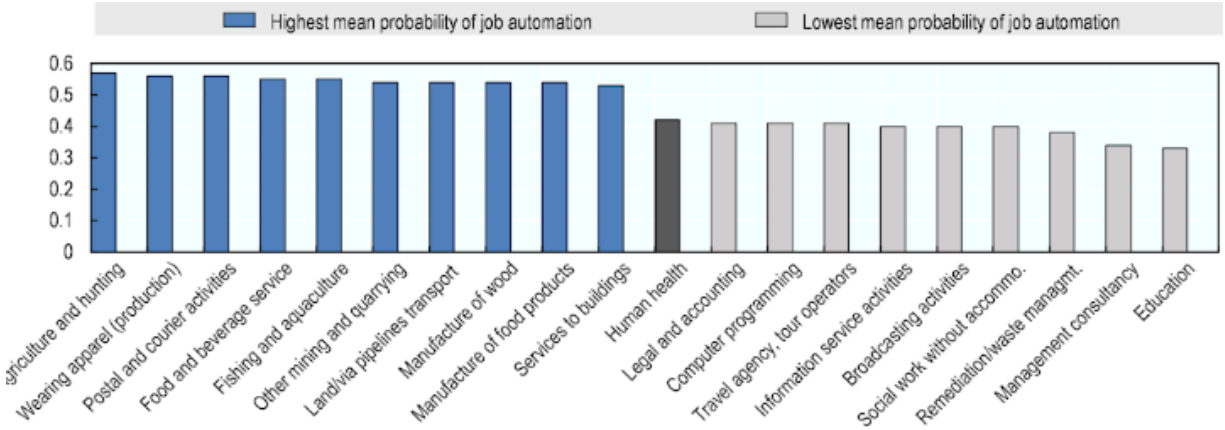
[160] EU-OSHA 2018, 46.
[161] Frey and Osborne, 2013, 2017.
[162] Manyika, J., Lund, S., Chui, M. Bughin, J., Woetzel, J., Batra, P., Ko, R., Sanghvi, S., 2017. Jobs lost, jobs gained: What the future of work will mean for jobs, skills, and wages. McKinsey Global Institute. https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/jobs-lost-jobs-gained-what-the-future-of-work-will-mean-for-jobs-skills-and-wages
[163] See Pastore, F. et al., 2019, 71; Arntz, M., Greogry, T., Zierahn, U., 2017. Revisiting the risk of automation. *Economics Letters 159* ; Nedelkoska, L. and Quintini G., 2018. Automation, skills use and training. OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers; Pouliakas, K., 2018. Automation risk in the EU labour market. A skill-needs approach. European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, University of Aberdeen business School and IZA.
[164] McKinsey, 2020a.
[165] Pugliano, J., 2017. *The Robots are Coming. A Human's Survival Guide to Profiting in the Age of Automation*. Berkeley: Ulysses Press.
[166] Nedelkoska, L., Quintini, G., 2018, 49
[167] McGuiness et al., 2021.
[168] Van Reenen, J., 1997. Employment and Technological Innovation: Evidence from U.K. Manufacturing Firms. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 15(2); Vivarelli, M., 2015. Innovation and employment. *Iza World of Labor 154;* Van Roy, V., Vértesy, D., Vivarelli, M., 2018. Technology and employment: Mass unemployment or job creation? Empirical evidence from European patenting firms. *Research Policy 47(9)*.
[169] Freeman, R. B., Ganguli, I., and Handel,M. J., 2020. Within Occupation Changes Dominate Changes in What Workers Do: A Shift-Share Decomposition, 2005-2015. AEA Papers and Proceeding.
[170] Arntz, M., et al., 2017.
[171] McKinsey 2020a, 30.
[172] WEF, 2018. The Future of Jobs Report 2018. https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_2018.pdf; Pastore, F. et al., 2019; WEF, 2020. The future of Jobs Report 2020. https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-future-of-jobs-report-2020

million new jobs and destroy 75 million.[173] By 2022 a share of new roles in jobs is expected to increase to 27%.

Evidence suggests that **occupations where workers have high degrees of social interaction, creativity, problem-solving and caring for others are least likely to be automated.**[174] This once again highlights the importance of workers developing soft skills that would give them advantage and higher likelihood of staying in the labour market. Nevertheless, the capabilities of robots are expanding, suggesting that virtually no occupation will remain unaffected by automation.[175] Robots are already undertaking cognitive mental tasks,[176] and some speculate they will be able to perform tasks that are now exclusive to humans, such as social tasks that involve empathy (e.g., caring for elderly people).[177]

Some of the most likely-to-be automated sectors concern public sector workers (see Figure 19). Fast evolving digitalisation of the postal sector is already evident. Postal sector and namely sorters as an occupation are highly likely to be undoubtedly affected by technological replacement.[178] Generally, the most likely to be replaced in the public sector are administrative and operative roles (this includes administrative jobs as well as physical jobs such as hospital porters).[179] It is predicted that the replacement of these jobs will occur by 2030.[180] On the other end of the spectrum, interactive, frontline and cognitive roles (e.g., health professionals, administrative managers, teachers, social service workers, police officers) are among the less affected groups.[181] It can be expected that some of their routine tasks, but not whole jobs will be replaced. Although they might not need to change occupations, even in these less affected sectors and occupations workers will need to adapt to changing nature of their tasks: many of administrative tasks, including handling of standard cases or invoicing, that are prevalent in the public administration can be easily automated.[182] **Due to rapid technology**

Figure 19. Jobs most and least likely to be automated



Source: OECD, 2018. Automation, skills use and training. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment/automation-skills-use-and-training_2e2f4eea-en

development, it is difficult to predict what jobs will be created by digitalisation. A significant proportion of people entering the workforce by 2025 will be working in jobs that do not exist as of now.[183] About 30% of new jobs created in the USA over the past 30 years did not exist or were not fully developed at that time,[184] including such occupations as app developer, social

[173] WEF, 2018.
[174] OECD, 2018, 49.
[175] Muro, M., Maxim, R., Whiton, J., 2019. Automation and Artificial Intelligence: How machines are affecting people and places. Brookings; EU-OSHA 2018, 46.
[176] Manyika, J., et al., 2017; OECD 2018.
[177] Foster, M., 2018. "Aging Japan: Robots may have role in future of elder care". Reuters. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-ageing-robots-widerimage-idUSKBN1H33AB
[178] Warhurst and Hunt 2019.
[179]Deloitte, 2017. The State of the State: Government through business lenses. https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/uk/Documents/public-sector/deloitte-uk-government-through-talent-lenses.pdf
[180] Deloitte, 2017.
[181] Deloitte, 2017.
[182] Voss, E., Rego, E., 2019.
[183] EU-OSHA, 2018, 23.
[184] Manyika, J., et al., 2017.

media manager, drone operator, search engine optimisation consultant, web developers, user experience designers, including Airbnb hosts, Uber drivers, social media influencers and stars.[185] Nevertheless, despite difficulties in forecasting, some emerging important functions of workers can be predicted:

- The labour market will need "*trainers*" who will manage large amounts of data and design algorithms to train AI systems. It will also need "*explainers*", workers able to interpret the outcomes of AI systems, and "*architects*" responsible for organising AI systems and recognising opportunities for AI adoption. "*Ethicists*" will be necessary to set guidelines and ensure that AI systems are accountable and ethically just.[186]
- The expansion in industrial robotics implies that manufacturing firms will need professionals that could provide robotics support services, namely *programmers and specialists in robot maintenance*.
- The demand for *data professionals* (e.g., data scientists) is constantly growing due to the need for professionals that can manage and elaborate large amounts of data available. By 2025 data professionals are expected to account for 4% of EU-28 employment, the share which was already 3.5% in 2017.[187]
- Some other examples of new jobs include *cybersecurity specialists*, *network experts, computer engineers*, *data stewards*, *open data coordinators*, *big data analysts* (see Figure 20).

Figure 20. Examples of jobs emerging due to digitalisation in different industries

Source: based on World Economic Forum, 2020. Jobs of Tomorrow. Mapping Opportunity in the New Economy. *Note: The emergence of new professions reflects the adoption of new technologies, which gives rise to green economy jobs, roles at the forefront of the data and AI economy, and roles in engineering, cloud computing and product development. It also reflects the importance of human interaction in digital economy.*

Figure 21 below outlines the key positive and negative implications of automation on workers. The key to maximising the positive implications and minimising the risks associated with automation, is to ensure that workers trust and accept technologies. To this end researchers highlight the importance of **adaptive automation**, which can ensure that the speed of the processes of robots are adapted to the speed of human-workers working with them.[188]

[185] WEF, 2020. Jobs of Tomorrow Mapping Opportunity in the New Economy. https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Jobs_of_Tomorrow_2020.pdf ; McKinsey, 2020a, 22.
[186] Wilson, H. J., Daugherty, P., and Bianzino, N., 2017. The jobs that artificial intelligence will create. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 58(4), 14.
[187] JRC, 2019.
[188] EU-OSHA 2018, 51.

Figure 21. Key implications of automation on workers

Source: author's own elaboration based on multiple sources.[189]

3.3. New forms of worker management

New forms of worker management occur whereby workers are put under tight ICT-enabled surveillance and monitoring. Worker management has been on the rise since teleworking and rapid transformation of work environment following the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, which have led to a global spike in usage of dedicated electronic monitoring software.[190]

Building-up on decades-long monitoring of employees' on-site activities via timesheets, **employers have started to resort to sophisticated electronic monitoring packages.** Increasingly digitalised ways to manage workers include use of people analytics (e.g., digitalised profiling) in human resources (HR) management, use of big data and algorithmic distribution of work, using sensory and other monitoring devices to track wellness and productivity, analyse tone and sentiment, using gathered data to make work-related decisions (who to hire, fire, or promote, what kind of tasks should be assigned to whom, which group of people work best together, etc.).

[189] OECD, 2018; Perez, C. & Martín, F., 2018. "Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence: the New Face of the retail banking sector. Evidence from France and Spain" Working Papers halshs-01884121, HAL; McKinsey 2020a: 18, 30; EU-OSHA, 2018, 47-51, 60, 64 ; Servoz, M., 2019, 75; Levy, F., and Murmane, R, J., 2004. *The New Division of Labor: How Computers Are Creating the New Jobs Market*; Muñoz-de-Bustillo, R., Grande, R. and Fernández-Macías, E., 2016. Innovation and Job Quality. An Initial Exploration, QUINNE Working Paper WP5-1-2016; Freeman, R.B., et al., 2020; McGuiness et al., 2021, 5; Nygren, K. G., 2012. Narratives of ICT and Organizational Change in Public Administration. *Gender Work and Organization 19(6)* 623-624; Steijn, W. M. P., Luiijf, E., van der Beek, D., 2016. Emergent risk to workplace safety as a result of the use of robots in the work place. TNO R11488; World Government Summit, & Kinetic CS, 2018. From automation to AI government strategic considerations.

[190] Morrison, S., 2020. "Just because you're working from home doesn't mean your boss isn't watching you". Vox. https://www.vox.com/recode/2020/4/2/21195584/coronavirus-remote-work-from-home-employee-monitoring

Algorithmic HR management enables employers to provide feedback to workers and allocate tasks without human interference.[191] This is facilitated by worker-related data collected by digital devices. Through monitoring such worker activity as their location, working pace and time, internet sites visited, keystrokes, absence/presence at the desk, social media activity, any physical activity, digital devices and software gather not only data related to worker performance, but also highly sensitive personal data. This data is coordinated and overseen by computer algorithms and software that can create a synthetic measure of employees' everyday performance.

For example, wearables, sensors, GPS, webcams, bionics and exoskeletons, various software are used to monitor (and enhance) worker performance. Specifically, alongside the widespread websites blocking and control of e-mail and phone calls history, modern software (e.g., ActiveTrak, Hivedesk, Time Doctor, Work Examiner, EmpMonitor, Workpuls, Hubstaff, Desktime, Teramind) allows employers to track keystrokes, file transfers, time spent on specific activities, email content, phone logs, and on-screen content via regular screenshots (up to 1 screenshot every 5 seconds).

Uptake of new forms of worker management in Europe has been growing as part of digitalisation process and has been further catalysed by the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, 47% of public sector workers in Germany reported that digitalisation resulted in increased levels of surveillance and control of their work.[192] Global demand for worker monitoring software increased by 80% in March 2020 compared with pre-pandemic times,[193] and the search term 'remote employee monitoring' peaked around the beginning of the pandemic according to Google trends.[194] Sales of monitoring products provided by companies such as Hubstaff, Awareness Technologies or Teramind have tripled,[195] while Enaible was getting four times as many inquiries about their software since the pandemic.[196] Such tools like Sneek, a screen capturing software, which takes webcam shots of employees every five minutes has gained prominence due to the pandemic.[197] New forms of worker management can have multi-directional implications for workers, depending on its purpose and the ways it is facilitated (see Figure 22).

[191] Lee, M., K., Kusbit, D., Metsky, E., Dabbish, L. A., 2015. Working with Machines : The Impact of Algorithmic and Data-Driven Management on Human Workers. Proceedings of the 33rd Annual ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems.
[192] DGB, NRW, 2018. Digitization in the public sector - effects from the perspective of employees (2018 survey) https://nrw.dgb.de/archiv/++co++5fb3a472-cd37-11e8-a27c-52540088cada
[193] Migliano, S., O'Donnell, C., 2020. "Employee Surveillance Software Demand up 56% Since Pandemic Started". TOP10VPN.
[194] Eurofound, 2020.
[195] Allyn, B., 2020. "Your Boss is Watching You: Work-From-Home Boom Leads To More Surveillance". NPR https://www.npr.org/2020/05/13/854014403/your-boss-is-watching-you-work-from-home-boom-leads-to-more-surveillance ; Dreyfuss, J., 2020. "Here's how employers are using tech tools to keep a close watch on their remote workers". CNBC. https://www.cnbc.com/2020/06/24/new-tech-tools-employers-are-using-to-keep-watch-on-remote-workers.html
[196] Heaven, W., D. 2020. "This startup is using AI to give workers a "productivity score. MIT Technology Review. https://www.technologyreview.com/2020/06/04/1002671/startup-ai-workers-productivity-score-bias-machine-learning-business-covid/
[197] Holmes, A., 2020. "Employees at home are being photographed every 5 minutes by an always-on video service to ensure they're actually working — and the service is seeing a rapid expansion since the coronavirus outbreak". Business Insider. https://www.businessinsider.com/work-from-home-sneek-webcam-picture-5-minutes-monitor-video-2020-3 ; Harwell, D., 2020. "Managers turn to surveillance software, always-on webcams to ensure employees are (really) working from home". The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/04/30/work-from-home-surveillance/

Figure 22. Key implications of new forms of worker management on workers

Source: EU-OSHA 2018: 6-7, 47, 49, 50-51, 54-56, 58, 62; Martin and Freeman, 2003; Knowledge at Work 2017; Bezek and Britton, 2001; Yerby, 2013; Mandl, I. et al., 2015; Messenger et al., 2017; HSE 2017; Voss and Rego, 2019; EU-OSHA, 2020; ETUI, 2017; Stein et al., 2016; Moore 2018; Jeske and Santuzzi, 2015; Akhtar and Moore, 2016.

3.4. Changes in machine-human interaction

Digitalisation means new forms of collaboration and cooperation between workers and machines. The rapid development of technological tools in the mid-20th century caused changes in machine-human interaction.[198] Before the pace of digitalisation increased, new equipment was designed in a way that a human would be able to control it, putting them in a clear position of power. However, since then machines are being modelled like humans and used to automate tasks that would normally be done by them, **changing human position from that of controller to supervisor.**

Human workers are working in an ever-close proximity with digital technologies. Due to the constantly evolving technologies such as speech and image recognition, emotion detection, the registration of eye movement and gestures, machines can register user behaviour increasingly more precisely,[199] making it possible for humans and machines to work together. Human-machine co-working is expected to develop further, as robots will be equipped with self-optimising algorithms which allow them to learn from their human colleagues.[200] Robots can be expected to be used in such sectors as healthcare, defence, customer-facing jobs, including services and administration,[201] to name a few examples related to the public sector.

Humans can interface with machines remotely via ICT. Human-machine interfaces are real-time, interactive, direct and immersive.[202] They are expected to advance even further, allowing human-machine interaction to increasingly resemble human face-to-face communication (e.g., enabling machines to use voice and gestures). [203] In addition, some workers in countries like Sweden or Estonia had already taken the human-machine interface further by getting microchip implants, which allow them to access workplaces or security-restricted areas more easily.[204]

Such proximity in human-machine relationship requires **new techniques to protect workers' OSH,** as workers and machines are no longer working in separate rooms without interaction. Employers therefore will need to adopt sensors, vision systems, soft, rounded edges, reduced speeds and force as measures to ensure worker protection.[205]

Key implications of new dynamics between machines and humans are presented in Figure 23. It is important that workers understand these capabilities and limitations of the machines they are working with. Therefore, employers are responsible for devising new working methods for employees to work with robots and other machines that would be safe and beneficial. [206]

[198] Mario Nardo, D. Forino, T. Murino, 2020. The evolution of man-machine interaction: the role of human in Industry 4.0 paradigm. *Production & Manufacturing Research*, 8(1), 20-34.
[199] EU-OSHA 2018, 46.
[200] EU-OSHA, 2018, 46.
[201] EU-OSHA 2018 46.
[202] EU-OSHA 2018, 50.
[203] EU-OSHA, 2018, 46.
[204] Bas-Wohlert, C., 2018. "Microchips get under the skin of technophile Swedes", *PhysOrg*, May 13, 2018. https://phys.org/news/2018-05-microchips-skin-technophile-swedes.html ; Savage, M., 2018. "Thousands Of Swedes Are Inserting Microchips Under Their Skin". *NPR*. October 22, 2018. https://www.npr.org/2018/10/22/658808705/thousands-of-swedes-are-inserting-microchips-under-their-skin?t=1636905448073 ; Siibak, A., & Otsus, M., 2020. "You either love it immediately, or you hate it". Reflections and experiences of Estonian employees with microchip implants. *AoIR Selected Papers of Internet Research*, *2020*.
[205] Boagey, R., 2016. 'Hand in hand', *Professional Engineering*. http://www.imeche.org/news/news-article/hand-in-hand
[206] Servoz, M., 2019, 75.

Figure 23. Key implications of changing machine-human interaction for workers

Source: EU-OSHA, 2018: 7, 47-50, 56, 59; Nygren, K.G., 2012; Elmore,T., 2014.

4. Central, local and regional government administrations

This chapter provides an overview of key digitalisation trends, and main impacts of digitalisation on the workers' skills and work organisation in central, local and regional government administration, including all levels and sections of government, agencies and public bodies. Considering the many units, departments and institutions that make up or are affiliated with central governments, local and regional governments, the scope of this chapter is wide:

- For central governments, it investigates digitalisation of departments of central government (i.e., ministries) responsible for managing different sectors of public administration, as well as government agencies that they control. The latter can range from such units as department of statistics, state data protection inspectorate, state food and veterinary service, national metrology institute, environmental protection agency, to name just a few.
- For regional and local government administrations, this chapter refers to municipality administrations (e.g., city governments). They are usually made up of multiple units responsible for different parts of administration (e.g., construction, culture, accounting), and control institutions that are responsible for providing multiple services in local territories. These services include but are not exclusive to infrastructure and property services (e.g., bridges, roads, waste collection and management, water utilities,), provision of recreation facilities (e.g., parks, sport fields and centres, halls), building services (e.g., inspections, licensing, certification), administration of facilities (e.g., ports, paring facilities), cultural facilities and services (e.g., libraries, museums), public transport).

Governments are key enablers of the digital transformation in the entire public sector as they hold crucial databases and registries, as well as controls state budget and has the power to set the priorities and strategies. At the same time, administrations are adopters of innovations, which have the potential to completely transform the way citizens interact with governments to obtain public services, including transforming the work of government staff.

4.1. Digital evolution in central government, local and regional administration

Key takeaways:

- Digitalisation of central government, local and regional administration refers to the use of ICT tools to complement or enable service provision. The key technologies that have a wide array of applications in both national and local public administrations are: predictive analytics, Robotics Process Automation (RPA), Internet of Things (IoT), Data-based innovations (e.g., geospatial data), and blockchain.
- The use of digital technologies has the potential to make public services more efficient, participatory, accessible, benefitting citizens, workers and wider ecosystem. Key obstacles that hinder digitalisation of public administrations include poor technological infrastructure, issues in coordination, lack of digital skills on behalf of workers and citizens, as well as risks that digitalisation can worsen policy outcomes.
- The overall performance score of EU countries delivering public services in a digital way has increased from 62% in 2016-2017 period to 68% in 2021. However, the public sector is still struggling to meet the needs of citizens (especially foreign citizens), while public services for businesses are becoming more accessible, transparent and convenient at a faster pace.

4.1.1. Key digitalisation trends

Digitalisation implies the redesign of the tools and methods used in the machinery of government.[207] The functions and service provision of central government administrations and local and regional administrations are complemented or enabled by the use of ICT. New technologies and practices such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, machine learning, data and text mining, remote surveillance of infrastructure are used to innovate and digitalise central

[207] Barcevičius et al., 2019.

government administrations, as well as local and regional administration. The sections below overview practical examples of application of five key groups of technologies in this sector.

Predictive and behavioural analytics are used widely by government administrations in order to make evidence-based, better-informed, less-biased and more responsive decisions. For example, the UK National Statistics Office use advanced data analytics tools to make predictions that help to steer economy, climate change, population migration, financial, electoral policies.[208] *Increasing use of data-driven process and decision-making* is the third most important trend in the sector according to CESI members (see Figure 24 below).

With the greater availability of digital documents and statistical data, government administrations can foresee trends and accordingly plan strategical responses. This is useful to optimise government response to emergency situations and crises. For example, for local governments this can mean being able to see in which parts of the city rise of the flood water level would start damaging properties.[209] For central governments predictive analytics on the data collected on citizen mobility were the key to predicting the spread of COVID-19 and managing the crisis.[210]

Multiple municipalities in the Netherlands are using a SyRi system for fraud detection.[211] The system uses risk indicators such as taxes, health insurance, and education, residence, to detect which addresses hold a higher risk of fraud or misuse of welfare benefits.
Such systems are also applied on the central government level. For instance, the Criminal department of the Lithuania Customs has deployed an advanced analytics tool that helps customs officials to determine whether to search a truck's cargo based on customs-related data which allows to predict the types of activities to associate with illegal or fraudulent operations.[212]

Predictive analytics are useful in day-to-day work of central and local public administrations as well. One of its many uses in local governments is for social care, e.g., to identify children at the most risk of ill treatment and the need for intervention of social workers, or to predict which households are at risk of becoming homeless before it happens.[213] Fraud detection is another very popular area of application of data analytics.

Robotic process automation (RPA) has wide application possibilities in the public sector, and is used in policing (e.g., to support crime reporting) healthcare (e.g., to make diagnosis more efficient) and education (e.g., to manage databases).[214] Increasing number of automated tasks is one of the important developments in the sector as noted by CESI members in the survey as well (see Figure 24 below).

Central government administrations use RPA for benefits calculations, tax calculations, anti-fraud checks, licensing applications processing, and other functions.[215]

Examples of RPA in central government administrations:

[208] Pantiru, M.C., 2019. Competencies necessary for eGovernment. EUPAN. https://www.eupan.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2019-final-REPORT-Competencies-necessary-for-eGov-PRES-RO-1.pdf

[209] Data Agility, n.a. "Real-world examples of predictive analytics in government". https://www.dataagility.com/real-world-examples-of-predictive-analytics-in-government/#:~:text=During%20the%202019%20floods%2C%20Canada's,could%20bring%20to%20their%20community.

[210] Evans, A., Jones, O., and Bradke, T., 2021. "Four ways governments can use data to transform outcomes". *EY*, March 25, 2021. https://www.ey.com/en_gl/future-government/four-ways-governments-can-use-data-to-transform-outcomes; Financial Times. "How AI and data models help governments fight Covid-19". https://www.ft.com/partnercontent/ibm/how-ai-and-data-models-help-governments-fight-covid-19.html

[211] Misuraca, G., van Noordt, C., 2020: 45-46

[212] Deloitte, 2016. Big data analytics for policy making. European Commission, Directorate-General for Informatics.

[213] Selwyn, R., 2018. Predictive Analytics. https://supportingfamilies.blog.gov.uk/2018/05/14/predictive-analytics/; Local Government Association, 2020. Using predictive analytics in local public services. https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/using-predictive-analytics-local-public-services

[214] Panait, C., 2021. Europe's Digital Decade-What is the role of automation? *The European Business Review*, April 1, 2021. https://www.europeanbusinessreview.com/europes-digital-decade-what-is-the-role-of-automation/

[215] Barcevičius et al.,2019

- Polish labour offices had automated the process of determining what kind of assistance an unemployed person can obtain using Algorithmic Decision-Making, where an algorithm aggregates people's answers to the questionnaire to certain criteria and thus classifies them as unemployed.[216]
- German Patent and Trademark Office has automated processes of directing individuals to patent examiners and distributing patent applications.[217]
- Finnish Government Shared Services Centre for Finance and HR has adopted RPA technology employing 26 bots that automate 70 process (e.g. processing invoices, maintaining the supplier register).[218]
- During the pandemic, Romania's National Agency for Social Payments rolled out a national RPA system to distribute payments to self-employed workers.[219]
- The Austrian Federal ministry of Finance has integrated a chatbot named "Fred" in its online portal, where he answers questions from citizens, as well as providing explanatory videos about the most important features of the portal (i.e., how citizens can file requests).[220] The chatbot is able to answer around 90% of the questions without any human involvement. Similar initiatives can be found across Europe (e.g., Swedish Tax Agency has a chatbot who answers citizens' questions about their tax returns).[221]

In local government administrations RPA is used for permit applications, incident reporting, case management and contract administrations.[222]

The municipality of Trelleborg (Sweden) uses RPA to handle social assistance applications for homecare, sickness benefits, unemployment benefits and taxes, significantly reducing the waiting time for citizens (from 10 days to 1) and allowing reallocation of workers on value added tasks (e.g., handling more complex cases).[223] The Municipality of Copenhagen (Denmark) has automated 75 of the processes across seven committees via six unattended and 50 attended robots.[224] One of the tasks of these robots is to provide citizens with information on what kind of data the municipality holds on them upon request (i.e., they access multiple systems, consolidate information, redact sensitive information, build a report and send it to the citizen). The results of the project show that automating one process in one committee saved almost 8,500 hours per year.

Internet of Things (IoT) is a driver of smart government, which is open, participatory and providing high-quality services.[225] It helps governments to increase efficiency of the use of resources and improve effectiveness of public services. [226]

IoT is key for development of smart cities, as they aim to maximise the efficiency of traffic, public transport, street lighting or other city infrastructure by using

Danish municipality had implemented a smart waste management system for public spaces by embedding solar-energy-powered trash cans with sensors which would notify trash collectors when it needs to be emptied. This enables more efficient waste collection due to route optimisation. Some trash bins have a "speech module" which they use to greet users and make the trash can more visible.

[216] Thapa, B.E.P., 2019. Predictive Analytics and AI in Governance: Data-driven government in a free society – Artificial Intelligence, Big Data and Algorithmic Decision-Making in government from a liberal perspective. European Liberal Forum
[217] WIPO, nd. Index of AI initiatives in IP offices. https://www.wipo.int/about-ip/en/artificial_intelligence/search.jsp. Other examples can also be found here.
[218] European Commission. Emerging technologies in public procurement. https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/public-procurement/digital-procurement/emerging-technologies-public-procurement_en
[219] Knutt, E., 2020. Take out the tedious: robotic automation in government. Global Government Forum. https://www.globalgovernmentforum.com/take-out-the-tedious-robotic-automation-in-government/
[220] BudesMinisterium Finanzen, 2021. Blümel: „FinanzOnline und Chatbot Fred sind digitale Service-Volltreffer".https://www.bmf.gv.at/presse/pressemeldungen/2021/jaenner/finanzonline-chatbot-fred.html
[221] AI Sweden, 2021. Artificial Intelligence improves the Swedish Tax Agency's customer service. https://www.ai.se/en/news/artificial-intelligence-improves-swedish-tax-agencys-customer-service-0
[222] Barcevičius et al.,2019
[223] Misuraca, 2019, 43-44
[224] UiPath,nd. RPA Improves the Lives of Employees and Citizens for the City of Copenhagen. https://www.uipath.com/resources/automation-case-studies/copenhagen-municipality-enterprise-rpa
[225] Mellouli, S. Luna-Reyes, L.F., & Zhang, J. 2014. Smart Government, citizen participation and open data. Information Polity 19(1): 1-4.
[226] Zenedese, A., Zanella,A., Vangelista,L. and Zorzi, M. 2014. adova Smart City: An urban Internet of Things experimentation

networks of sensors and computers.[227] One of the most common applications of IoT is intelligent street lighting, which turns streetlights on or off automatically, based on nearby movement, outside light or time of the day.[228] This leads to energy and cost reductions. IoT is also used in smart parking, i.e., to detect vehicle occupancy and provide drivers about parking space availability in real time thus reducing traffic congestion.[229] Municipalities can also use IoT for waste management. Many other IoT applications exist, e.g., for measuring water consumption, monitoring environment (e.g., weather), building management (e.g., regulating and monitoring temperature, ventilation and lights indoor), and even in enhancing experiences related to culture or tourism (e.g., using sensors to estimate queuing time in amusement parks and museums).[230]

There are relevant examples of central government using IoT outside of Europe – one of which is the US General Service Administration, where it is using IoT sensors in federal buildings and smart devices responding to outside environments (e.g., automatic shades, smart light bulbs) to analyse real-time energy and water consumption, identifying building inefficiency and reducing energy waste.[231]

Data is of key importance for digitalisation of central, local and regional government administrations. A building block of digitalisation of this sector is **interoperable base registries**, i.e., trusted and authentic sources of information (e.g., on persons, companies, vehicles, licenses, buildings, locations, roads) under the control of a public administration or organisation appointed by government.[233] Base registries are simply databases or networks of interoperable datasets. The rationale for setting them up is in the 'once only' principle, which dictates that users of government services should be able to provide data once only, and administrations should be able reuse this information they have. This is changing the traditional storing of information about a business or a citizen in multiple registries that are specialised (e.g., census registry, criminal registry, business registry).

For example, Ministry of Economy and Entrepreneurship in the Government of the Republic Srpska has recently launched a unified E-Register of Incentives in order to "*consolidate data and better information exchange*".[232]

Interoperability is also crucial at the sub-national level. To get government services most of the people go to local administration, which means that it holds large amounts of very important citizen data (e.g., population registries, local business registries, etc.). Researchers note that frequent failures of eGovernment plans are because they do not take into account the wide gap between the national and local level of public administration.[234] While EU Member States have rather interoperable systems at the central level, city governments lag behind due to technological barriers, weak ICT strategies and habits to use non-interoperable systems. However, the recent eGovernment Benchmark has showed that the gap between local and central administration digitalisation is narrowing.

In 2016, there were almost 90,000 sub-national authorities in the EU, and they were responsible for one-third of government expenditure, 53,7% of public investment, 51% of public employees and 45% of total procurement.[235] Traditionally, various data held at the municipal level would be

[227] Davies, R., 2015. Internet of Things. Opportunities and challenges. European Parliament briefing; Bass, T., Sutherland, E. & Symons, T. 2018. Reclaiming the Smart City. Nesta; Naafs, S., 2018. 'Living laboratories': the Dutch cities amassing data on oblivious residents. https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/mar/01/smart-cities-data-privacyeindhoven-utrecht ; Barcevičius et al.,2019, 47.
[228] Westergreen, U.H., Jonsson, K., Velsberg, O., 2019. Internet of Things in the Public Sector. Perspective from Norther Europe. https://iotsverige.se/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Internet-of-Things-Slutrapport-Kommunal-IoT-190330.pdf
[229] Westergreen, U.H., et al., 2019.
[230] Westergreen, U.H., et al., 2019.
[231] Castro, D. et al. 2016. How is the federal government using internet of things? Center for Data Innovation.
[232] Srpska, nd. Incentives in economy of Republic of Srpska. https://investsrpska.vladars.net/business-guide/incentives-in-economy-of-republic-of-srpska/
[233]European Commisison, 2016. Access to Base Registries. Good Practices on building successful itnerconnections of Base Registries. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
[234] European Commission, 2017. eGovernment in Local and Regional Administrations: Guidance, Tools and Funding for Implementation. Brussels: European Commission.
[235] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Subnational Governments in OECD Countries: Key Data. Paris: OECD, 2016.

distributed among thousands of databases, managed my tens of different software solutions with little to no interoperability. The problems it would cause range from delays in service delivery, inaccurate data, costs for any process that involves different municipalities (e.g., change of residency of a person).

Box 4. Creating interoperable local government sector in Hungary

A good practice of local government digitalisation comes from the creation of **Hungarian Municipality Application Service Provider (ASP)** service system (Önkormányzati ASP). Hungarian central Government has digitalised the entire local government sector by obliging local governments to use the central Municipality ASP solution, which replaced their former siloed local systems. Since January 2019 practically all (i.e., 3197) Hungarian local governments have been connected to the Municipality ASP. The key benefit of the project is creating connected municipalities at all levels of interoperability, which makes public administration and e-government service provision easier. It is also a cost-cutting measure for national government, as it can save around 12,8 million euros every year as compared to the costs of maintaining previous separate systems of local governments. One of the lessons learnt from implementation of the project is importance of involving and coordinating stakeholders (i.e., local government associations and local government officials), who were invited to regular consultations, information days and forums. Municipality ASP was also mentioned as a good practice in the CESI members' survey by Hungarian Civil Servants and Public Employees trade union (Magyar Köztisztviselõk és Közalkalmazottak Szakszervezete MKKSZ).

Source: Dán, M. 2019. The Hungarian central Municipality ASP as a good practice of local government digitalisation. https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/egovernment/document/hungarian-central-municipality-asp-good-practice-local-government-digitalisation

Smart cities also heavily rely on **geo-spatial data**. The use of web-based platforms (e.g., FixMyStreet across the UK[237], Tvarkau miestą in Vilnius, Lithuania[238]) and social media allows citizens to report a specific problem in their city or their neighbourhood (e.g., lighting problems, graffiti, fly tipping, stray pets, public transport problems). It allows city councils to map out problem areas and recognise issues early, responding faster and more effectively.[239] The monitoring of citizens requests over time can help officials to develop more responsive development strategies that address citizens' needs.

An impressive example of the utilisation of geo-spatial data is the City of Vienna's digitalisation project "Wien gibt Raum".[236] It focuses on surveying and mapping all public spaces and objects in the city. The data that is collected allows to streamline and accelerate official permit procedures (e.g., for outdoor eating areas, street festivals and other projects). The application where collected images are stored provides users with all objects and structures in Vienna's public spaces and their specific GIS layers, which allow to access geo-data, survey and image data on status quo. The images that had been collected are the basis for a digital twin, a complete digital 3D replica of the city.

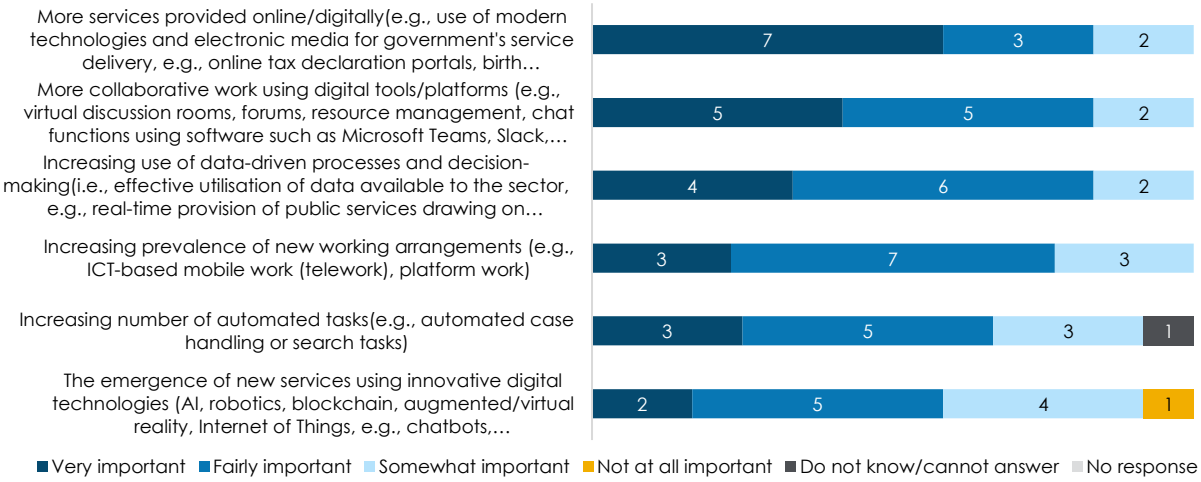
Blockchain is utilised by governments to ensure better protection of data, streamline processes, and reduce fraud, waste, and abuse, while at the same time increasing trust and accountability.[240] Blockchain can support a wide array of government services, such as land registration, identity management, voting. Blockchain also helps citizens to directly report their needs to the government and shows a potential to prioritise some request over others and thus letting public authorities address the most urgent requests first.[241]

[236] City of Wien, nd. Optimising shared use of public spaces. https://smartcity.wien.gv.at/en/wien-gibt-raum/
[237] FixMyStreet https://www.fixmystreet.com/
[238] Tvarkau Vilnių https://tvarkaumiesta.lt/
[239] Williamson, B., 2014. Knowing public services: cross-sector intermediaries and algorithmic governance in public sector reform. *Public Policy and Administration*, 29(4), 292-312; Jun, P-S., 2018. Ten years of research change using Google Trends: From the perspective of big data utilizations and applications. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 130, 69-87
[240] Consensys, nd. Blockchain in Government and the Public Sector https://consensys.net/blockchain-use-cases/government-and-the-public-sector/ .
[241] Shen, C., & Pena-Mora, F. 2018. Blockchain for Cities - A Systematic Literature Review. IEEE Access, 6, 76787-76819.

- Blockchain is used for land and property registry systems in central governments (e.g., in Sweden, Ukraine, the UK, Georgia, Australia), where it speeds up transaction and registration processes (reducing transaction costs), reduced possibilities for fraud and corruption, and helps to keep confidential information secure and private.[242]
- Blockchain enables more secure management and storage of digital identities.[243] An example can be found in the city of Zug (Switzerland), where local administration has launched a government-issued identity on the Ethereum blockchain, called uPort. [244] It is another solution for identity confirmation and personal data management for citizens, allowing the municipality to stop storing personal data and have a single check of identity of a person, leading to operational cost saving.
- Blockchain can also be used to support secure eVoting (e.g., systems for corporate and local voting are developed in Estonia).[245]

A couple of other key developments in the central government, local and regional government administrations were indicated by CESI members in the survey (see Figure 24). The most important trend according to respondents is *online provision of increasingly more services*, such as online tax declaration, issuance of documents and certificates, vehicle registration, eVoting, digital filling of various forms and applications. *More collaborative work* facilitated by digital tools is another important development in the sector. CESI members explain that there are fewer physical meetings while employees' collaboration via digital platforms has increased.

Figure 24. Importance of trends in central government, local and regional administrations sector as reported by CESI members



Source: Visionary Analytics, 2021. CESI Members' survey on digitalisation of the public sector. N=12

4.1.2. Take-up of ICT use for work

Overall performance of EU+ countries in terms of digitalising public services is measured by the eGovernment Benchmark. [246] It is based on four indicators, namely user centricity, transparency, presence of key enablers, and cross-border mobility of services. Generally, according to the

[242] New America. n.d.. Blueprint blockchain and social innovation. Case studies. Retrieved from https://www.newamerica.org/brettonwoods-ii/blockchain-trust-accelerator/reports/blueprint-blockchain-and-social-innovation/case-studies; Airtable. n.d.. Blockchain government tracker. Retrieved from https://airtable.com/shrelXQjzluCxam37/tbl7qVDFKKiEcFFrc?blocks=hid ; Kariuki, D. 2018. Blockchain-Based Land Registry Systems Can Help Eliminate Fraud, Corruption and Delays. Cryptotomorrow. Retrieved from https://www.cryptomorrow.com/2018/02/27/blockchain-based-land-registry-and-record-systems; Consesys Codefi, nd. HMLR: Blockchain Case Study for Real Estate Tokenization in the UK. https://consensys.net/codefi/assets/hmlr/

[243] Consesys Codefi, nd. Blockchain in Digital Identityhttps://consensys.net/blockchain-use-cases/digital-identity/

[244] Allessie, D., Sabolewski, M., Vaccari, L., 2019. Blockchain for digital government. An assessment of pioneering implementations in public services. Luxembourg: Publications Offices of the European Union.

[245] Ojo, A., & Adebayo, S., 2017. Blockchain as a Next Generation Government Information Infrastructure: A Review of Initiatives in D5 Countries. Government 3.0 – Next Generation Government Technology Infrastructure and Services, 32, 283–298.

[246] The e-Government Benchmark covers 36 countries: 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Norway, Montenegro, Serbia, Switzerland, Turkey, the UK, Albania and North Macedonia.

benchmark there has been a significant improvement in terms of EU countries delivering public services in a digital way since 2015. As of 2021, the overall performance of EU27+ stands at 68% as compared to 62% in 2016-2017 period. [247] More precisely:

- **User centricity** of services has been consistently improving across Europe over the years. 81% of public services can be fully completed online, with several countries already offering all services fully online (without the need for any face-to-face interactions or use of paper forms).[248] Currently the focus is on increasing the provision of fully automated services (services provided proactively, without the need for the user to initiate an interaction) and improving mobile-friendliness of services.
- **Transparency** of governmental services has been improving significantly over the last few years. Currently, more than half (61%) of government portals inform users whether and which of their personal data have been consulted by public administrations, and some offer advanced transparency (e.g., showing when, by whom and for what purpose the data was consulted). Still, improvements are needed in indicating how long the service will take, when the users can expect to receive an outcome or decision, and in allowing citizens to participate in co-creation of digital services.[249]
- **Key enablers** indicator highlights the need for further improvements as most countries lack key enablers (i.e., eID, eDocuments, Authentic Sources and Digital Post) that allow users to access services in a safe and convenient way:[250]
  - 64% of services that require identification allow to use an official eID (an increase from 57% in 2020).
  - 72% of services (increase from 68% in 2018-2019) enable eDocuments, i.e., users can upload and obtain official documentation (forms and papers) via digital channels.
  - 61% of online forms are pre-filled with information previously provided by the user using Authentic Sources (government registries) thus, facilitating the filling of online forms. That is an increase from 54% in 2018-2019.
  - 73% of government organisations use Digital Post, communicating with their users via email rather than post (an increase from 51% in 2016-2017 and 67% in 2018-2019).
- **Cross-border mobility** remains the lowest performing indicator as non-domestic users encounter difficulties to access governmental services in Europe. Only less than half (43%) of services are designed for non-domestic users. Lack of cross-border mobility can be attributed to 1) lack of adequate information and language features as in 65% of services, non-national encounter language issues; 2) document recognition and translation issues, as 38% of services do not allow users to upload or obtain their eDocuments; 3) lack of acceptance of foreign eIDs as only 24% of services allows access with eIDs from other European countries.

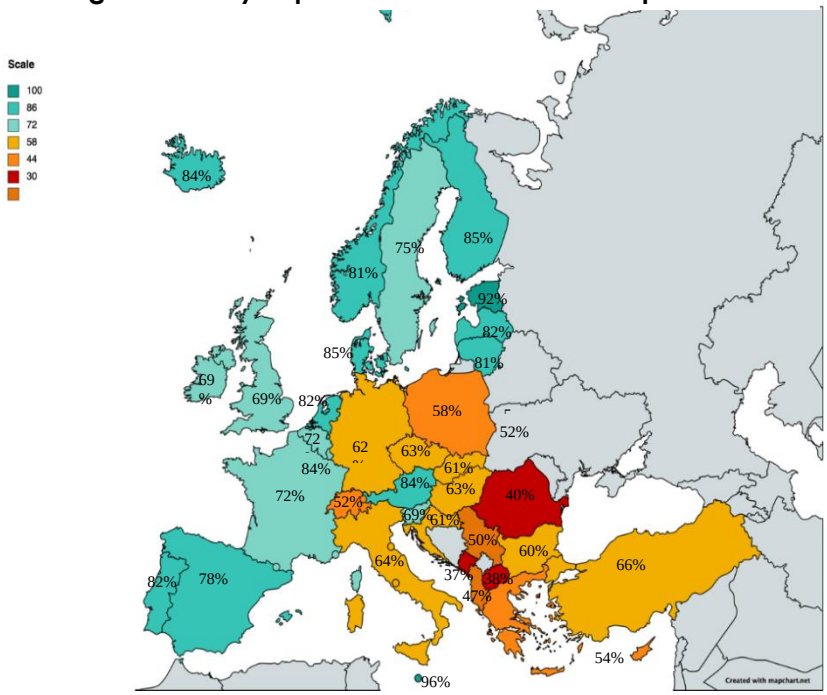
The extent of digitalisation of public services differs among European countries. The best performing countries in eGovernment are *Malta* (with a score of 96%) and *Estonia* (92%), followed by *Denmark* and *Finland* (both scoring 85%), *Austria*, *Iceland*, and *Luxembourg* (with a score of 84%), *Portugal*, *the Netherlands* and *Latvia* (scoring 82%), *Norway* and *Lithuania* (both scoring 81%) (see Figure 25).

Signalling the overall advances in digitalisation of the public sector, **the gap between frontrunners and laggards is narrowing** as the worse-performing countries are catching up. The gap between national and local government administrations also narrowed in 2018-2019 as the latter improved online availability of their services, but it remained the same in 2020.[251] However, two important gaps remain. Firstly, services provided for businesses are more often accessible online, more transparent and more convenient (i.e., more extensive use of pre-filling of various forms), than

[247] European Commission, eGovernment Benchmark 2021.
[248] Capgemini et al., 2021, 17.
[249] Capgemini et al., 2021, 19.
[250] Capgemini et al., 2021,19-21.
[251] eGovernment Benchmark 2020 and 2021

services for citizens.[252] Secondly, as mentioned before, the gap between accessibility of services for foreign and domestic citizens also remains large.[253]

Figure 25. Digital delivery of public services across Europe



Source: European Commission, 2021. eGovernment Benchmark 2021. Available at https://www.capgemini.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/eGovernment-Benchmark-2021-Insight-Report.pdf

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digitalisation in the public administration, as also highlighted by all CESI members responding to the survey. [254] The crisis made the challenge of digital transformation more urgent and opportunities more immediate.[255] The search for technical solutions has hastened in order to meet the conditions of the pandemic and continue work (see Box 5). Administrations started investing in security of data networks and digital applications. As a CESI member noted, the political attention to the topic of digitalisation of administration has increased enormously.[256] While before the pandemic climate change mitigation and adaptation were of the most importance to European municipalities, the pandemic has shifted their focus more towards investing in digital infrastructure.[257]

At the same time, the pandemic exposed weaknesses of organisational preparedness to digitalisation. As noted by CESI members, often work from home brought forward the issue of poor digital infrastructure, namely lack of (functioning) technical equipment (including company mobile phones), lack of VPN connection, poor Internet connection, and lack of software.[258] On the other hand, besides showing governments which challenges need to be addressed, it also revealed the potential of digitalisation to improve quality of public services as well as optimising public spending.[259]

Box 5. Good practices of using digital innovations to respond to the COVID-19 in the sector

Vienna City Administration has used AI to respond to the increased need for information on protective measures and instructions to citizens about COVID-19 pandemic. [260] The administration has introduced a digital assistant chatbot "WienBot" in 2017 to provide users of administration portal information on parking

[252] Capgemini et al. 202, 26
[253] Capgemini et al. 202, 27
[254] Visionary Analytics, 2021. CESI members' survey on digitalisation in public sector
[255] KPMG, 2021. Achieving digital transformation in local councils. https://home.kpmg/au/en/home/insights/2021/08/local-government-transformation-series.html
[256] Visionary Analytics, 2021.
[257] European Investment Bank (EIB), 2021. The state of local infrastructure investment in Europe. EIB Municipalities Survey 2020. https://www.eib.org/attachments/efs/eibis_2020_municipality_en.pdf
[258] Visionary Analytics, 2021.
[259] Porrúa, M., Lafuente, M., Mosqueira, E., Roseth, B., Reyes, A. M., 2021. Digital transformation and public employment. The future of government work. Inter-American Development Bank.
[260] City of Vienna, 2021. A chatbot for Crisis Communication. https://digitales.wien.gv.at/en/ai-against-covid-19-disinformation/

fees, entrance fees, opening hours of public spaces, events, waste sorting. The chatbot is fully integrated into the City of Vienna's information page and mobile application, where it provides written answers and gives users a chance to ask questions by voice. At the beginning of the pandemic, it was trained to provide targeted and quick answers to citizens' questions about the COVID-19. The "Corona-Bot" was trained with a few thousand questions and technical terms on the topic and his answers were designed to be short, up-to-date and informative. The chatbot automatically prioritised answers according to relevance and urgency. In addition to being embedded in city administration's information channels, it was also placed as an interactive banner in Austrian online media website, where it answered questions about the current situation in Vienna's public swimming pools and helped citizens to plan their visit during the pandemic. The chatbot reduced the burden of employees in public health services and hotlines.

The Governing Council of Castile and León (Spain) has utilised open and reusable data on its web to provide transparent information on the pandemic circumstances by launching a national dashboard to monitor the epidemiological situation.[261] Dashboard is divided into sections with each section providing indicators, tables, graphs and maps that give users a clear and understandable information on the impact of the pandemic. Accountability is fostered by providing explanatory notes that explain the methodology for data collection and documents that specify the applied policies. Users can search records according to specific criteria and download over 30 data sets in different formats. Such measures provide citizens with Castile and León with reliable and timely information. The portal has become the most visited site of the Governing Council of Castile and Leon. In the first 12 months, 4 006 008 separate users made 22 742 570 visits.

Source: EIPA, 2021. European Public Sector Awards, 2021. Available at: https://www.eipa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Results-EPSA-2021_all-projects-overview.pdf; Spaan, M., Marani, G., 2021. Building a Better Europe for Citizens. What Can We Learn from the Best Government Innovations by European Countries?.

4.2. Opportunities of digitalisation in central, local and regional government administrations

Key takeaway:

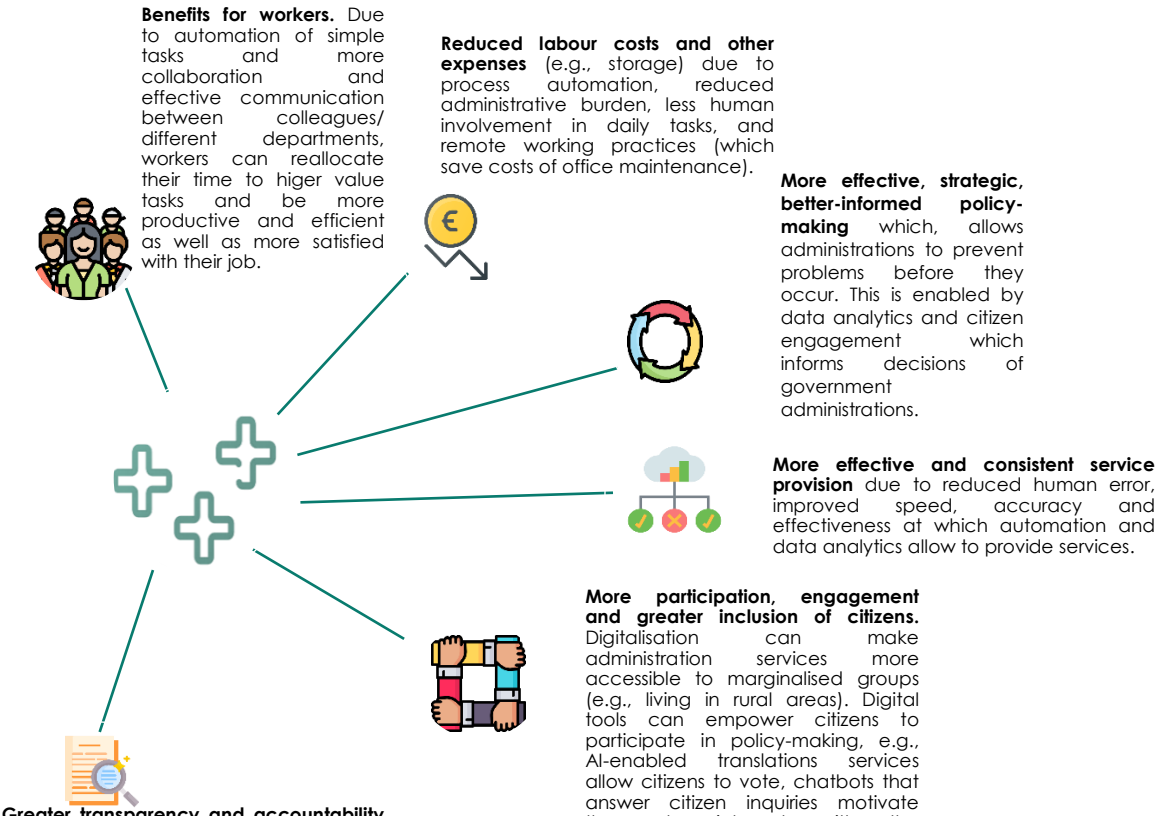
- Digitalisation of central, local and regional government administrations can reduce labour costs, improve quality and effectiveness of services and policies, increase transparency and accountability of government administrations, offer citizens more opportunities to participate in policy-making, and offer workers such benefits as more productivity, effective communication and job satisfaction.

Implementation of eGovernment services is associated with values such as efficiency, public interest, transparency, rule of law, accountability, trust in government, professionalism, objectivity, responsibility, productivity, public participation, co-creation, user-centricity, accessibility and simplicity.[262] These values are translated into the opportunities of digitalisation of central government, local and regional government administrations (see Figure 26). Elaboration on the specific benefits that digitalisation can have for workers is provided in Section 4.4.

[261] Spaan, M., Marani, G., 2021. Building a Better Europe for Citizens. What Can We Learn from the Best Government Innovations by European Countries? https://www.eipa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/EPSA-2021_What-Can-We-Learn-from-the-Best-Government-Innovations-by-European-Countries.pdf

[262] Pantiru, M.C., 2019, 8.

Figure 26. Opportunities of digitalisation in the central government, local and regional administration



Source: author's own elaboration based on multiple sources.[263]

4.3. Barriers to digitalisation and remedies: what can trade unions do?

Key takeaways:

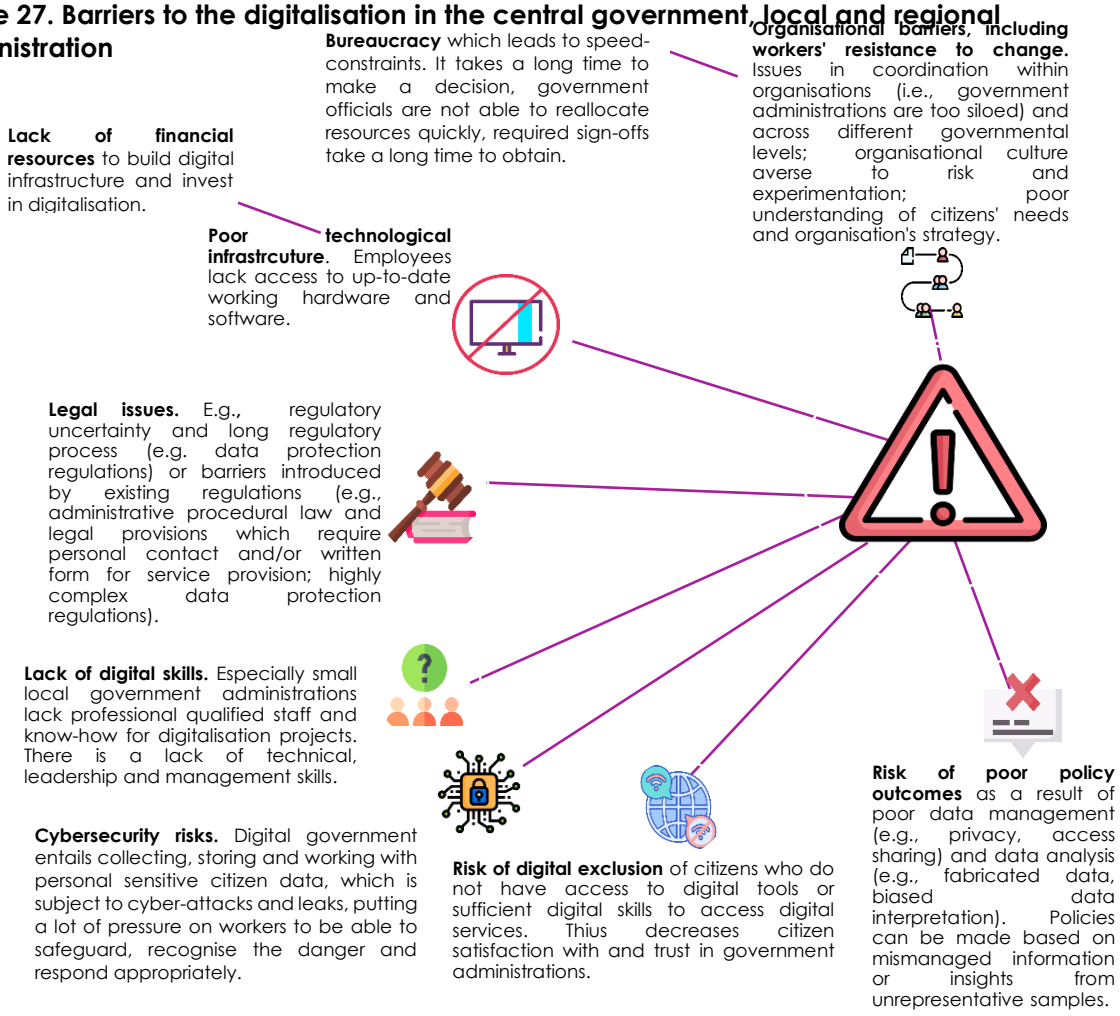
- Barriers to digitalisation of the central, local and regional government administrations range from technical issues such as lack of equipment, cybersecurity risks, to organisational barriers such as workers' resistance to digital change as well as lack of digital skills.
- Government employees can be resistant to change due to fears of negative effects, such as job loss, deskilling, de-personalisation of work. However, CESI members believe that workers in the sector hold more positive attitudes towards digitalisation as they expect it to increase their efficiency and are eager to take part in the process of digital transformation.

[263] McKinsey, 2018. Public Services, Government 4.0 – the public sector in the digital age; Deloitte, 2015, 3; Digital Transformation Agency, 2019. Blockchain case study: Commonwealth Bank and the NDIS. Australian Government; Lethbridge, J., 2015. Digitalisation of local authority services in Europe. CEMR, EPSU; Kuhlmann, S. and Bogumil, J., 2021. "The Digitalisation of Local Public Serives. Evidence from the German Case" in *The Future of Local Self-Government*. ; JRC, 2019; Polonski, V. W., 2017. "How Artificial Intelligence Conquered Democracy", *The Conversation*, August 8, 2017. https://theconversation.com/how-artificial-intelligence-conquered-democracy-77675 ; Mehr. H. 2017; Heuberger and Scwab 2021; Icons retrieved from Flaticon.com

- All public servants are expected to have a set of core competences to be able to work in Digital Government. These skills include both technical (e.g., ability to use digital tools in work, utilise data) and soft (e.g., leadership, communication, creativity) competences. However, public administration staff (especially in smaller local administrations) lack basic digital skills, calling for more training that would be accessible, relevant and useful to workers.
- CESI members in the sector react to digitalisation positively, believing it will bring more opportunities than risks.
- Trade unions can support workers through helping them understand the rationale behind digitalisation as well as the potential benefits of digitalisation for them, as they inform workers' attitude towards digital change. Trade unions can also support narrowing digital skills gap, by participating in social dialogue on digital skills, as well as organising training.

Opportunities of digitalisation in central, local and regional government administrations do not necessarily lead to successful digitalisation as there are several barriers which hinder the process (Figure 27). The most prominent obstacles-besides lack of resources (especially technology and equipment) and regulatory barriers-are workers' attitudes towards digitalisation, as well as their lack of digital skills. These obstacles are also the most relevant for trade unions that can put effort into impacting workers' attitudes, as well as guiding them through digital skills development. These two barriers are discussed in greater detail below.

Figure 27. Barriers to the digitalisation in the central government, local and regional administration



Source: author's own elaboration based on multiple sources.[264]

4.3.1. Workers' attitudes

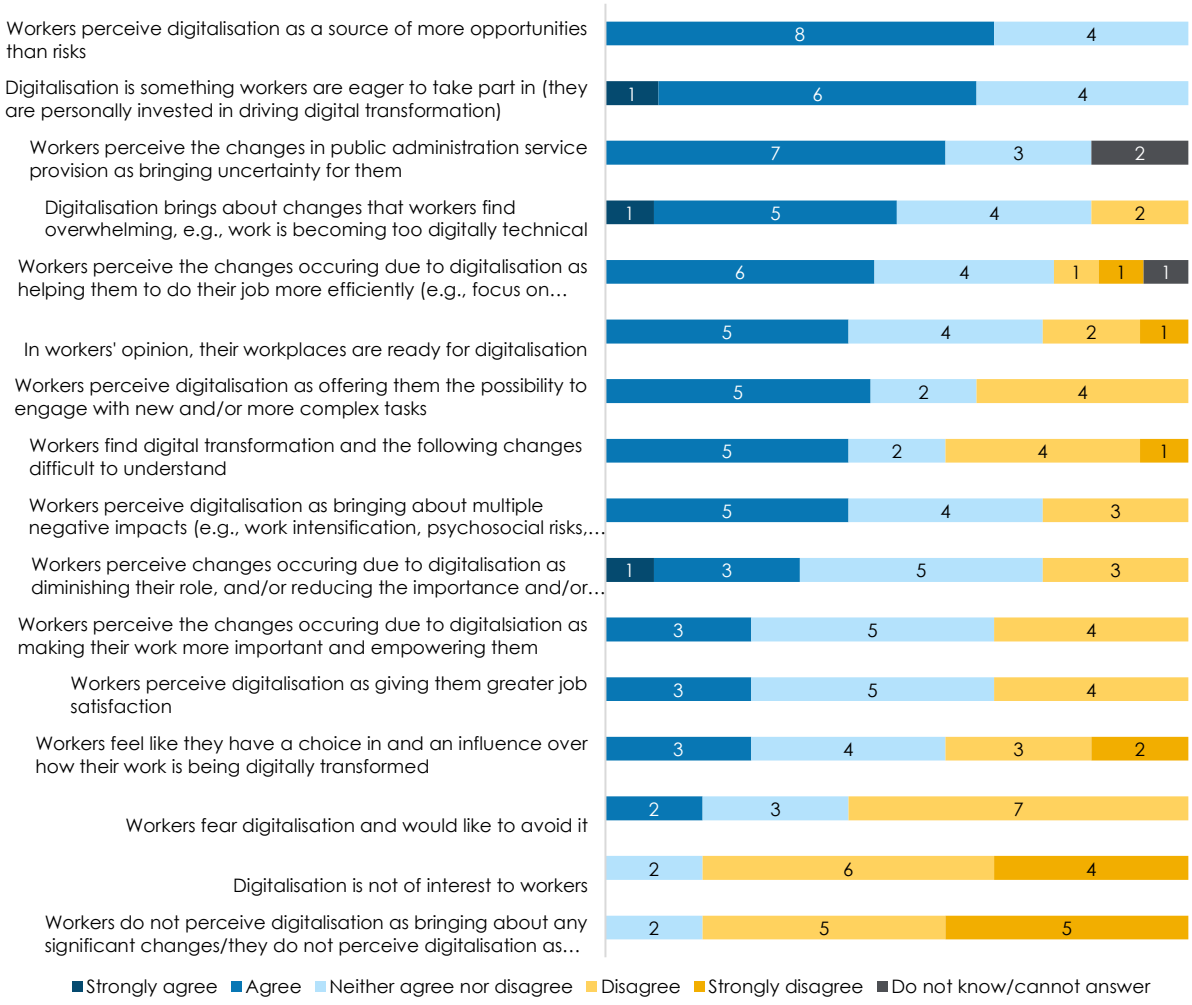
Negative attitudes of personnel is a noteworthy barrier of digitalisation of the sector. Personnel in central, local and regional administrations may resist digital transformation out of fear of job loss, fear of radical transparency, work intensification, loss of autonomy, increased uncertainty. For example, in 2012 the Danish government had passed a Public Digital Post law, mandating citizens to receive electronic messages from the public sector. A study which explored the attitudes of clerical staff involved in implementing this change found that the staff as critical of how it was implemented, pointing out that there was a lack of preparation in relation to procedures, strategies and information provided to staff and citizens.

CESI members' survey suggests that some workers in the sector may resist digital change. CESI members disagree that workers feel like they can influence the process of digitalisation, and believe that digitalisation induces feelings of uncertainty for workers and brings changes that they find overwhelming (see Figure 28). Nevertheless, CESI members also acknowledge the positive attitudes of workers, indicating that digitalisation in the sector is seen as a more positive rather than negative development. According to respondents, workers understand that digitalisation brings about significant changes to their work. They do not fear digitalisation and are eager to take part in it, believing it can help them to do their job more efficiently.

Research finds that government personnel acknowledges multiple benefits that digitalisation can offer to them, including advantages of digital communication with citizens, the speed and ease of use of digital tools. For example, a study of U.S. government employees revealed highly positive views towards adopting AI in government, claiming that government should consider using AI to improve public service, and indicating they would expect AI to improve the efficiency and quality of government work, as well as free them from repetitive tasks. A study also explained that workers' attitude towards adoption of AI in government depended on their perception on new technologies, the outlook on the role of AI in society, and their familiarity and experiencing in using some form of AI applications.

[264] Dubow, T. 2017, Civic engagement: How can digital technologies underpin citizen-powered democracy. An overview of the consultation on civic engagement held as part of the Corsham Institute Thought Leadership Programme 2017. RAND; Kuhlmann and Bogumil, 2021; Hornung, C., 2021. "Is a multi-skilled workforce the future of local government?", *LocalGov*, November 17, 2021. https://www.localgov.co.uk/Is-a-multi-skilled-workforce-the-future-of-local-government/53277; EIB, 2021; Lethbridge, J., 2015; Berger, J.B., 2014. "Mandatory e-government has arrived: The silent protest from staff calls for the committed scholar – resistance must never be futile!" Proceedings of the 25th Australasian Conference on Information Systems, 8th - 10th December, Auckland, New Zealand. Icons retrieved from Flaticon.com

Figure 28. Attitudes of workers in the central government, local and regional administration sector according to CESI members



Source: Visionary Analytics, 2021. CESI Members' survey on digitalisation of the public sector, N=12.

4.3.2. Digital skills

Government officials are at the centre of digital transformation public sector, as they are designing, implementing, and using the tools. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that government officials have the skills required to do their jobs that now include using new tools, conducting new tasks and functions, and working in new ways. Moreover, the sector needs professionals able to drive digital transformation beyond their offices and workplaces, which also require digital competence.

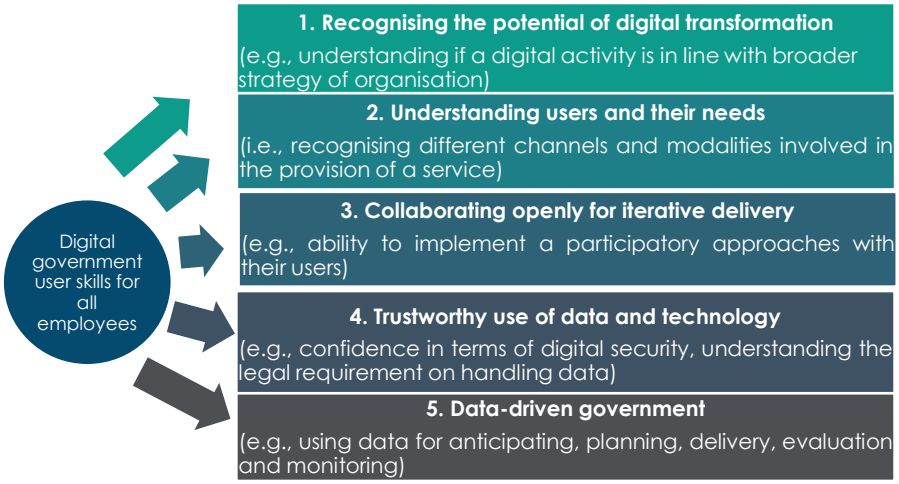
4.3.2.1. Increasing demand for digital skills

As demands for services are increasing, workers in public administrations need not only better access to digital tools but also skills to effectively use them in order to meet the goal of increasing efficiency and productivity of service delivery. Every public servant should be expected to have a foundational level of digital government user skills regardless of their role or position in their organisational structure or whether they work in national or local government.[265] There are five areas of core skills for public servants in digital government as presented in Figure 29. In addition

[265] OECD, 2020a.

to these core government user skills, there needs to be a blend of socio-emotional skills amongst staff that is working on digital government, i.e., this refers to abilities and behaviours in the areas of vision (e.g., big picture thinking), analysis (e.g., problem solving), diplomacy (e.g., empathy), agility (e.g., adaptability), and protection (e.g., providing stability).[266] On top of that, there are specific skills needed for professionals in different roles, depending on how much their role involves dealing with digital and data.[267] More advanced skills are needed from some government officials that are involved in policymaking (e.g. use of data for policy modelling, evaluation, data analytics, and data mining to support policy and impact evaluation).[268] Finally, there are certain competencies that leaders and managers in digital government administrations should have on top of government user skills (i.e., ability to manage change, identify opportunities for improvement, understanding the necessity of digitalisation).

Figure 29. Core skills for government officials in central, local and regional government administrations



Source: OECD, 2020. The OECD Framework for digital talent and skills in the public sector: 35

A recent European Public Administration Network (EUPAN) survey of central government administration staff revealed that the top competences required for employees that work in eGovernment services are digital/IT skills, collaboration, problem-solving, customer orientation, followed by competences in design for solutions, flexibility, initiative, ability to innovate, proficiency in English and creativity.[269] Such results suggest that although technical digital IT skills are the most in demand, there is an increasing need for soft skills. Such conclusions are supported looking at digital competence frameworks for employees in eGovernment in European countries.[270]

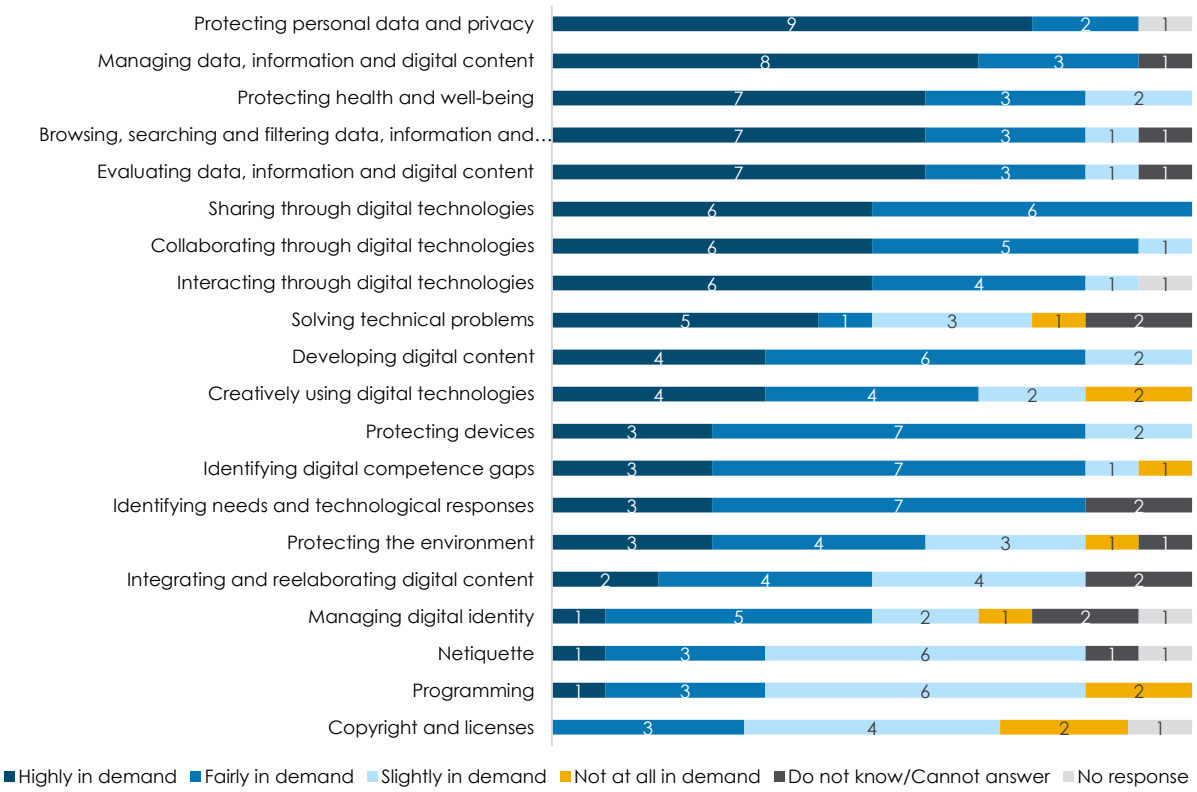
CESI members believe that in the last five years the demand for skills in the sector has changed and nine out of twelve trade unions think that there is an increased need for *cognitive* (e.g., logical reasoning, prioritisation, adaptability) and *self-leadership skills* (e.g., self-management, coping with uncertainty, self-awareness).[271] Eight and seven trade unions respectively believe that there is an increased demand for technical *digital skills* (e.g., programming, data literacy), and *interpersonal skills* (e.g., empathy, resolving conflicts, role modelling) respectively. Interestingly,

[266] OECD, 2020a, 43.
[267] OECD, 2020a, 44-46.
[268] European Commission. eGovernmetn4EU. https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/blog/digital-skills-public-administrations-are-essential-make-egovernment-happen-0.html
[269] Pantiru, M.C, 2019.
[270] See Pantiru, M.C., 2019. Competencies necessary for eGovernment. European Public Administration Network. Available: https://www.eupan.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2019-final-REPORT-Competencies-necessary-for-eGov-PRES-RO-1.pdf for examples of digital competences that government require employees to have in various European countries (e.g., Portugal, Finland, Italy). These skills range from IT competence (using digital services and tools in work, systems privacy and security knowledge) to change competences (e.g., change management, risk and project management), social competences (e.g., leadership, cooperation, communication), creativity.
[271] Visionary Analytics, 2021.

one trade union noted that while there is an increased need for all types of digital skills, digitalisation is not the leading factor behind that.

The skill to *protect personal data and privacy* is on top of the list of skills that are highly in demand in the sector, according to CESI members (see Figure 30). Other skills that are highly or fairly in demand in the sector are *sharing* and *collaborating through digital technologies*, as well as *managing data, information and digital content*. Generally, none of the digital competences were deemed as not at all in demand by more than a couple of trade unions, but the least in demand for the sector seem to be the skills of *netiquette, programming* and *copyright and licenses*.

Figure 30. Demand of digital competences in central government, local and regional administration sector according to CESI members



Source: Visionary Analytics, 2021. CESI Members' survey on digitalisation of the public sector, N=10.

4.3.2.2. Digital skills gap

There is a shortage of sufficiently skilled labour force in public administrations across EU. McKinsey study on Europe's public sector conducted in over 600 organisations in the public sector, including public administration, defence, social security and education, shows the potential digital skills gap among workforce: by 2023 EU-27 and the UK public sector will need additional 1.7 million employees that would possess technological skills, including 1.1 million with advanced and complex data analytics skills. [272] In 2020 these numbers meant that around 5% of all public sector employees in EU-27 and the UK did not possess such skills which are increasingly important. In addition, around 3.7 million public sector employees are expected to lack certain "classic" soft skills such as problem-solving, creativity and adaptability. Although these results cover more than

[272] Chinn, D., Hieronimus, S., Kirchherr, J., Klier, J., 2020. The future is now: Closing the skills gap in Europe's public sector. McKinsey & Company.

public administration workforce, they suggest that there is a big digital skills gap in government administrations.

More targeted national studies confirm these conclusions. In a 2012 study of the impact of new digital system introduced in a Swedish municipality to deal with municipal business and documents, managers evaluated that workers (mostly women, and especially older women) were lacking computer skills and motivation to address these skills gaps.[273] As of 2017, 29% of UK's civil servants indicated that they had not been given any training in the digital skills needed for their role and over a third of civil servants use their own time to ensure they have the digital skills necessary.[274] Such gaps are still prevalent in the UK, as of 2021 civil servants still cited problems related to the lack of digital skills. [275] The digital skills gap is even more pronounced in small local administrations, where staff lacks basic computer literacy, as well as more specialized knowledge (e.g., the ability to procure ICT systems, make better use of the data that is available).[276] CSIF (a CESI member) which represents workers from public administration has noted in the survey that not all staff is familiar and trained on how to use technologies, and sometimes they do not have available resources in terms of equipment, as well as opportunities for training.

Government officials today need to be trained to develop a higher comfort level with digital technologies, and to be able to respond to the rising demands of citizens and the potential of 'co-creation' and design thinking.[277] In addition, training opportunities allowing to upgrade digital skills continuously are important to offer in the sector where there is a lack of suitable talent.

EUPAN survey of central government administration staff revealed that training for the personnel in eGovernment services is most frequently delivered through workshops, e-learning resources, lectures, blended learning, practice based/job shadowing and others (e.g., micro learning, webinars, testimonial videos, coaching, mentoring, community of practice, massive open online course (MOOCs), world café, project work/team work, courses in universities).[278] Managers and public institutions leaders also enjoy special information sessions/training for awareness and leadership in eGovernment, which cover such topics as collaboration across departments for digitalisation projects.[279] Some examples of specific support measures to narrow the digital skills gap in public administration are presented in Box 6.

Box 6. Good practices of addressing digital skills gap in public administration by governments

- **Die Digitalakademie** was founded in 2021 in Germany, as part of the Federal Academy for Public Administration in the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community. It has been developed to support federal administration through the digital transformation process. All federal employees are encouraged to use the advanced training courses provided through the Academy. It offers skills development in the areas of IT, technical, organisational and self-development skills, as well as leadership, cooperation and communication skills. The Academy holds online and face-to-face events, as well as offers digital learning formats.
- Central Government and the presidents of regional and autonomous provincial authorities in Italy has established **Regional Competence Centres** as a support measure to local public sector bodies on eGovernment. They provide technical assistance, information and training activities, support to implement eGovernment, upgrade IT systems and reorganise back-office processes and service delivery channels.[280]

[273] Nygren, K.G., 2012
[274] Brecknell, S, 2017. "Civil servants studying in their own time to catch up on digital skills", *CSW,* 12 June, 2017. https://www.civilserviceworld.com/news/article/civil-servants-studying-in-their-own-time-to-catch-up-on-digital-skills
[275] Smith, B., Trendal, S., 2021. "Digital skills gaps remain despite civil service adding 10,000 people last year." PublicTechnoogy.net, February 1, 2021. https://www.publictechnology.net/articles/news/digital-skills-gaps-remain-despite-civil-service-adding-10000-people-last-year
[276] Osimo, D., 2018. How Local Government for eGovernment Renewal is Key to Europe's Digital Success: A Six-Point Programme Reform. The Lisbon Council.
[277] Osimo, D., 2018.
[278] Pantiru, M.C., 2019
[279] Pantiru, M.C., 2019
[280] European Commission. Digital Public Administration factsheet 2020. Italy.

- The Ministry of Public Administration in Italy has developed one of the most comprehensive digital competence frameworks in 2019 and updated it in 2020.[281] The **Syllabus on Digital Skills for the Public Administration** groups key digital skills for public administration employees under five groups: data, information and IT documents, communication and sharing, safety, online services, and digital transformation. The skills included in the syllabus range from the ability to use standards tools (e.g., Internet, office automation tools for the production and cataloguing of documents, using e-mail as the main communication tool), understanding different authentication tools to access online services, to understanding the meaning of linked open data, being able to use advanced tools to communicate with other administrations and users (including via social media), recognising the areas of application of emerging technologies (i.e., Cloud computing, Big Data, Data analytics, AI, IoT, blockchain), knowing how to defend against cyber-attacks.
- Department for Digital Government Policy in the Netherlands has established a **National Academy for Government Digitization** (RADIO) in 2017.[282] It offers courses and digital learning forums for policymakers in order to learn about digitalisation and computerisation. Subjects covered by the academy range from AI, cybersecurity, data, to ethics and privacy and law in relation to digitalisation.
- Denmark has the **State Digital Academy** to advance the digital skills of government employees in collaboration with educational institutions and private sector stakeholders.[283]
- The Administration Academy at the Ministry of Public Administration in Slovenia has launched a "**Digital literacy training programme for public servants"** in 2019.[284] The training programme follows the DigComp Framework for Citizens and aims to support civil servants in developing these competences and being able to use ICT in a creative, safe and critical way.

Source: Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, n/d. Digtal Academy. https://www.digitalakademie.bund.de/SharedDocs/05_Digitalakademie/01_Willkommen_Digitalakademie/Willkommen_in_der_Digitalakademie.html ; European Commission. Digital Public Administration factsheet 2020. Italy ; National Academy for Government Digitization and Computerization https://www.it-academieoverheid.nl/

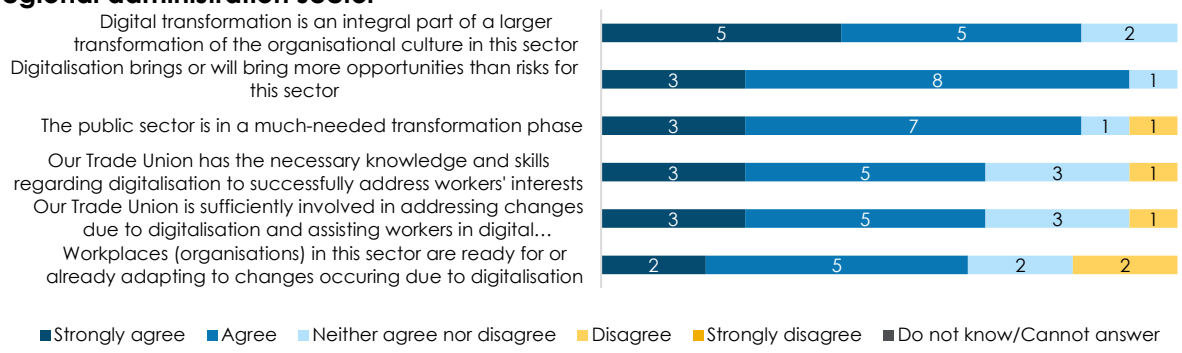
There are several issues with civil service management processes, including on how workers are given space to develop their skills. These problems, alongside insufficient funding for training systems and for hiring the necessary staff already equipped with skills, and shortage of professionals who have those skills in the market, are key barriers to having prepared and competent digital governments.[285]

4.3.3. Trade union response

CESI members believe that digitalisation will bring more opportunities than risks for the sector (see Figure 31). They think that public sector is undergoing a much-needed transformation phase and that digitalisation is part of the transformation of the organisational culture. Most CESI members believe that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to support workers throughout digitalisation, and that they are sufficiently involved in the process. Moreover, seven out of twelve trade unions believe that workplaces in the sector are ready for digitalisation and only two disagree, painting a rather positive view about organisational preparedness in the sector.

[281] See: https://www.competenzedigitali.gov.it/syllabus-delle-competenze/che-cose.html
[282] National Academy for Government Digitization and Computerization. https://www.it-academieoverheid.nl/
[283] Danish Ministry of Finance, Agency of Digitization. https://en.digst.dk/
[284] Gruden, B., 2018. The renovation of training for digital literacy civil servants in Slovenia. https://europa.eu/eas/dispa/meetings/sofia2018/Breda%20Gruden.pdf ; OECD 2020, 33.
[285] Porrúa, M. et al., 2021.

Figure 31. CESI members' attitudes to digital transformation in the central government, local and regional administration sector



Source: Visionary Analytics, 2021. CESI Members' survey on digitalisation of the public sector, N=12.

In the light of work tasks and processes being transformed for central, local and regional government administration workers, **trade unions have an important task to support them,** especially in shaping their attitudes and fostering digital skills development. **Firstly**, in order to ensure that workers approach digitalisation without prejudice and therefore are more likely to benefit from it, trade unions could:

- *Be aware and raise awareness* of why and how digitalisation is changing ways of working. This involves explicitly informing employees (especially those that are less technology-oriented) about the potential advantages of digital transformation, as well as about the drivers of digitalisation. The former would help workers to understand how they can benefit from digitalisation, while the latter would explain the mechanisms behind the need to digitalise.
- *Ensuring that workers are consulted and informed* about the purpose of digital change in a workplace. This may involve closer cooperation with employers on behalf of trade union representatives.

Secondly, trade unions can contribute to narrowing the digital skills gap. CESI members believe they have a role in facilitating the reduction of the digital skills gap. Nine out of twelve CESI members think that *trade unions should raise awareness* amongst workers about the opportunities of digitalisation, and eight believe that *trade unions should be more involved in social dialogue* on the topic of digital skills.[286] BLC (a CESI member) notes that for the trade union to be able to support workers in digital transition, cooperation of the employees is necessary as staff representatives should be active in demand training and cooperating with the trade union; such active feedback is lacking as those affected often do not report their needs. In addition, trade unions could *organise digital trainings* themselves, or at least *guide workers on how to access such trainings.*

CESI members explain that there is a high need for more training for workers to develop digital skills. Six out of twelve trade unions report that opportunities for professional development/training are lacking for workers and that they do not adequately address workers' needs, naming them as the main barriers to successfully addressing changing skills needs in the sector. BLC (a CESI member) explained that sometimes workers learn by doing and their training occurs as peer learning, when those more experienced teach those that struggle to use technology. For example, RJPS (a CESI member) noted that existing e-learning programs are superficial and lacking practical interactivity. DBB (a CESI member) calls for more tailored training and further education offers, such as Digital Academy for Public Administration in Germany (see Box 6). Another trade union noted that trainings do not focus enough of team development and

[286] Visionary Analytics, 2021.

management. The most important barrier to successfully addressing the changes in skills needs due to digitalisation is however the *difficulty to identify what skills workers need*.

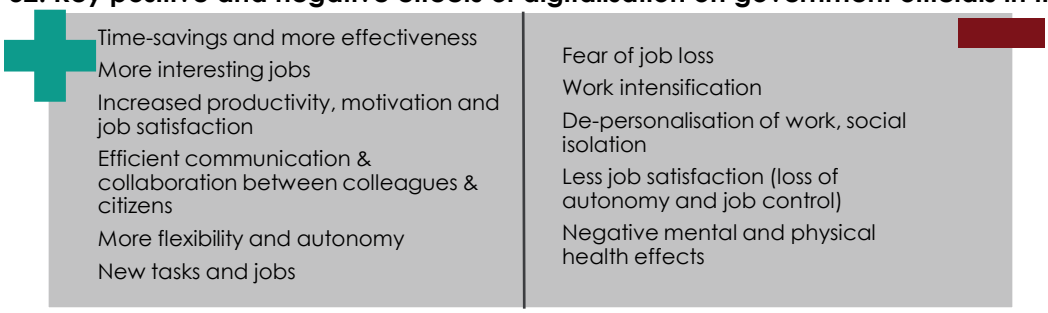
4.4. Impact on work organisation in central government, local and regional administration sector

Key takeaway:

- For government officials, digitalisation can be both advantageous (e.g., giving them more autonomy, increasing their job satisfaction, making their work more effective) as well as introduce several risks (e.g., inducing fear of job loss, causing higher levels of pressure and stress).

Digitalisation of public sectors means that central government, local and regional administration personnel experience changes not only in terms of skills, but in terms of their working practices and operations. Digitalisation restructures work, reorganises public information and knowledge and entails re-orientation of citizen-official relationship.[287] Staff needs to embrace digital delivery of services, automation of their work processes, such flexible working arrangement as telework, more collaborative and team work, and creation of new job profiles that they can try on. The main implications of these and other changes on government officials and their OSH as presented in Figure 32 are briefly discussed in this section.

Figure 32. Key positive and negative effects of digitalisation on government officials in the sector



Source: author's own elaboration

4.4.1. Positive effects of digitalisation on workers

Technologies can make government officials' **jobs more effective** and save their time. The simplest example of this is storing documents in the cloud system instead of physical files, which means that it is easier for employees to obtain documents that belong to other departments, to look for reports or update files in real-time.[288] Automation also contributes significantly to this, by taking over certain tasks that allow government officials to focus on more important ones. There are many examples of automation in local and central government administrations, and it can be applied to a lot of processes in the workplaces (see Section 4.1). Other examples include automating translations of documents, transcription of political debates, answering citizens' queries or providing them with information-tasks that would have to be done by workers but can be automated by natural language processing (NLP) technologies. A practical examples comes from Finnish Tax Administration (FTA) which has automated around 80% of its operations.[289] Accessibility of data through cloud storage means workers do not have to spend time searching for files in archives and can access automatically generated reports and analysis which makes their work easier. Automation of administrations' tasks lets workers to spend their time on other, less administrative and manual and

[287] Petrakaki, D., 2018. Re-locating accountability through technology: From bureaucratic to electronic ways of governing public sector work, *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 31(1), 31-45; Letbridge, 2015; Andersson, C., Halling A., Ivory C., 2022. Unpacking the digitalisation of public services: Configuring work during automation in local government. Government Information Quarterly 39(1).

[288] GovPilot, nd., "11 Benefits of Digital Transformation for Local Government". https://www.govpilot.com/blog/benefits-of-digital-transformation-for-local-governments

[289] Microsoft, 2017. How Finland is embracing digital transformation. Digital challenges and success showcases.

more skilled work (e.g., dealing with more complex applications or permits) which can make their work more demanding, motivating them to improve, to deepen their competences, making their work more interesting and increasing their well-being.[290]

Increased job satisfaction can be another benefit of digitalisation. Workers in the public administration work to meet the needs of the economy and society, which gives them a strong sense of purpose, keeping them working in public service.[291] When digitalisation allows for faster service delivery and higher quality services, citizens are happier, motivating staff and increasing their levels of job satisfaction.[292] Fewer repetitive manual tasks as a result of automation has also been proven to increase job satisfaction. This was the case in the UK's HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Department, where RPA automatically opens files related to customer queries for contact centre advisers, reducing their call times by 40%.[293]

Job satisfaction can also be stimulated by work in teams. Digitalisation in central and local government administrations embraces work in cross-disciplinary, diverse teams made up of people from different professional background, skill sets, gender, culture and age. [294] For example, representative teams are required when developing AI systems to be used in government administrations. Multi-disciplinary teams are needed to "address governance issues around collaboration or technical and regulatory issues concerning data access and sharing".[295] Working in teams can stimulate individual performance and motivation, lead to more productivity as well as job satisfaction because of the feeling of the sense of belonging in the workplace.

The use of ICT for work purposes can **improve communication and collaboration** between colleagues and different departments, eventually contributing to the more efficient service delivery. An illustrative example comes from local governments which embrace the idea of multi-skilling, i.e., when council employees use mobile phones or other devices and applications to report another job that needs to be done by another department fast and without the need for paperwork.[296] In practice this would mean that social care workers could report on the home maintenance needs of the residents they are taking care of. It has been called the future of local government.[297] In a more general sense digitalisation means that all departments of government administrations can access and manage the same real-time data and information, removing the bottlenecks of communication and collaboration (when the systems are interoperable).

Six out of twelve CESI members believe that digitalisation of the sector leads to **increased work autonomy** where workers have more opportunities to decide where and when to work. Indeed, public administrations are encouraged to embrace more flexible ways of working in order to facilitate working environment for multi-disciplinary teams.[298] Large majority of CESI members that responded to the survey in the last five years have observed *the increase of teleworking.* Another source of autonomy comes from digital leadership, which means that instead of traditional decision-making which is happening at the top of an organisation, authority and autonomy is distributed throughout an organisation. It empowers teams to make their own decisions. Such flatter organisational structure can increase pubic

[290] Kuhlmann and Bogumil, 2021; Wallin, A., Pylväs, L., & Nokelainen, P., 2020. Government Workers' Stories about Professional Development in a Digitalized Working Life. *Vocations and Learning*, 13(3), 439-458.
[291] OECD, 2020a, 19.
[292] Daub, M., Domeyer, A., Lamaa, A., Renz F., 2020. Digital public services: How to achieve fast transformation at scale. McKinsey & Companny.
[293] Capgemini., 2016. HMRC advisers use robots to reduce call times by up to 40%.
[294] Pantiru, M.C., 2019.
[295] OECD, 2020a, 19.
[296] Hornung, C. 2021.
[297] Hornung, C. 2021.
[298] OECD, 2020a, 19.

servant's satisfaction, contribute to a healthy digital workplace and influence public servant's productivity, motivation and happiness at work.[299]

Digitalisation **creates new jobs** for staff in central government administration, as well as local and regional administration. CSIF (a CESI member) explained that digitalisation creates jobs that are necessary to maintain and support technologies used for work in administrations.[300] Some examples of new roles that are related to digitalisation in government administrations are: chief digital officer/ chief data officer (in charge of fostering technological innovation in departments and improving IT capacity),[301] information officer, chief innovation officer, chief knowledge officer.[302] For example the municipality in Milan has created a post of "councillor for digital transformation".[303] An occupation of "analytics translators" is appearing to bridge data engineers, scientists and other technical staff with the rest of organisations.[304] The increasing usage of social media and other channels for closer cooperation with citizens and knowledge sharing can also mean the increasing need for content-creators and communication, media experts in central and local governments.

In addition to new jobs, workers also find themselves engaging in **new tasks** within their old jobs. For example, before their tasks were automated case officers who usually interacted with the public and helped to process citizens their claims, are now helping them to navigate and interpret automated processes.[305] In this very example, case officers become mediators between the digital system and clients, changing the client-officer relationship. Eight out of twelve CESI members in the survey noted they have observed *emergence of new tasks or job functions* as a trend in the last five years.

4.4.2. Negative effects of digitalisation on workers

As digitalisation is partly a way to reduce workload of the government administration, it naturally leads to **job losses**, which is one of the central disadvantages of digital transformation for workers.[306] Automation of clerical and routine tasks in some cases entirely diminishes the need for human involvement replacing human workers with automated systems.[307] BLC (a CESI member) explained that less qualified jobs are disappearing and the tasks in these jobs are taken over my more highly qualified employees.[308]

Digitalisation can **increase the workload** of government officials by making simple tasks more complicated and time-consuming than before.[309] For example, the digital post reform in Denmark in 2012 increased the workload of clerical staff and reduced the quality of their working life.[310] A survey of Finnish government workers revealed that digitalisation contributed to hectic pace of work, multitasking and interruptions with the demand that everything should be ready right away and the constant flow of emails, phone queries, and instant messages.[311] Intensification of work can also be a side-effect of

[299] OECD, 2020a, 21
[300] Visionary Analytics, 2021.
[301] Wiseman, M. J., 2018. Data-driven government: the role of Chief Data Officers. IBM Center for The Business of Government. ; ESPON, 2019. Digital innovation in urban environments Solutions for sustainable and fluently working cities.
[302] JRC, 2019, 70.
[303] Osimo, D., 2018.
[304] Henke, N., Levine, J., McIerney, P., 2018. Analytics translator : the new must-have role. McKinsey & Company. https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/mckinsey-analytics/our-insights/analytics-translator
[305] Wihlborg, E.,Larsson H., Hedström, K. ""The Computer Says No!" -- A Case Study on Automated Decision-Making in Public Authorities," 2016 49th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS), 2016, 2903-2912.
[306] Lethbridge, J. 2015.
[307] Wihlborg et al., 2016
[308] Visionary Analytics, 2021. CESI Members'
[309] https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s12186-020-09248-y.pdf
[310] Berger, J.B., 2014.
[311] Wallin, A., Pylvas, A., Nokelainen, P., 2020.Government Workers' Stories about Professional Development in a Digitalized Working Life. *Vocations and Learning,* 13(3), 439-458

teleworking, which makes workers feel like they need to do more work within a working day and must be constantly available (see Section 3.1). CSIF (a CESI member) also explains that increased workload can be a result of the lack of training for workers before technologies are introduced in their workplaces. In these situations, workers are given no time to adapt and familiarise themselves with the tools, which leads to more time spent on learning how to use them. *Work intensification* was observed as one of the changes in work organisation in the sector by eight out of twelve CESI members in the survey. All but one CESI member reported that workers experience *blurred work-life boundary* due to work intensification and telework, making it the most pronounced OSH effect of digitalisation in the sector.[312] In addition, seven out of twelve trade unions reported *burnout* as one of the OSH effects.

Reduced number of face-to-face interactions together with a shift to providing e-services were among the most prevalent changes in work organisation observed by CESI members from the sector in the last five years.[313] Due to automation and telework, workers have less face-to-face contact with citizens and their colleagues, leading to **de-personalisation of work.** For example, for workers in a Swedish municipality the key effect of the project which integrated ICT in the HR department was loss of personal contact which previously was maintained through telephone work.[314] De-personalisation of work can lead to loss of communality and make workers feel less important as they have less opportunities to share knowledge with others personally. [315] This can lead to feelings of loneliness, isolation, erosion of social work skills and poor social relationships of workers.

Digitalisation can make workers **less satisfied with their job**. Survey of Finnish government officials revealed that workers spend a lot of their working time for testing and development of ICT systems or doing tasks that were previously responsibility of workers that were laid off due to automation. This prevents employees from doing their job that they are educated for and competent in.[316] Digitalisation can decrease workers satisfaction with their work by making it difficult to fulfil their key task which is to help citizens. This is attributed to digital divide, which means that some citizens do not have access to digital public service and in turn, making workers feel like they cannot fulfil their task, reducing control that they feel over their labour process. Deskilling is another source of workers' dissatisfaction with their work. As officials become mediators between a citizen and digital interface they are no longer required to use parts of their educational training or professional experience, which was necessary before digitalisation.[317] For example, in a Swedish municipality, the increased use of computer work increased the volume of monotonous work and made workers feel undervalued and unable to use their professional skills.[318] Workers referred to their social skills and the situation where the knowledge they had accumulated is no longer in need and no longer used.[319] Moreover, workers have **less space for professional autonomy** and discretion as algorithms are taking over human decision making, also contributing to decreased levels of job satisfaction.[320]

[312] Visionary Analytics, 2021.
[313] Visionary Analytics, 2021.
[314] Nygren, K.G., 2012
[315] Wallin, A., et al., 2020
[316] Wallin, A., et al., 2020.
[317] Andersson, C., Hallin, A., Ivory, C., 2022. Unpacking the digitalisation of public services: Configuring work during automation in local government. *Government Information Quarterly 39(1).*
[318] Nygren, K.G., 2012
[319] Nygren, K.G., 2012
[320] Busch, P.A., & Henriksen, H. Z.,2018. Digital discretion: A systematic literature review of ICT and street-level discretion. *Information Polity 23(1)*; Busch, P. A., Henriksen, H. Z., & Sæbø, Ø.,2018. Opportunities and challenges of digitized discretionary practices: a public service worker perspective. *Government Information Quarterly*, 35(4), 547-556.

The general **negative OSH effects** presented in Chapter 3 are relevant for staff in central, local and regional governments as well. For example, intensification of work leads to excessive working hours, de-personalisation of work leads to feelings of isolation. Five out of twelve CESI members have observed that digitalisation makes workers feel loneliness and isolation.[321] Increased levels of stress in one of the key negative OSH effects. Organisational changes, including digitalisation, create stress among the workforce.[322] Stress can also be a side-effect of excessive screen time and the "always on" work culture. Eight out of twelve CESI members reported *the increase in work-related stress* as one of the OSH effects of digitalisation, and six report *increase in the levels of stress related to the deterioration of the working environment* (e.g., due to loss of trust between employees and management, increased competition, and inequality among workers). In addition, increase in online work and work in non-office environments increases the likelihood of ergonomic risks, such as postural issues or carpal tunnel syndrome.

According to CESI members, there are two obstacles preventing successful addressing of changes in work organisation, namely *difficulties in adjusting OSH practices to take into account the use of digital tools and new working arrangements* and *organisation unpreparedness*. Most of CESI members believe that trade unions should *participate in social dialogue and collective bargaining* and protect workers' well-being through these means, as well as *monitor the impact of digitalisation on work organisation* and *provide workers with tailored and easy-to-read information*. CESI members are less eager for trade unions to consult organisations on implementing OSH policy changes or to facilitate OSH training.

Notably, a few CESI members highlight the importance of measures to regulate screen time and breaks of workers when working with digital tools and teleworking (see Box 7).

Box 7. CSIF addressing changing work organisation practices in central government, local and regional administration sector

Spanish Central Independent and Public Employees' trade union (Central Sindical Independiente y de Funcionarios CSIF) has referred in the survey to the lack of regulation on workers' right to disconnect in Spain. As telework was reinforced by the pandemic on public sector employees, trade unions advocated a healthy working environment and work-life balance by demanding for prevention measures and regulations on workers' right to disconnect. In addition, CSIF is committed to awareness-raising activities related to the impact that digitalisation has on workers' health. Besides the topics of digital disconnection, these publications address such topics as techno-stress and postural care.

CSIF is also active in defending workers' right to telework. In January 2022 the trade union won a ruling that recognized two days of teleworking a week to a worker who performs registration and customer service functions in an instrumental entity dependent on the Ministry of Rural Environment of the regional government of Xunta de Galicia. 323 The order was published in 2020 which stated that employees working in registration and customer service (i.e., providing information to citizens) could not carry their work out via telework, except in cases where worker can present a favourable report from the entity he/she belongs to and from the competent management centres. The worker had obtained a favourable report from the General Secretariat of the entity where she works, explaining that another worker is assigned to the register and they take turns to attend it in addition to two other people who are authorised to replace them in case of sick leave or holidays. However, the worker received an unfavourable report from the Ministry of Finance and the request to telework was rejected.

CSIF took legal action and filed a complaint on the grounds of violation of the right to equality of this worker, considering that 12 of her colleagues in the same department had been granted the right to

[321] Nygren, K.G., 2012; Wallin, A., et al., 2020.

[322] Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, 2014. Changes at work – a challenge and an opportunity for well-being at work, careers and the quality of work life. Report for the international evaluation of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH).

[323] CSID, 2022. "Una sentencia ganada por CSIF reconoce el teletrabajo en puestos de registro y atención al público en la administración". https://www.csif.es/contenido/nacional/general/334381; RTVE, 2022. "Una sentencia reconoce el teletrabajo en puestos de registro e información al público de un ente gallego". https://www.rtve.es/noticias/20220126/sentencia-reconoce-teletrabajo-puestos-registro-informacion-publico-ente-gallego/2270144.shtml

telework. CSIF celebrates the ruling as a successful way to defend workers' rights and enable them to reconcile family life and work for which telework is an important tool.

Source: Visionary Analytics, 2021. CESI Members' survey on digitalisation of the public sector.

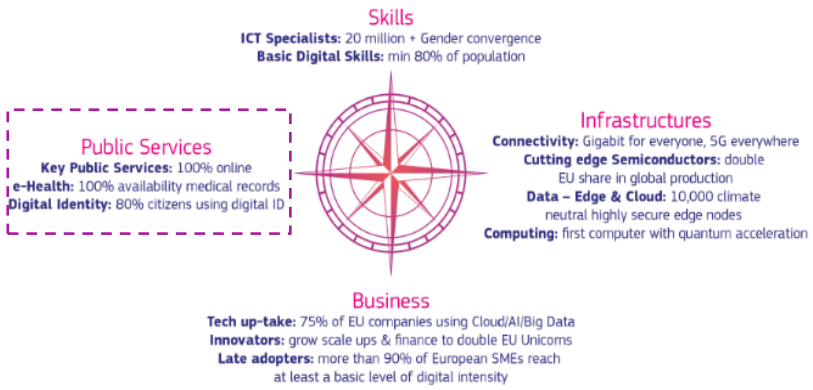
5. EU initiatives

EU attributes great significance to digitalisation. Digital policies rose to the top of EU's agenda at the beginning of 2010. Currently, digitalisation is one of the key six strategic priorities of the European Commission. With the great attention paid to the topic, there is an abundance of strategies, policy papers, legislative proposals that can be relevant for workers and that trade unions should be aware of. This section starts with introducing the leading digitalisation strategy of the EU and proceeds with overviewing legislative, financial and other initiatives related to digital transformation, skills and working conditions. The focus is on the most relevant and significant developments of European Commission and European Parliament and on the four focal sectors for the study.

5.1. Europe fit for the Digital Age

First and foremost, one of the six key strategic priorities of the European Commission is to create **a Europe fit for the Digital Age**. To this end it has committed to make 2021-2030 **Europe's Digital Decade**, by setting digital targets to be achieved by 2030.[324] The strategy responds to the growing importance of digital technologies and associated challenges including the digital divide. The strategy commits EU to pursue a human-centric, sustainable digital society to empower citizens and businesses. Objectives of the strategy will translate into 20 new legislative and non-legislative initiatives.[325]

Figure 33. Key targets of EU's Digital Decade strategy



Source: European Commission. Europe's Digital Decade. https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/europes-digital-decade

Published in March 2021, the Communication '**Digital Compass: The European Way for the Digital Decade**' presents four targets of EU's digital strategy, one of which is digitalisation of public services (see Figure 33). In this regard, EC is focused on reducing barriers to public services and ensuring their accessibility to all. It aims to enable all citizens and business to have online access to key public services related to career, studying, family, regular business operations, moving, and seeks that at least 80% of citizens use digital ID. EC has already taken action through funding e-participation projects, standardizing electronic health records, and supporting the development of smart cities.[326]

In September 2021, the EC specified how the Digital Decade objectives should be achieved by releasing **the Policy Programme: a path to the digital decade**. The plan advocates for structured and close cooperation between the EU and MS. It sets up a governance framework based on an *annual cooperation cycle* and *introduces a mechanism to coordinate investments* between EC and MS to reach the targets of the Digital Decade. The plan also communicates EC's initiative to launch *large-scale multi-country digital projects* that would pool EU, national and private resources to address gaps in the identified critical capacities of the EU and thus help to achieve the targets. To this day the Commission's initial list of the areas

[324] European Commission. Europe fit for the Digital Age. https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age_en

[325] European Parliament. Legislative Train Schedule. Europe fit for the Digital Age. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-a-europe-fit-for-the-digital-age/fiche

[326] European Commission. Digital public services and environments https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/digital-public-services

of investment that multi-country projects should focus on include public administration and digital skills, as well as digital innovation hubs, 5G communications and others. To help with the set up and implementation of these projects, EC developed a new instrument called the **European Digital Infrastructure Consortium** (EDIC). The plan foresees that EC monitors and reports the progress towards achieving Digital Decade targets via annual **'Report on the state of the Digital Decade'**. Commission's work programme for 2022 expresses its commitment to follow up on the path by reaching agreements on and implementing proposals for a safe and secure internet, a European digital identity and on trustworthy AI.[327] It plans to develop projected trajectories for each target of the Path together with the MS.

As part of the Digital Decade, EC aims to define what kind of digital transformation it promotes and defends via a **joint inter-institutional solemn Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles** of the European Parliament, the Council, and the Commission. [328] The declaration would set a common benchmark at the European level for fundamental rights and values in the digital space, ensure that all citizens benefit from digitalisation, are skilled for the digital society and exercise their rights online and offline, guide the EU and MS in designing and enforcing coordinated policies, help monitor the perception of Europeans of the benefits of digitalisation in an annual Eurobarometer. After a public consultation in 2021, the draft of the Declaration was released on 26 January 2022 and is expected to be endorsed by the summer.[329] The Declaration refers to such rights and principles of digital transformation as placing people at its centre, supporting solidarity and inclusion, ensuring the freedom of choice online, fostering participation in the digital public space, increasing safety, security and empowerment of individuals, and promoting the sustainability of the digital future. It explicitly refers to everyone's right to access all public services online and to not be asked to provide data more often than necessary, right to digital education and skills, and right to healthy and safe working conditions and appropriate protection in the digital environment (i.e., the right to disconnect and work-life balance).

The European Strategy for Data is also a part of the Digital Decade and it aims to facilitate a free flow of non-personal data within the EU to enable citizens, businesses, researchers and public administrations to make well-informed decisions based on data.[330] According to EC, data have the potential to upgrade public services (e.g., provision of personalised medicine). The first legislative initiative adopted under the European strategy for data was the **European Data Governance Act** (drafted in November 2020 and agreement between EP and Council reached in November 2021).[331] The regulation aims to facilitate data sharing across sectors and MS, to increase trust in data sharing, strengthen mechanisms to increase data availability and overcome technical obstacles to the reuse of data. The regulation is expected to help citizens (including workers) to gain more control over their data, being able to decide who and for what purposes can access the data.[332] Complementary to this regulation, the Commission is in process of proposing another major legislative initiative, the **Data Act,** which aims to foster data sharing among businesses, and between businesses and government.[333]

The Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL) is a first ever funding programme dedicated solely to supporting digital transformation in the EU. It has a budget of €7.5 to support projects in five key capacity areas: supercomputing (€2.2 billion), artificial intelligence (€2.1 billion), cybersecurity (€1.6 billion), advanced digital skills (€0.6 billion), and ensuring a wide use of digital technologies across the economy and society (€1.1 billion).[334] The Commission has

[327] European Commission, 2021. Commission work programmer 2022: Making Europe stronger together. https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/com2021_645_en.pdf
[328] European Commission. Europe's Digital Decade: digital targets for 2030 https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/europes-digital-decade-digital-targets-2030_en
[329] European Commission, 2022. Declaration on European Digital Rights and Principles.https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/declaration-european-digital-rights-and-principles
[330] European Commission, European data strategy. https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-data-strategy_en
[331] European Commission. European data governance act. https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/data-governance-act
[332] European Commission, 2020. Regulation on data governance-Questions and Answers https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA_20_2103
[333] European Parliament. Legislative Train Schedule. A Europe fit for the Digital Age. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-a-europe-fit-for-the-digital-age/file-data-act
[334] European Commission. The Digital Europe Programme https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/digital-programme

launched the first three calls under the Programme in November 2021.[335] Other funding instruments that contribute to the modernisation of public sector are European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and ISA² programmes.[336]

An important development has been the establishment of the **Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)** in February 2021 with the budget of €723.8 billion which is meant to support investment and reforms in MS to cope with the pandemic and prepare Europe for green and digital transitions. The Regulation requires that each MS devotes at least 20% of the allocation received from RRF to foster the digital transition. Up to October 2021, in practice the Member States that received funding for their Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRPs), had gone over the 20% target and averaged digital investments at 26% of their allocations.[337] **Digital investment to digital public services was the top priority area** for MS and they allocated 37% of investments to develop platforms, to give access to e-government solutions, to increase interoperability between different digital solutions, to reduce the administrative burden, to digitalise healthcare, transport and energy systems. Digitalisation of public services was followed by 20% of allocations on the digitalisation of businesses, and 17% on human capital, including facilitating online learning possibilities through digital platforms for schools and individuals or including digital skills in VET courses.

5.1.1. Initiatives related to digital transformation

This section overviews the most important and recent legislative developments in the EU (mostly EC) related to digital transformation. More precisely, it presents EU-level regulations related to the increasing collection and use of data, provision of online services and development of the artificial intelligence (AI).

The **Tallinn Ministerial Declaration on eGovernment** signed between all EU MS and EFTA countries in 2017 represented the highest level of commitment by MS to make e-government and a digitalised public sector a key to transforming societies and support the EU's four freedoms.[338] The Declaration included agreeing on the common user-centricity principles to improve user experience in accessing public services. By signing the declaration, MS pledged to implement the principles of digital-by-default, inclusiveness and accessibility, user-centricity, trustworthiness and security, interoperability, openness, and transparency of digital public services by 2022.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is fully applicable since 2018. Employees have a number of rights under GDPR important in the context of digitalisation of workplaces. GDPR provides employees the following rights:

- Information about the collection and processing of their personal data
- Access the personal data and supplementary information held about them by the data controller
- Have their personal data rectified by the data controller if the personal data they have is inaccurate or incomplete
- Have their personal data erased by the data controller
- Restrict a data controller from processing their data if they consider it is unlawful or the data is inaccurate
- Object to their personal data being processed for direct marketing, scientific or historical research
- Data portability – this allows them to get data from their employer and reuse it.

Under GDPR employers must be transparent about how they use and safeguard personal data of workers and are accountable for their data processing activities. They must inform

[335] Misheva,G., 2021. Commission launches first calls for proposals under the Digital Europe Programme. Digital Skills & Jobs Platform. https://digital-skills-jobs.europa.eu/en/latest/news/commission-launches-first-calls-proposals-under-digital-europe-programme

[336] European Commission. European structural and investment funds. https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes/overview-funding-programmes/european-structural-and-investment-funds_en; Innovation and Network Executive Agency. "Connecting Europe Facility". https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility; European Commission. ISA² - Interoperability solutions for public administrations, businesses and citizens. https://ec.europa.eu/isa2/home_en

[337] European Commission, 2021. Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2021. Thematic chapters, 11.

[338] Joinup, 2021. "About Tallinn Ministerial Declaration". https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/tallinn-ministerial-declaration/about

employees about what personal data they will be collecting, how and why it will be processed, and must have either legal basis or consent for collecting personal data.

The Electronic Identification, Authentication and Trust Services (eIDAS) Regulation entered into force in September 2018 and fosters cross-border recognition of electronic identification means, important for the digitalisation of the public sector. It sets the rule for all organisations delivering public digital services in all EU member state to recognise electronic identification from all EU member states. The regulation attributed all electronic signatures, qualified digital certificated, electronic seals, timestamps and other electronic authentication mechanisms the same legal standing as authentications on paper. The EIDAS Regulation is currently under revision and is expected to be updated by introducing the **European Digital Identity system (EUid)** to secure the identification for the use of public and private online services.[339] The vote on the EUid is expected to take place in July 2022.

In 2017 the European Commission has published the revised **European Interoperability Framework (EIF)** which provided a set of recommendations for Member States on how to set up interoperable digital public services.[340] The EC has stressed that digital public services are important in order to enable citizens to interact with public administrations electronically, in a timely, effective and efficient manner. EIF was created to make sure that MS' efforts to enable these electronic interactions do not create isolated digital environments and digital fragmentation of services and data in Europe.

Cybersecurity is important for secure digital transformation of society. **The EU Cybersecurity Strategy** published in 2020 fosters resilience to cyber threats and trustworthiness of digital technologies used by citizens and businesses.[341] Among other topics the strategy covers the security of the connected objects in the workplaces. In October 2021 MEPs demanded **common EU cyber defensive capabilities,** i.e., measures and IT policy as well as improve military cyber defence coordination.[342] The EC is planning to publish a proposal for a **new European Cyber Resilience Act** in the third quarter of 2022. The aim of the act is to establish common cybersecurity standards for products.[343]

Recognising that Artificial Intelligence (AI) has great potential to benefit society and economy (e.g., through better healthcare, efficient public administration), EU has developed a comprehensive approach to AI. Multiple legislative and non-legislative initiatives of European Commission and European Parliament stress the importance of AI to be excellent and trustworthy and pays attention to how AI deployment in organisations affects workers.

- **The European Strategy on AI** (2018) named the potential benefits of AI technology for workers, including helping workers with repetitive, strenuous and dangerous tasks, assisting workers by providing more accurate information and suggesting decisions (e.g., assisting doctors with diagnosis), helping people with disabilities to join the labour market.[344] It also predicted that AI will create new jobs and tasks and while replacing others. The strategy identified the need to help workers whose jobs are most likely to be transformed or disappear by providing them with opportunities to upskilling and training.
- In 2019 the High-Level Expert Group on AI presented **Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence.[345]** The guidelines acknowledge that deployment of AI systems in workplaces can have significant negative effects on workers and highlights the

[339] European Parliament. Legislative Train Schedule. Revision of the eIDAS Regulation- European Digital Idenityty (EUID). https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-a-europe-fit-for-the-digital-age/file-eid

[340] European Commission, 2017. New European Interoperability Framework Promoting seamless services and data flows for European public administrations. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, https://ec.europa.eu/isa2/sites/default/files/eif_brochure_final.pdf

[341] European Commission. The Cybersecurity Strategy.https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/cybersecurity-strategy

[342]European Parliament, 2021. "MEPs demand common EU cyber defensive capabilities" News. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20210930IPR13930/meps-demand-common-eu-cyber-defensive-capabilities

[343]European Parliament. Legislative Train Schedule. The New European Cyber Resilience Act. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-a-europe-fit-for-the-digital-age/file-european-cyber-resilience-act/12-2021

[344] European Commission, 2018. Communication from the Commission "Artificial Intelligence for Europe". https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2018%3A237%3AFIN

[345] European Commission, 2019. Ethics guidelines for trustworthy AI. https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/ethics-guidelines-trustworthy-ai

importance to ensure that workers and their representatives are informed, consulted and participating in the process of implementing AI systems at organisations.

- These beliefs were reinstated in the **White Paper on Artificial Intelligence – A European approach to excellence and trust** published in 2020. The White Paper was the first major publication within the EU's goal of Shaping Europe's Digital Future. It sets out policy options on how to promote safe development and deployment of AI.[346] In the paper the EC expresses its opinion that AI applications used for recruitment processes or in any situations that impact workers' rights should be considered "high-risk" calling for safeguards. Moreover, it once again highlights that involvement of social partners is crucial to ensure a human-cantered approach to AI at work. The White Paper was accompanied by a '**Report on the safety and liability implications of Artificial Intelligence, the Internet of Things and robotics**' which concluded that current product safety legislation has gaps that must be addressed.[347]
- European Parliament has set up a Special Committee on Artificial Intelligence in a Digital Age, which analyses the impact of AI on the EU economy.[348] In October 2020 MEPs adopted **several legislative and own-initiative reports** that outlined how the EU could regulate AI. Legislative initiatives focused on 1) ethical aspects of AI, robotics, and related technologies (including how it should be human-centric, safe, transparent, with safeguards against bias and discrimination) and 2) civil liability regime for AI (including liability when AI causes damage on health, physical integrity, or property of users).[349] EC's response to these initiatives was the proposal for regulation of AI (discussed below). MEPs had also proposed guidelines for the use of AI in military, justice and health, as well as education, culture and the audiovisual sector (see below), and more recently drawn attention to the secure and fair use of AI by the police.[350] The ongoing initiatives of MEPs include **the report on AI in a Digital Age** which will be put to a vote, followed by a plenary debate and vote in May 2022.[351] The draft of the report presented in November 2021 revealed that EU should focus on fostering the enormous potential of AI.
- EU renewed its approach to AI in 2021. Firstly, it updated the **Coordinated Plan on AI** first published in 2018.[352] The Plan focuses on strong collaboration between EC and MS in accelerating development of AI that is human-centric, sustainable, secure, inclusive, and trustworthy. Secondly, and most importantly, in April 2021 the European Commission proposed first-ever **proposal for an AI Regulation (Artificial Intelligence Act).**[353] The proposal names AI technology used for employment, workers management and access to self-employment as high risk and thus subject to strict obligations before they can be put on the market. The Regulation would be an important safeguard for workers against the negative implications of AI usage in their workplaces. The proposal is currently discussed by the Council and EP, which is preparing its position on the proposed regulation to come out in 2022.[354] The anticipated position will contain recommendation on the ways to deal with the challenges in deploying the technology. The Regulation could enter into force in

[346] European Commission, 2020. White Paper on Artificial Intelligence a European approach to excellence and trust. https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/commission-white-paper-artificial-intelligence-feb2020_en.pdf

[347] European Commission, 2020. Commission Report on safety and liability implications of AI, the Internet of Things and Robotics https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/commission-report-safety-and-liability-implications-ai-internet-things-and-robotics-0_en

[348] European Parliament. Special Committee on Artificial Intelligence in a Digital Age https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/aida/home/highlights

[349] European Parliament, 2020. "Parliament leads the way on first set of EU rules for Artificial Intelligence", News. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20201016IPR89544/parliament-leads-the-way-on-first-set-of-eu-rules-for-artificial-intelligence

[350] European Parliament, 2020. AI rules: what the European Parliament wants https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20201015STO89417/ai-rules-what-the-european-parliament-wants; European Parliament, 2021."Use of artificial intelligence by the police: MEPs oppose mass surveillance", News. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20210930IPR13925/use-of-artificial-intelligence-by-the-police-meps-oppose-mass-surveillance

[351] European Parliament Legislative Observatory. 2020/2266 (INI(Report on Artificial Intelligence in a Digital Age. https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2020/2266(INI)&l=en

[352] European Commission, 2018. "Member States and Commission to work together to boost artificial intelligence "made in Europe"https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_18_6689; European Commission, Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence 2021 Review 2021. https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/plan-ai

[353] European Commission, 2021. Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down harmonized rules on Artificial Intelligence (Artificial Intelligence Act) and amending certain Union Legislative Acts. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1623335154975&uri=CELEX%3A52021PC0206

[354] European Parliament. Legislative Train Schedule. Proposal for a regulation on a European Approach for Artificial Intelligence https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-a-europe-fit-for-the-digital-age/file-regulation-on-artificial-intelligence

the second half of 2022 in a transitional period and would become applicable in the second half of 2024.[355]

On top of that the Commission has also proposed **legal initiative on EU rules to address liability issues** related to new technologies, and a **revision of sectoral safety legislation** (e.g., Machinery Regulation, General Product Safety Directive). Both of these initiatives are expected to contribute to building trustworthy new technologies that do not negative affect their users, including workers.

In May 2021 the European Parliament adopted a **resolution on shaping the digital future of Europe,** which calls on the EC to boost its efforts in dealing with challenges of digital transition.[356] The report focuses on AI as the key driver of digital transformation and encourages EC to address such issues as lack of digital skills and connectivity.

EU is also promoting the application of Internet of Things (IoT) and the use of data in governments. In 2015 it launched the **Alliance for Internet of Things Innovation** (AIOTI) to support the growth of European IoT ecosystem.[357] In 2016 EC published a staff working document on '**Advancing the Internet of Things in Europe'**[358].

5.1.2. Initiatives on digital skills

European Commission acknowledges the need to address the problem of skills mismatch due to digitalisation in the EU labour market. Building on the ten actions of the New Skills Agenda (adopted in 2016 to help workers acquire necessary digital skills) in 2020 the European Commission has launched the **new European Skills Agenda**. It is a five-year plan to help individuals and businesses develop more and better skills. The target set by the EC is 70% of adults to have basic digital skills by 2025.[359] The European Skills Agenda includes 12 actions grouped in four categories, one of which is to ensure that people have the right skills for jobs. The group includes six actions: strengthening skills intelligence, EU support for strategic national upskilling action, Proposal for a Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET), rolling out the European Universities Initiative and upskilling scientists, skills to support the twin transitions, increasing STEM graduates and fostering entrepreneurial and transversal skills, skills for life.

As part of the European Skills Agenda, in November 2020, the EC has launched **the Pact for skills** to encourage skills development in Europe.[360] The Pact invites public and private organisations to join their efforts in upskilling and reskilling Europeans. Signatories of the Pact commit to support upskilling and reskilling, and the Pact provides signatories with support to find partners, with webinars, updates on EU policies and instruments, best practices, guidance, and resources.

Digital Skills & Jobs/ Platform was launched in May 2021 and became the main gateway to information on digital skills in Europe, providing access to relevant news, events, training and research on skills and digital competences.[361]

In 2021 the EP adopted a **resolution on the European Skills Agenda**, calling for MS to invest more to close the digital skills gap by prioritising retraining and learning new skills in their COVID-

[355] European Commission. Regulatory framework proposal on artificial intelligence. https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai
[356] European Parliament "MEPs want more support for digital innovation and AI applications ". News https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20210517IPR04133/meps-want-more-support-for-digital-innovation-and-ai-applications
[357] Alliance for Internet of Things Innovation https://aioti.eu/
[358] European Commission, 2016. Staff Working Document: Advancing the Internet of Things in Europe https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/staff-working-document-advancing-internet-things-europe
[359] European Commission, Digital skills and jobs. https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/digital-skills-and-jobs
[360] European Commission. Pact for Skills https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1517&langId=en
[361] Digital Skills and Jobs Platform https://digital-skills-jobs.europa.eu/en

19 recovery and resilience plans.[362] It also called for EU to devote a much bigger part of the budget for the European Skills Agenda.

The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan has set the target of 60% of all adults taking part in training every year by 2030. To support MS in achieving this goal, in December 2021 the EC had adopted two proposals related to improving upskilling opportunities for Europeans.[363] These proposals were EC's response to the pandemic-accelerated need for reskilling and upskilling, as well as to current situation where Europeans rarely participate in regular learning after their initial education and training because they lack financial resources or time, or are not aware of the upskilling or reskilling opportunities. The following is proposed:

- **Individual Learning Accounts (ILA)** proposal aims to address key bottlenecks that prevent people from accessing training, i.e., motivation, time and funding. ILAs are defined as virtual skills wallets for every person of working age, giving them a budget to spend on training to improve their skills and employability.[364] The EC proposed for MS and social partners to set up ILA and provide training entitlement for all adults of working age, to define a list of labour-market relevant and quality-assured training that would be eligible for funding from ILA and accessible through a digital registry (e.g., a mobile device), and to offer opportunities of career guidance and validation of previously acquired skills together with paid training leave. National authorities would be responsible to ensure adequate annual provision of individual training entitlements, which could be accumulated by peopled and used throughout their career.
- In the second proposal, the EC aims to establish a common definition, standards and recognition for **micro-credentials**, which are used to certify learning outcomes of small learning experiences (e.g., a short course of training).[365] Micro-credentials allow people to develop their skills in a flexible and targeted way. EC wants to ensure these credentials are of high quality and transparent, so that more people would use them for skills development.

The European Digital Competence Framework (DigComp) has been under one more revision since January 2021. The updated version of DigComp has been published in early 2022 and takes into account Artificial Intelligence, the Internet of Things, datafication, teleworking, among other digital developments.[366]

According to the European Commission work programme for 2022, the EC will propose further **measures to facilitate and promote digital skills in schools and higher education**.[367]

5.1.3. Initiatives on working conditions, workers' safety and health

Two key OSH Legislations at least partly related to the use of ICT for work in the EU are **Directive 89/391/EEC (the Framework Directive)**[368] **and Directive 90/270/EEC on display screen equipment**.[369] The Framework Directive mentions that employers should keep themselves informed about the dangers of deploying the latest technology advancements, and should ensure that workers and/or workers' representatives are consulted when planning and introducing new technologies in order to ensure better OSH protection. Employers are also obliged to ensure that each worker receives adequate safety and health training when any new technologies are introduced, when new work equipment is introduced or changes. The

[362] European Parliament, 2021. "Put digital skills at the heart of education and training policies " News. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20210204IPR97127/put-digital-skills-at-the-heart-of-education-and-training-policies

[363]European Commission, 2021. "Commission takes action to improve lifelong learning and employability" https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_6476

[364] European Commission. Adult skills - Individual Learning Accounts: a tool to improve access to training . https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12876-Adult-skills-Individual-Learning-Accounts-a-tool-to-improve-access-to-training_en

[365] European Commission, 2021. "Commission takes action to improve lifelong learning and employability" https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_6476

[366] European Commission, 2022. "Digital Competences Framework (DigComp 2.2) update published" https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=10193&furtherNews=yes

[367] European Commission, 2021. Communication on Commission work programme 2022: making Europe stronger together.

[368] Council Directive of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:01989L0391-20081211

[369] Council Directive 90/270/EEC of 29 May 1990 on the minimum safety and health requirements for work with display screen equipment https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:31990L0270

Directive on display screen equipment lays down minimum safety and health requirement for work with display screens, explaining that it can introduce risks of eyesight, physical problems and problems of mental stress and obliging employers to perform an analysis of workstations, ensure they are safe to use, inform workers on all aspects of safety and health and provide them with training. Workers are also entitled to an eye and eyesight test before commencing display screen work and at regular interval afterwards.

In 2021 the Commission adopted the new OSH strategy via the communication **'EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027 – Occupational safety and health in a changing world of work**'.[370] One of the missions of the strategy is to make workplaces fit for digital transition. To this end the strategy foresees a **review of the Workplaces Directive and the Display Screen Equipment Directive**, as well as an EU-level **initiative related to mental health at work**. Other two priorities of the strategy relate to improving prevention of accidents and illnesses and getting prepared for any potential future health crises.

Digital transformation enables workers to work from anywhere at any time, which can potentially bring about negative health outcomes, intensifying work, increasing levels of stress and anxiety, as well as leading to sleep disorders and musculoskeletal disorders (see Chapter 3). In 2020, the EMPL committee in the EP initiated legislative proposal for the '**right to disconnect'.**[371] The proposal set minimum requirements on the use of digital tools for professional purposes outside working time, addressing workers' rights to fair working conditions. It also advocated establishing minimum requirements for remote working and clarifying working conditions, hours and rest periods. The proposal emphasized the significant role of social partners for the implementation of the right to disconnect. The legislative initiative passed the vote in the Parliament in January 2021, calling for EC to propose a law. In March 2021 the EC foresaw a follow-up on the proposal after it assesses the existing practices related to the right to disconnect. The foreseen **implementation report of the Working Time Directive** that will be published in 2022 is going to shed more light on the implications of remote work on working time and can be significant for the future of the right to disconnect.[372] **Council conclusions on telework** of June 2021 called on MS to recognise the benefits and risks of telework, paying more attention on the OSH, including working time.[373]

The closest measures that come to workers' right to disconnect in the EU are:

- **Working Time Directive** (setting the minimum daily and weekly rest periods essential for workers' health and safety)[374]
- Principles 9 (work-life balance) and 10 (healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection) of the **European Pillar of Social Rights[375],**
- **Directive on work-life balance for parents and carers** that entered into force in July 2019.[376]

According to the European Commission work programme for 2022, the Commission will follow up on the **implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights** action plan in order to ensure that European workers can enjoy better balance in their lives and have fair working conditions.[377]

[370] European Commission, 2021. Communication on EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027 Occupational safety and health in a changing world of work. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=COM:2021:0323:FIN

[371] European Parliament. Legislative Train Schedule. The right to Disconnect. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-a-europe-fit-for-the-digital-age/file-al-legislative-proposal-to-the-commission-on-the-right-to-disconnect/12-2021

[372] European Parliament. Legislative Train Schedule. The right to Disconnect.

[373] Council of the European Union, 2021. Council conclusions on telework. https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9747-2021-INIT/en/pdf

[374] European Commission. European employment strategy, Working conditions https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=706&langId=en&intPageId=205

[375] European Commission. European Pillar of Social Rights: Building a fairer and more inclusive European Union https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights_en

[376] Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EUhttps://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32019L1158

[377] European Commission, 2021. Communication on Commission work programme 2022: Making Europe stronger together

Importantly for trade unions, the Commission has plans to publish a **Communication to strengthen the social dialogue** at EU and national level, supporting the key role of social partners in digital transitions. [378]

5.2. Sector-specific EU initiatives: central government administrations, local and regional administrations

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, in December 2021, the European Parliament Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) held a public hearing of experts on the digital public administration.[379] The hearing allowed experts to discuss the costs and benefits of digitalisation of administrative procedures. Experts discussed the benefits of training public officials in digital systems and digital tools. IMCO has launched a study titled "GovTech: Innovation in public procurements – digitalisation of the public sector", foreseen to be published in the first half of 2022.[380]

In 2018, the **Digital Transition Action Plan** was signed under the Urban Agenda for the EU. [381] The Action Plan aimed to help implement the EU eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020 at the local government level. Among the Plan's goals was to mainstream the EU Digital Competence Framework for citizens to encourage skill development, helping cities to develop a user-centric eGovernment model, developing DESI at local level, and others.

[378] European Commission, 2021. Communication on Commission work programme 2022: Making Europe stronger together

[379] European Parliament, Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, 2021. Digital public administration in covid-19 era https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/digital-public-administration-in-covid-1/product-details/20211208CHE09825

[380] European Parliament, Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, 2021. Programme of the Public Hearing on Digital public administration in support of daily lives f consumers and businesses in light of the Covid-19 era. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/243349/DigitalPublicAdministration_FinalProgramme_EN.pdf

[381] European Commission. Digital Transition in cities. https://ec.europa.eu/info/eu-regional-and-urban-development/topics/cities-and-urban-development/priority-themes-eu-cities/digital-transition-cities_en ;European Commission. Digital transition action plan https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/digital_transition_action_plan_for_dgum_300818_final.pdf

6. Conclusions and recommendations

Digital transformation of workplaces in the public sector is a development which has great potential to help workers. However, the potential risks are not insignificant and need to be mitigated with care. In this light, it is essential that, as the representatives of workers, trade unions are active in supporting them through the digital transition. The findings of our study shed light on a few recommendations for trade unions, which CESI members can draw inspiration from.

1. The very purpose of trade unions is to protect the interests and wellbeing of workers through maintaining and improving their working conditions. Digitalisation is one of the most important current developments that has been proven to have significant impact on workers, having the potential to improve and to worsen working conditions. Workers' interests need to be taken into account when adopting digital tools in workplaces and their working conditions should not deteriorate due to digitalisation. Therefore, it is important for trade unions to put digitalisation on their agendas, realising that it is a relevant and important development that they can shape and support workers through. While most CESI members attribute a lot of importance to digitalisation and the ways they can support workers, trade unions should **acknowledge that they can and should play a key role in the process of digitalisation**.

Pay more attention to digitalisation by approaching it as a key development that affects workers and required trade union involvement.

Draw inspiration from the examples in which trade unions adopt an active stance in providing support and advocating for workers' interests in the context of digitalisation. A number of such examples had been provided in this study as well.

2. Public sector is undergoing a digital transformation which was further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently among the most widespread technological innovations adopted in the public sector are Artificial Intelligence, robotics, data-based innovations, Internet of Things and blockchain. The use of these technologies in public sector brings important changes to how work is organised; it affects how workers conduct their tasks on a daily basis, and how likely they are to remain active participants of the labour market. In the environment of increasingly growing demands of citizens, public sectors' search for ways to make services more economically beneficial, and constant technological developments, digitalisation of the public sector is only likely to advance further and affect workers in more different ways. To this end, first and foremost **trade unions should be aware about the current and foreseeable key developments of digitalisation and how these developments affect workers in practice.**

Conduct surveys of workers or organise discussions where they could share their experiences with using digital tools for work, and how it impacts them daily. This would allow trade unions to hear a first-hand experience and learn more about how digitalisation of workplaces look in practice. Such discussions could also involve employers.

Make an effort to identify and follow relevant research on digitalisation and its impacts on workers, e.g., European Commission's eGovernment benchmark, thematic ILO, JRC, Eurofound, other studies. This study can provide a useful starting point to identify the most relevant research, which also includes studies that are predicting future trends.

3. For digitalisation to be a process which benefits all stakeholders, it requires an environment where workers hold positive attitudes towards the change, are willing to support and embrace it. However, quite often workers find digitalisation overwhelming, changes as difficult to understand and bringing them uncertainty. Workers' attitudes are informed not only by their previous experience with technology, their levels of digital skills, but also awareness and proof of the actual benefits of change. Hence, lack of information and clear strategy on how digitalisation happens and what it means for workers can foster negative attitudes, leaving workers with no clarity. While employers are the key stakeholders in supporting organisational change and leading workers through digitalisation, **trade unions can shape workers' attitudes** as well, especially by informing workers about what kind of positive and negative impacts they can expect.

- Through discussions identify information needs of workers, i.e., what kind of information they lack or would be interested in (e.g., statistics of the spread of teleworking, upcoming trends and new technological advancements, legislative initiatives that affect their work, how they can benefit from digitalisation and what disadvantages they can expect, etc.)
- Organise awareness-raising campaigns to provide workers (especially those unaware about the potential of digitalisation) with the most relevant information on digitalisation and its impacts. This can range from simply sharing the link to relevant studies, news articles, blog posts via email or social media, to producing and sharing periodical newsletters, where the most relevant information is summarized in an easy-to-read way.

4. As digitalisation affects them on a daily basis, workers should be consulted on the implementation of new technology and changes in work organisation. To this end, as worker representatives, trade unions should protect workers' right to information, consultation and participation and seek to represent workers' needs regarding digital tools and how they will be applied. To this end trade unions **be active in consultations and negotiations on the implementation of new technologies in workplaces.**

- Highlight to employers the importance of a fair digitalisation process which requires participation of workers. If needed, actively encourage employers to set up consultations with worker representatives before they plan adopting digital tools.
- Gather workers' opinions/views on digitalisation or use of a specific tool before the consultation, and actively participate in consultations and/or negotiations with employers representing those views.
- Assess whether new digital tools planning to be developed/implemented benefit workers and respond to their needs, what are the potential risks and whether there are mitigation strategies in place.

5. The topic of digitalisation is high on the agenda of policymakers at the national and EU levels. Policymakers periodically organise consultations inviting stakeholders to express their views on digitalisation and related regulations. Participation in public consultations is an effective way for trade unions to indirectly shape the future regulations and rules by communicating the needs and concerns of their members. Trade unions should **not miss a chance to contribute to policymaking** by participating in these stakeholders' consultations.

- Stay informed about the ongoing and planned public stakeholders' consultations set up by national and EU-level policymaker: follow news on the policymakers' websites, social media or through networks with other trade unions.
- Actively seek to participate in available public stakeholders' consultations and contribute by providing practical insights and representing the real workers' attitudes and needs.
- Advocate for greater/new regulations when workers recognise the need to update, change or complement the existing rules or laws that are outdated/insufficient (e.g., on telework). This can be done through discussion with employers, ministries, and other regulatory bodies.

6. Lack of digital skills is a major barrier to digitalisation. It prevents workers from enjoying the benefits of digital tools and instead makes their work more complex. Workers lack opportunities to develop digital skills. To this end, trade unions should **make an effort to narrow the digital skills gap**.

Advocate for facilitation of training for workers on the necessary digital skills and the use of specific digital tools before/while they are set up in workplaces. Encourage employers to provide workers with training opportunities that are accessible (i.e., at convenient time and place, not expensive) and relevant (i.e., tailored to specific needs of individual workers/worker groups).

Make an effort to identify (e.g., through surveys of workers or employers) or learn through published research about what kind of skills are and will be needed for workers in the future.

Allocate part of trade union resources to organise training on digital skills, e.g., train in-house staff to provide these trainings or hire external professionals and organise periodical training sessions to update digital skills or one-off trainings on the use of specific software.

7. Public sector is lagging behind the private sector in terms of digitalisation. Trade unions that represent **workers from private and public sector can facilitate knowledge exchange** between two groups of workers. Workers in the private sector are more likely to already have experience and knowledge on how it affects their day-to-day job, skills and working conditions. Using this knowledge and applying it to the public sector can help prepare public sector workforce for digitalisation.

Organise workshops or discussions between workers in the trade union from different sectors and industries to facilitate dialogue on digitalisation.

8. There is a wide variety of available regulatory, financial, and informational instruments developed by European organisations, think thanks, social partners on digitalisation and its effects on labour market. The regulatory instruments inform about the values of digitalisation which should not be overlooked or breached by employers when adopting digital tools in workplaces. The financial instruments provide opportunities to get funding for digital skills development or digitalisation itself. Informational instruments can be useful for following the latest research, news on the topic and accessing good practices. Trade unions should make **use of the wide variety of available instruments** that can support workers.

Consult existing national and EU-level regulatory instruments (e.g., White Paper on AI, Declaration of Digital Principles) to be aware about the values of digitalisation that employers should respect in digitalising workplaces. If need be, use these instruments to advocate for workers' interests through social dialogue and collective bargaining.

Be aware of and use informational instruments (e.g., Digital Skills and Jobs Platform) to find relevant up-to-date information related to digitalisation, as well as good practices to draw inspiration from.

Be aware of, use and encourage employers to use available financial instruments that fund development of workers' skills or development of digital tools that would support workers.