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The role of the OECD in evaluating the impact of artificial intelligence on the future of work

Committee Opinion[1]
Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development
Rapporteur: Ms Maria-Gabriela HORGA, Romania, Group of the European People's Party

A. Conclusions

1. The Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development (hereafter "Social Affairs Committee") welcomes the report on "The role of the OECD in evaluating the impact of artificial intelligence on the future of work" prepared by Ms Marietta Karamanli (France, SOC) for the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy (Doc. 16472). It considers that member States of the Council of Europe and the OECD have the duty to extend adequate safeguards regarding the responsible design and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the employment sphere in order to protect human dignity, safety and well-being at work.

2. The Social Affairs Committee notes that private sector enterprises overwhelmingly dominate the development of AI systems and believes that their liability should be strengthened in the context of national strategies and regulatory frameworks for AI based on the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human rights, Democracy and the Rule of Laws (CETS No. 225, "the Convention") and the OECD Principles for responsible stewardship of trustworthy AI. Considering that the Convention gives countries much latitude to apply its provisions to private sector businesses or not, the enlarged Assembly should insist that member States of the Council of Europe and the OECD effectively and directly bind businesses to the convention's rules. Member States should do so in a manner consistent with the requirements of the European Social Charter (ETS No. 35 and ETS No. 163), the European Union AI Act, relevant International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions and national labour law.

3. The Social Affairs Committee emphasises the need for policy makers to guarantee safe operation of AI systems and accordingly presents four amendments to this end.

B. Proposed amendments

Amendment A (to the draft resolution)

After paragraph 19.1., insert the following paragraph:

> *"ensure that the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law applies to all business entities operating on their territory in a manner consistent with the requirements of the European Social Charter (ETS No. 35 and ETS No. 163), the*

1. Reference to Committee: Doc. 16055, Reference 4841 of 29 November 2024, modified on 3 October 2025 and 20 April 2026. Reporting committee: Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy. See Doc. 16472. Opinion approved by the committee on 28 September 2026.

European Union AI Act, the OECD Principles for responsible stewardship of trustworthy AI and the related Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible AI, relevant International Labour Organization (ILO), conventions and national labour law".

Amendment B (to the draft resolution)

After paragraph 19.3, insert the following paragraph:

"explore the feasibility of an international treaty that would prohibit the development of so-called "artificial superintelligence" technology and other advanced AI technologies worldwide until appropriate guardrails, regulatory frameworks and a multilateral supervisory body are in place to guarantee their safe use and full human control".

Amendment C (to the draft resolution)

In paragraph 20.9, replace the words "labour market biases and discrimination" with the following words:

"as a magnifying glass, entrenched systemic inequalities"

Amendment D (to the draft resolution)

Replace paragraph 20.12. with the following paragraph:

"ensure that no decision regarding hiring, assignment, evaluation, compensation, promotion, disciplinary action, or termination of employment is made solely on the basis of an automated system without qualified human intervention, and guarantee that when automated systems are involved, this is comprehensibly explained to affected individuals and effective legal remedies are provided, if needed".

C. Explanatory memorandum by Ms Maria-Gabriela Horga, rapporteur for opinion[2]

1. The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into work environments brings not only the promise of productivity and efficiency gains but also introduces a broad spectrum of risks and challenges for employers, employees and society at large. As AI becomes increasingly embedded in workplace processes, its impact extends well beyond pure automation, reshaping job roles, skill requirements and even the core notions of equality and well-being at work. The report by Ms Marietta Karamanli on behalf of the Political Affairs Committee fairly reflects most of these continued concerns and the OECD's contribution to developing collective responses to ensure the responsible and safe use of AI.

2. A central risk associated with AI in the workplace is the potential for job displacement, exacerbating entrenched inequalities. AI systems are expected to replace existing jobs: according to the OECD's estimates, about 27% of occupations in member countries are at high risk of automation, though in some regions and for certain activity sectors this percentage is even higher. While new jobs emerge and workflows are transformed, the uncertainty, the speed and unevenness of this transition will leave many workers vulnerable. Additionally, countries and enterprises already endowed with strong digital infrastructure and high-skilled workforces are better positioned to adopt AI, putting others at a competitive disadvantage. SMEs (small and medium-size enterprises) and creative industries, lacking the resources of larger firms, are more likely to struggle to protect their workforce from these disruptive trends. (see proposed amendment C)

3. Reckless implementation of AI in the workplace also poses significant risks to job quality and workers' rights. Algorithmic management tools, which increasingly control the allocation of work, monitor performance and even make decisions about hiring and firing, can lead to a dehumanised workplace. The OECD has reported concerns about intrusive worker surveillance and decision-making processes that lack transparency or meaningful avenues for appeal. All too often AI is used without notifying the users and without giving them the choice of refusing AI-powered tools. As most AI applications are developed by the business entities, short-term corporate profit-seeking and vested interests tend to prevail over longer-term privacy, cyber security, safety and environmental concerns.

4. Discrimination and bias are persistent risks wherever AI systems are deployed. AI models trained on historical data may replicate or even amplify existing prejudices, adversely affecting hiring, performance assessments or promotional opportunities. AI-enabled monitoring may involve continuous surveillance of

2. The explanatory memorandum is drawn up under the responsibility of the rapporteur.

employees' communications and physical movements, generating huge amounts of personal and behavioural data. The boundaries between legitimate performance management and invasive oversight become blurred, with employees potentially subjected to permanent data collection and analysis. Even with well-intentioned design, the complexity and opacity of many AI tools make it difficult to ensure that they do not introduce or perpetuate unfairness in the workplace.

5. The challenge of accountability also looms large. When decisions with significant consequences are made by AI systems, determining liability for errors or harm can become diffuse, involving employers, software providers or end-users. This complicates legal recourse for employees who feel harmed by an AI-generated outcome and risks undermining established frameworks for workplace justice. The spread of AI also risks undermining the right to collective action and collective bargaining. When AI enables individualised management of workers and micro-targeted remuneration or performance regimes, it may erode the solidarity on which worker organisation depends. Ensuring social dialogue and meaningful worker representation as AI is integrated remains an ongoing challenge.

6. Legal and ethical ambiguities around AI abound. The rapid deployment of AI technologies often outpaces the ability of regulatory frameworks to catch up, leaving significant grey areas regarding the acceptable uses of AI in the workplace, the scope of worker consent and the right to contest automated decisions. This regulatory lag exposes workers to shifting standards and inconsistent protections. Moreover, as workplaces become more reliant on interconnected AI systems, they are exposed to greater threats from cyberattacks and data breaches. For smaller enterprises and creative industries in particular, as well as public services, the capacity to defend against such threats may be inadequate, leaving intellectual property and personal non-public data vulnerable to automated data scraping for unauthorised uses.

7. AI systems in the workplace can have both positive and negative effects on employees' mental health. By automating repetitive tasks, supporting decision-making and reducing workloads, AI can help alleviate stress, improve efficiency and give employees more time for meaningful or creative work. However, excessive monitoring, algorithmic management, concerns about job security, reduced autonomy and the pressure to adapt quickly to new technologies can contribute to anxiety, burnout and feelings of inadequacy or isolation. The impact largely depends on how AI is introduced and managed; organisations should therefore involve employees in implementation decisions, provide adequate training and support, maintain transparency about how AI is used and ensure that technology complements rather than replaces human judgment and workplace relationships.

8. Finally, there is the overarching risk of technological dependence and "lock-in" within the public sector and at the societal level. If AI systems, particularly those developed and controlled externally, become embedded in core public or workplace functions, societies may find themselves dependent on proprietary technologies, with limited sovereignty and reduced ability to steer development or ensure compliance with values such as transparency and equity.

9. The question thus is, are humans in control of AI tools in the world of work and beyond? I should recall that the Parliamentary Assembly's Resolution 2345 (2020) "Artificial intelligence and labour markets: friend or foe?" asked member States to ensure "sovereign participation in and control of algorithmic developments, guaranteeing the full respect for existing legal norms and standards by AI developers and users in the context of employment, and avoiding regulatory capture by influential AI businesses". The same resolution asked member States to design "a regulatory framework that promotes complementarity between AI applications and human work, and ensures proper human oversight in decision making". (see proposed amendment D)

10. While the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence adopted in 2024 requires signatory governments to adopt national laws and regulations on AI lifecycles to ensure that AI systems respect human rights, democracy and the rule of law, it gives countries much latitude to apply these protections to private sector businesses – or not. Yet private companies overwhelmingly dominate the development of cutting-edge AI applications and their use compared to public entities;[3] they should be held accountable for the proper design and use of such applications at workplaces, including the recruitment processes.

11. The AI genie is out of the bottle, and we have to live with this reality. Policy makers must now heed the warnings issued by major AI researchers and engineers shortly after disturbing revelations about AI applications under development turning wild and uncontrollable, beyond human comprehension, "escaping

3. Stanford University AI Index Report 2026.

their test environments and hacking into other systems completely autonomously" with a huge destructive potential for critical infrastructure and humanity.[4] AI systems should work for people, not vice versus. (see proposed amendment B)

12. In the circumstances, as rapporteur for opinion, I believe that Council of Europe and OECD member States should step up their regulatory action to strengthen the liability of all entities developing and using AI modules and applications, notably in the employment sphere, so as to protect human dignity, safety and occupational health, and to ensure the responsible design and use of AI systems in line with the requirements of the European Social Charter, the European Union AI Act,[5] the OECD Principles for responsible stewardship of trustworthy AI and the related Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible AI, relevant ILO conventions and national legislation. (See proposed Amendment A)

4. "Some AI engineers are afraid of what they're building. They want to speak up while they still have leverage", article by Hadas Gold for CNN business, 16 September 2026. "I worked at Google DeepMind. You should listen to the warnings about AI", article by Alex Turner, *The Guardian*, 14 September 2026. "AI 'kill switch' may need to be mandatory, Anthropic co-founder tells BBC", article by Kali Hays, *BBC*, 14 September 2026.

5. The European Union AI Act (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence) sets out risk-based rules for AI developers and users concerning specific uses of AI.