



Parallel Session 1  
Will robots take our jobs  
away or make us more  
productive?

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# Current IZA Study: What have new technologies done to European labor markets?

Total number of jobs lost from 1999-2012: 1,6 million.

At the same time, total number of jobs created: 3,1 million.

- Yet the jobs created are different from the jobs lost  
→ we cannot simply move around people who lost their jobs.
- Yet the jobs created stem from different sources:
  - Invention/production of robots (high level jobs, requires adequate supply of skilled workers)
  - Invention of new digital business models (not necessarily high level jobs)
  - Stronger general demand for goods and services, as digitalization makes “us” richer.  
(Bu who is us? Workers? Owners of Capital - in Europe? Or somewhere else?)

# Risks of Polarization

- relative job growth at the top AND at the bottom end, while the middle class comes under pressure
- rising inequalities due to income shifting towards the owners of capital
- countries changing their relative position within the global economy

# Discussion Highlights 1

**The participants of the session confirmed that these challenges are real, everywhere, but stressed that initial conditions matter.**

Therefore, there is a need

- to adapt policies, in particular concerning education and qualification, in order to help workers adapt;
- to engage more in redistribution, i.e. to adapt tax and transfer schemes, in order to work against growing divides – including digital divides, and emerging new disparities between cities and the countryside;
- to make sure that national economies remain competitive, in order to be able to ripe the benefits of digitalization and automatization

# Discussion Highlights 2

**There are examples of good (or at least reasonable) practice in many countries.**

- Netherlands: Individual Learning accounts, state-financed, and implemented with help of social partners
- Luxemburg: Digital Skills Bridge, pilot project providing coaching as regards skill adaptation needs and strategies, at the individual and company level;

But how far should states go in taking away agents' individual responsibilities to adapt?

# Discussion Highlights 3

## Key sentences.

- “We need to combine technological with social innovation.”
- „Get the social partners involved.“
- „We have to give more social protection to non-standards workers.“
- “Don’t protect jobs, enable workers to be responsive and adapt.”
- „Make use of the opportunities, and open spaces wheree human capacities win over robots.“
- “How can we be agile enough?”

# Discussion Highlights 4

## The Really Big Open Questions.

- How do induce life long learning and make citizens agile, which is cumbersome, especially if you are not young anymore?
- How do we deal with multiple challenges - digitalization, ageing, economic transition - that could easily overstrain citizens (and policy makers)?

**Everyone needs to work hard, if we do not want to get lost in digital transition.**

That's it! Thanks!

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