



Wellbeing of digitalized societies and workplaces: For an ethical compass for sustainable digitalization

Participants of the conference of "Church Action on Labour and Life" gathered in Strasbourg (France) from 10-12th March 2022 to begin to create an ethical compass for sustainable digitalization on the three levels of ecology, economy and social relations.

During the conference the 40 participants gathered in-person and online from European countries discussed how to reach and work for the "Wellbeing of digitalized societies and workplaces".

They agreed with the goals of EU compass, particularly that digitalization can be a lever to improve savings of energy and use of resources of this earth, as published by the EU-Commission in March 2022 as a "compass for digitalization" (see: [Europe's Digital Decade | Shaping Europe's digital future \(europa.eu\)](#))

The conference opens a process of dialogue which will lead to an **ethical compass for sustainable digitalization on three levels (social, ecological and economic)** addressing politicians, authorities, companies, trade unions and decision makers on different levels, as well as church organizations.

This will be led by partners in Finland and Germany, and funded by ERASMUS+ programme.

The conference heard contributions from

MEP Miapetra Kumpula-Natri (Social-Democrats, Finland)
MEP Alexandra Geese (Greens, Germany)
Ludovic Voet (European Trade Union Confederation)
Selim Alexander Arrad (Eurométropole de Strasbourg)
Dr. Stefano Frache (Italy)
Anna Blaich (Next Mannheim, Germany)
Aleksi Kopponen (Ministry of Finance, Finland)
Prof. Dr. Julija N. Vidovic (Orthodox Church, Paris)
Prof. Rev. Dr. Traugott Jähnichen (Bochum)
Dr Pete Philipps (United Kingdom)
President Rev. Christian Krieger (CEC-KEK, Brussels)
Rev. Jary Pulkinnen (Church of Finland)
General Secretary Rev. Dr. Jørgen Skov Sørensen (CEC-KEK, Brussels)

Further details are to be published on the CALL-website.

The participants of the conference agree that digitalization offers many opportunities and that it is shaping the culture of work more and more so that a "Change of civilization" (Michel Serres) can be seen. The digitalized world has to be understood as a new cultural context.

This means that political and economic actors are asked to make a good use of its opportunities as well as to contribute actively to the process of regulation which is inevitable. Churches, along with other faith-based organisations and civil society, are also called to action.

Digitalization opens possibilities for Participation on an equal level, but not all have access to internet and digital devices;
for the participants of the conference it is important to act in such a way that "no one is left behind" in the digitalized civilization.

Participants of the conference agreed that AI offers good possibilities, but want to insure that workers are not exploited, by any part of the process not even by design of algorithms.

We see that scrutiny is continuously necessary about the use we make of technology and that the first consideration needs always to be the human dimension, even before digitalized procedures are implemented, and design of algorithm shall not be a source of discrimination.

Therefore we welcome the European initiative on Digital Markets Act (on platform economy).

Wellbeing of all can be achieved by making good use of digitalization, shaped in a sustainable way, which includes a comprehensive vision of ecological, economic, social factors. These are interrelated sectors – one without the others is not enough.

As an example: lean design of software by "Green code" is to be promoted as it will use and produce less data and lowers the use of process energy.

The Covid-Crisis has not only been a human tragedy and a challenge for medical treatment and all societies, but it can also be understood as a driver for digitalization and shows that new types of work are possible if trust and self-responsibility match.

But a legal framework is necessary to protect people from psychological stress factors and to ensure that there is no digital gap in basic access to digital services.

The participants of the conference, most of whom are from faith-based organisations, agree to continue their reflection and discussion of an ethical compass for sustainable digitalization in a dialogue with all stakeholders as the process of digitalization continues to grow.

Strasbourg, 12th March 2022

Church Action on Labour and Life.

CALL is a European Network.

(in partnership with the Conference of European Churches)

<https://www.ceceurope.org/employment-and-social-issues/call-network/>

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EMPLOYMENT AND
ECONOMY NETWORK

For further information turn to the coordinator of the CALL network

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<https://www.ev-akademie-boll.de/akademie/projekte/aktuelle-projekte/gutes-leben-in-einer-digitalisierten-gesellschaft.html>



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