ETUC Perspective

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ETUC aims to harness the opportunities presented by new technologies while mitigating the associated risks.

To achieve this goal, it is crucial to apply the fundamental legal precautionary principle, as defined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU, Art. 191). Contrary to the so-called 'innovation principle,' which lacks a treaty provision, the precautionary principle is key to fostering innovation that benefits everyone.

This should be at the core of technological development, providing direction to innovation and fostering a governance model based on social dialogue that involves relevant societal actors. It offers a framework conducive to explaining and holding algorithmic decision-making accountable, ensuring that technological innovations prioritize safety for both workers and society.

The construction sector is characterized by very dangerous working conditions and high exposure to the natural environment, a fact that must be sanctified especially in the context of the climate crisis. In addition, many workers belong to special categories such as immigrants with communication difficulties.

The Occupational Safety and Health Cycle could composed of six steps: regulation, education and training, consultation, risk assessment, risk prevention, and accident analysis.

The findings of most of studies show the following future subjects as trends of research and implementation in OSH in construction: rewards in safety programs; increasing the usage of information technology tools; production process automation; implementing proactive measures rather than reactive measures; integrating quality, environmental and OSH management system standards and using technological tools to train workers.

ETUC firmly believes that social dialogue structures, collective bargaining, information sharing, consultation, and the active participation of workers' representatives and trade unions are pivotal in providing essential
support for workers to actively shape the introduction and oversight of
digital tools in the workplace.

We have to underline the need of appropriate training / very important
are the ergonomics of such tools (software / screens / the device in
general).

When it comes to the collection and processing of workers' data in the
workplace or enterprise operations, obtaining workers' freely given,
specific, informed, and unambiguous consent, along with prior
information and consultation with their representatives, is of paramount
importance.