



Resolution on education and digitalization

Digitalization is proceeding at an ever-increasing rate. Digitalization affects our lives on many levels. Both private and working life. The digitalization can provide a number of benefits for the individual, for companies, for the public sector and for the whole community. It can be said that all types of jobs are or will be affected by digitalization and parts of the job will require digital competencies.

In this development, it is crucial to realize and remember that in the end of the day it is the skilled labor force who makes this happen. Therefore, education is the prerequisite for individuals, businesses and society to benefit the most from digitalization. Both individuals, companies and society, have a responsibility here: employees need willingness to learn and acquire new skills, companies are to support – in time and preferably also as concrete training opportunities – and politicians as well as public authorities need to offer financial resources, flexible re- and uptraining models and possibly tax reduction schemes.

The European Commission states in its Communication “A renewed EU Industrial Policy Strategy” the following: “Education and training systems need to ensure that people are equipped with the right set of skills to drive such change and avoid widening social gaps. These skills need to be developed well before entering the labour market and updated throughout the working life. The involvement of key stakeholders, including social partners, is essential in that regard.” There is, however, a lack of resources to fulfil this commitment and the Commission should make sure that cooperation with stakeholders and involvement of social partners in lifelong learning can become reality.

The increasing degree of digitalization in industry causes a fall in the number of unskilled jobs and thus in the demand for unskilled labor. At the same time, the need for skilled workers - with the right skills - increases in a situation where there is already a large shortage of skilled workers in most of the Nordic countries.

The answer to this is not to fight digitalization, it is necessary for the industry in the Nordic countries to remain competitive.

Instead, more focus on education and access to training to allow re-skilling and up-skilling must be put in place so that unskilled people can get their skills to the skilled level and more skilled young people are given the opportunity to take courses in higher education to support working career. Access to Lifelong learning must be a possibility for everyone in the labor market. Cutting down on the funding for education, as has happened recently in even some Nordic countries, is a completely wrong signal to send, and a serious obstacle to, inter alia, that the industry's need for labor can be met.

Only by prioritizing the education area can we ensure that we get the skilled workers, engineers, etc. that are needed in the industry and in other sectors. The



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growth and economies of our societies depend on new generations accessing and remaining in the job market. Industries are in critical need for skilled new talents to fill in the vacancies that have arisen as a result of digitalization and ageing of population.

Today a large part of the communication, among others, between the citizen and the public sector is already taking place electronically (digitally). This makes communication fast, cheap and efficient. Systems merge and give gains on time and economy.

For these reasons alone, it is attractive for the public and for businesses to digitize when possible and affordable. They save both time and money.

People respond differently to the digital possibilities. From the little child that is fascinated by the iPad's possibilities through the intuitive use to the elderly for whom the technologies are strangers and inaccessible.

To secure that the Nordic countries continue to succeed in the global competition, it is important to take advantage of the opportunities offered. This can happen in many ways and our education systems are a crucial part of this.

Educational systems must form and train for digitalization. Even before primary education level, the small children can be activated digitally, so it is not only children from "surplus families" who have experience with digitalization when they start school. Many teaching materials are today digitally supported and this development will only continue. Primary and secondary education must continue digital education and training so that everyone has a basic level in this area when they are entering working life or further education.

The adults that are already in the labor market and do not have digital experiences should be offered training opportunities to gain new skills. It requires possibilities for continuing education and lifelong learning. Everybody should have the possibility to become digitally literate.