

**Key points by First Vice President of the European Parliament, Mairead McGuinness**

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***SHAPING THE FUTURE OF WORK***

***– A faith-based contribution to the ILO Centenary Initiative -***

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**Tuesday 27 November 2018, 09.00-10.00**

**European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)**

- The approach of churches and faith communities goes beyond defending their own interests. They seek to put the person at the heart of policy making. They strive to ensure human dignity is respected in all policy decisions. Their approach seeks to identify and promote the Common Good.
- Elected politicians need to take as a starting point the concerns of the people most impacted by globalisation. Then we are able to discuss issues of cause and effect. Then we are able to identify the effects we don't like because they are harmful to society; then we can set about tackling the causes.
- We saw to devastating effect during the financial crisis how swiftly capital can move across borders and around the world. Workers do not enjoy the same level of mobility. This is because workers are far more than "factors of production" in a "labour market".
- They are women and men who put down roots in their local community, who have families to raise. Each and every one of them has their own inherent human dignity that must be fully respected whenever legislation related to markets and labour is being drafted.
- Technological advances have led to upheaval in work practices. The pace of change in recent years has significantly accelerated. In many areas, this is creating new divisions in society: divisions between old and young; divisions between skilled and unskilled; divisions between urban and rural areas.
- Such divisions are dangerous. They can ultimately undermine the very basis for a society, united in common purpose, and with a shared set of values and goals. Failure to address the divisive nature of some of these trends could lead to further disillusionment with the political process, with democratic institutions.
- If citizens feel helpless on a vast ocean of globalisation and technological change; if they feel that national governments and the EU are equally helpless, then they may seek solutions elsewhere. This is a real risk that needs to be addressed.

- Throughout human history, new technology has created new opportunities to improve the quality of life for millions of people. Information Technology, for example, has allowed greater flexibility as to place of work or working hours. It has the potential to help improve work-life balance. At the same time, if left unchecked, it could have the opposite impact by making work increasingly intrude on private and family time.
- It is precisely because many of the trends in the workplace have the potential either to improve or to reduce people's quality of life, that all of society - legislators, employers, organised labour, churches, civil society - needs to work together.
- The EU is a community of values; at its core is human dignity. That has been the motivation behind our founding, and that must remain the touchstone for all policy making, especially in the area of work.
- Full employment is not just about everybody having a job. It is about people being able to work in a way that fully respects their human dignity, that contributes to the broader Common Good, and that is sustainable for the created world in which we live.