

## Digitalisation as an element of exclusion from the labour market: policies of protection<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** The irruption of digitization in the labour market has led to its transformation. Fundamental rights, schedules, disconnection..., classical institutions are called into question. Its action on labour relations unfolds its effects in the social protection system, offering an uncertain panorama in it. The analysis of how a new social coverage model has to be articulated constitutes the object of this work. In this, a classic methodology has been followed in legal disciplines, the identification of the problem, its regulatory analysis and the preparation of proposals.

**Keywords:** Digitization, social exclusion, social protection.

**Summary:** 1. Introduction. 2. Methodological aspects. 3. Expanded identification of vulnerable groups. 3.1. The absence of accurate identification of disadvantaged groups. A short-sighted and incomplete vision in need of adjustments: (i) approximation to recommendation 20 of the Report on the evaluation and reform of the Toledo Pact (2020). 3.2. (ii) and the European framework. 3.3. Other vulnerable groups. 4. Elements on early school leaving and training policies. 5. Social protection policies. 6. Conclusions. 7. Bibliography.

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## 1. Introduction

There is nothing new or suggestive in arguing that the digitalisation and robotisation of the economy is transforming today's society by leaps and bounds. However, it does constitute a reaffirmation of a fact that, however obvious it may seem, should not be overlooked.

The ordinary chores of life - buying basic products in distribution lines, planning leisure and recreational activities, consulting instant information, interpersonal communications and social relations in their various forms - are in many cases facilitated (and in others, depending on the age or qualifications of the people who must make use of them or, why not, even because of the complexity implemented for their use without other annexed elements playing a role, made more difficult) by the use of this wide range of tools and instruments that are made available to society in general with immediate access and without major direct or additional costs.

While there are strong defenders of this technological breakthrough insofar as this set of techniques implies a direct improvement in living conditions, there are also important groups of detractors who observe that it leads to a significant limitation of people's rights.

Their misgivings are largely based on the vertigo produced by the unknown, given the current impossibility of knowing (or even imagining) its limits in the near future (González-Páramo, 2018: 89). Uncertainties, moreover, which are accompanied and increased by the traditional fear that always nests in change and gives rise to sheltering and harbouring conformist and conservative positions. These are even greater when this disruption (Rodríguez-Piñero Royo, 2017: 127) takes place in such a vertiginous and accelerated manner as the present phenomenon is developing. As has been indicated, "the speciality of this transformation in relation to previous processes [is] the virulence and speed with which these changes are now being installed in our productive systems", completely lacking in precedents in this area (Mercader Uguina, 2017: 13 y ss.).

At the same time, on the other hand, the former is encouraged, propelled and strengthened by the latter, as the natural result of the progress of technology and knowledge is projected on the latter, inexorably leading to an improvement in living conditions in general, and in productivity in particular. In other words, more efficient processes are achieved with lower costs, that favour business development, productivity, capital mobilisation..., in short, the well-being of society as a whole.

The labour market is not, and cannot be, oblivious to this prevailing reality which permeates all economies and all sectors and affects society as a whole. On the contrary, it is a direct agent in its development.

The transformation of labour relations as a result of the implementation of these tools in production processes and human resource management is, despite everything, an unquestionable fact, in which "the scenario in which labour relations develop, both from the individual and collective perspective, is clearly altered" (Cruz Villalón, 2017: 15).

Perhaps not always well calibrated quantitatively or qualitatively, making the discrepancies observed above in this specific field either positive - increased economic growth, improved working conditions and new employment opportunities - or negative - massive job destruction (Molina Navarrete, 2017: 6-7), going so far as to state that "the figure of the human being will become totally dispensable, at least, as far as its consideration as a factor of production is concerned" (Selma Penalva, 2021: 32); proliferation of atypical forms of work and deepening of

the polarisation of occupations (CES, 2018: 51 and ss. , and 82 ss.), as well as an increase in social and productive inequality (Gallego-Losada, 2021: 36-37), when viewed only from the extremes or with a parcelled prism.

There are many advantages to this process, but there are also certain risks and drawbacks (Cruz Villalón, 2021: 105). The conjunction of the positive elements and the limitation of its inefficiencies, which is not easy to achieve, will allow the logical and orderly progress of society.

Hence, in this desired effort to reach the middle ground, questions are now being asked about how these practices fit into the binary or collective relationship in the work environment. The examination of aspects related to the exercise of fundamental rights (discrimination, privacy or dignity), the reconciliation of personal and working life, access to employment, selective processes and biases, health protection and control, occupational risk prevention, the instruments of representation and collective negotiation, the legal framework of recent figures promoted in the wake of new types of business, the working day model or the spatial and temporal elements of service provision occupy the scientific doctrine and the courts in an outstanding manner. A quick glance at the studies published in recent times confirms this. The courts' pronouncements on the application of technology in the labour market follow one after the other.

However, the aim of this collaboration is to take a preliminary step. The aim is not to carry out a study of the legal problems arising from the confrontation that may occur in the employment relationship (exercise and enjoyment of rights or changes in the provision of services) due to the implementation of technologies. Far from it, the aim is to examine how this overwhelming process of digitalisation and robotisation acts as an instrument of expulsion from the labour market, initially by making it impossible to enter it, and subsequently by favouring premature termination of contracts due to a lack of qualifications or due to the supplanting of activity by means of digital tools, making the human factor unnecessary.

In view of this, the question arises as to what kind of policies should be put in place to encourage people to enter the labour market or, where appropriate, to re-enter it. It is also important to consider what protection mechanisms are needed to provide full coverage for people who find themselves excluded from the labour market as a result of technological advances.

But before that, however, it is appropriate to ask a new question: which groups could be identified as those most affected (to a greater extent) by the disruption of technology? The answer, although it will be dealt with more concisely below, will be the group of people who lack adequate training, whether at the beginning due to early school leaving, or in their development due to making the wrong choice in their formative option, or due to the lack of professional re-qualification during the provision of services, as well as those who cease to be useful in the productive process due to their replacement by instruments facilitated by digitalisation and robotisation.

The following pages are devoted to identifying which groups are vulnerable because of the irruption of these processes.

## **2. Methodological aspects**

The legal questioning of which social protection models should be designed and implemented in the near (or immediate) future in the face of the social transformations derived from technological advances and their impact on the labour market requires that three broadly interconnected lines of work be offered. First, the groups that have been found to be vulnerable as a

consequence of these processes are outlined. The critical spirit nestles in their treatment, as it is argued that it is manifestly in need of improvement, both at the national and international level. Secondly, it is openly postulated that other groups that should be included in political and social attention, but which, for the time being, are not. Thirdly, and as a result of this, with a statistical basis using data from the National Institute of Statistics and the institutions responsible for the national education system, the figures for school drop-outs in Spain are presented. This is a clear example of the lack of qualified equipment required by technology-based companies and, consequently, groups of people with clear difficulties in labor insertion. It is therefore necessary to postulate which type of social protection should be the most suitable in the face of the new challenge facing the social security system.

### **3. Expanded identification of vulnerable groups**

#### **3.1 The lack of accurate identification of disadvantaged of disadvantaged groups. A short-sighted and incomplete vision that needs to be adjusted: (i) approximation to the recommendation 20 of the Evaluation and Reform and Reform of the Toledo Pact (2020)**

The situation described in the introductory section, i.e. the existence of vulnerable groups due to the irruption of technological processes and digitalisation in the labour market, has not gone unnoticed. The attention shown by scientific doctrine and the courts has been noted. And, perhaps somewhat belatedly, it has also deserved to focus the attention of the ruling class.

It is worth noting that, at the national level, the Commission for the Monitoring and Evaluation of the Toledo Pact Agreements, in the complex and lengthy process of reviewing the recommendations that are to guide the reforms of the social protection system, have not remained oblivious to this phenomenon<sup>3</sup>. To this end, it has incorporated, in the text approved at its session of 27 October 2020, a novel (Monereo Pérez and Rodríguez Iniesta, 2020: 29) recommendation in the Report on the evaluation and reform of the Toledo Pact (2020)<sup>4</sup>. On that primary occasion it was numbered as recommendation 19 bis and headed “Social Security and the Digitised Economy”<sup>5</sup>. Name that remains unchanged in the text of the Evaluation Report... approved by the Plenary of the Congress of Deputies at its session of 19 November 2020<sup>6</sup>, same as its content, but renumbered as recommendation 20<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> It should be remembered that the ultimate aim of this Committee is to analyse the structural problems of the Social Security system and to indicate the main reforms that need to be undertaken to ensure its viability. Cfr. Approval by the Plenary of the House of the text approved by the Budget Committee on the basis of the Report of the Committee for the analysis of the structural problems of the Social Security system and the main reforms to be undertaken, as well as individual votes, BOCG –*Congress of Deputies* –, no. 134, 12 April 1995, page 3.

Twenty-five years have now passed since that political agreement, with successive renewals. These can be consulted in: BOCG - *Congress of Deputies* -, no. 596, 2 October 2003, pages 1 and ss., and BOCG - *Congress of Deputies*-, no. 513, 31 January 2011, pages 2 and ss.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. DS -Congress of Deputies-, no. 188, 27 October 2020, pages 2 y ss., in particular page 30, the result of the vote was as follows: votes in favour, 30; against, 5; abstentions, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Cfr. BOCG -*Congress of Deputies*-, no. 175, 10 November 2020, pages 74-75.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. DS -*Congress of Deputies*-, no. 64, 19 November 2020, page 82.

The result of the vote was as follows: votes cast, 102 plus 240 telematic votes, 342; in favour, 102 plus 160 telematic votes, 262; against, 2 telematic votes; abstentions, 78 telematic votes.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. BOCG -*Congreso de los Diputados*-, no. 187, cit. pages 63-64.

This was not the only recommendation to be renumbered. All those that had been adjectivised as bis by the Follow-up Commission were renumbered, and were given their own numerical identity.

The Monitoring Committee identifies three central elements, located on three levels, which are mutually supportive and complementary when looking at this impetuous phenomenon from a purely individualistic perspective in the framework of social security<sup>8</sup>: field of application and framing; contribution periods and insurance careers and, finally, as a consequence of all of the above, the impact on the protective action.

As an introduction, it describes and describes the current situation and its consequences. It describes and delimits the framework in which services are currently provided and briefly forecasts what is to come. Basically, it contextualises the time of its decision-making.

It is maintained that the emergence of technological processes and digitalisation in the labour market has a direct impact on the scope of application of the Social Security system. And it does so in a significant way in that service provision are characterised, to a large extent, by being sporadic or marginal in terms of working time. These elements favour the informal economy and, therefore, lack of protection. In other words, they do not fit into the protective model. Or, perhaps and in the best of cases, the mistaken and opportunistic fitting into the social security scheme that entails lower costs and less protection<sup>9</sup>.

Several proposals are outlined by the Follow-up Commission in this field.

On the one hand, it advocates the extension of the subjective scope of the social security system, with an increase in its base, identifying those new groups to be included, in line with the extension of the boundaries of the employment contract.

Secondly, it urges the (classic and constant) fight, in close connection with the previous section, against the use of the figure of the false self-employed, widely established and hidden in a multitude of situations, even in the most traditional and unashamed in the face of flagrant non-compliance with the labour law, with the constant search for imaginative and innovative ways of circumventing compliance with the law (Goerlich Peset, 2022: 383-410)<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> The Commission does not forget the collective or intergenerational solidarity perspective, warning that, if the context of digitalisation leads to a loss of labour's weight in productive activity, reducing the system's income via contributions, new mechanisms must be found to complement the financing of social security, beyond social security contributions. This is where the possible contribution of robots, the creation of a new tax rate to finance the pension system, the increase in contributions, as will happen from 2023 onwards will come into play....

<sup>9</sup> As the month of September comes to a close, the media echoes the sanction that the Labour and Social Security Inspectorate has imposed on Glovo for "disregarding" the legal provisions contained in Law 12/2021, of 28 September, which amends the revised text of the Workers' Statute Law, approved by Royal Legislative Decree 2/2015, of 23 October, to guarantee the labour rights of people dedicated to delivery in the field of digital platforms.

<sup>10</sup> This is an enormously widespread design and it seems that the different campaigns promoted by public institutions have little influence on it. One only has to look at the Resolution of 29 November 2021, of the Secretary of State for Employment and Social Economy, which publishes the Agreement of the Council of Ministers of 16 November 2021, approving the Strategic Plan of the Labour and Social Security Inspectorate 2021-2023 to confirm this statement. It states, firstly, that during the period of the *Master Plan for Decent Work 2018, 2019 and 2020*, 39,249 false self-employed workers were regularised, of which 9,547 were platform workers; and, secondly, it lists as a specific action 1.7 *False self-employed workers*, which states: "This is a recurrent offence in which the existence or not of an employment relationship must be analysed in all cases. In coordination and with the collaboration of the General Treasury of the Social Security and the State Tax Administration Agency, priority will be given to inspecting, with the support of the Anti-Fraud Tool, sectors in which there is greater fraud, as well as cases in which there are indications of fraud because the self-employed work exclusively for an employer".

It is therefore clear that significant progress has been made in this area. At the same time, it can be seen that business development is promoting actions that go beyond substantive labour legislation.

In this context, it also argues in favour of a specific reflection on economically dependent self-employment, which again touches on the subject of the previous paragraphs. After several years of implementation, new questions are being asked about its effectiveness.

Finally, it is interested in analysing and, where necessary, reviewing the treatment of situations of multi-employment and multi-activity. These are on the rise in the face of the fragmentation of jobs and are complex to adapt to standardised norms on declining production models.

The Monitoring Committee's concern and fixation on the impact that the technification and digitisation of processes is having on the provision of services for both employed and self-employed workers is more than evident. The subjective scope, its delimitation, appears to be the key element on which all efforts must be made to ensure that it is clarified, avoiding the always complex grey areas. With an equally notable predilection, the labourisation of productive activity and its place in the regulatory framework of the General Social Security Scheme.

The Commission's commitment is clear and determined to avoid the long-standing "flight of labour law" (Baylos Grau, 2000: 35-54).

The marginality, intermittency and sporadic nature of the services provided in the digital environment lead, correlatively and irrefutably, to limited contribution periods and low contributions. This makes it difficult to accommodate the system's traditional protection scheme.

The Commission identifies in this, secondly, "a serious problem of 'under-contribution' and, as a consequence, of insufficient protection". These are elements that are far removed from the constitutional mandate of sufficient and adequate benefits (Articles 41 and 50 EC).

Thirdly, as a result of the above (short or limited contribution periods and contributions to the system on low contribution bases), the Commission is in favour of re-forcing the system's non-contributory mechanisms. This directly answers some of the questions set out above.

This, however, can only be described as an overflowing of the contributory protective system in the face of technological progress, with a markedly defeatist aura or technological pessimism. The Monitoring Committee thus testifies to the impossibility of establishing an optimal and conducive regulatory framework and labour relations in line with the developments imposed by technological progress that make it possible to achieve decent work.

It is recognised by the various political forces that integrate the Monitoring Committee (with the exception, of course, of those that abstained or voted against the recommendations) that exclusive action from the point of view of the contributory nature of the provision of employed or self-employed services is not possible at the present time and in the future to provide adequate coverage in situations of need, given the employment formulas that must be predominant<sup>11</sup>.

Although stated at the beginning of the text of the recommendation, it concludes that it will be necessary to "carry out the regulatory adaptations that allow for the identification and attention of new social needs and vulnerable groups, while at the same time preserving the hallmarks of our social protection model".

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<sup>11</sup> Regardless of the fact that it also stresses the importance of promoting regulatory actions that guarantee "decent and sufficient working conditions, both at work and in terms of activity, to avoid precariousness". And that a major effort must be made in employment policies to enable and encourage the employment of large cohorts of workers in the new strategic sectors with the required training and qualifications.

It can only be acknowledged that this new recommendation was well conceived (Sánchez-Uran Azaña and Grau Ruiz, 2021: 906), and at the same time its late incorporation into the guidelines for the reforms of the system<sup>12</sup>. Perhaps as a consequence of the political cycle in which the work of the Commission had to develop over four legislatures (XI to XIV), with different presidencies, continuous interruptions due to successive electoral processes and an increasingly richer variety of members that made it difficult to reach an agreement<sup>13</sup>.

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that it is clearly incomplete (Hierro Hierro, 2022: 164 and ss.)<sup>14</sup>. The identification and pre-eminence of one group in such an overt manner devalues and undervalues the rest of the groups that require the same attention.

It is true that the reality of the present almost obliges us to consider people who provide services on platforms as a priority group, but the Monitoring Committee's vision must go beyond this. Situations of vulnerability are present in different places and the regulatory framework, its guidelines, must be broadly defined and marked in all of them. It is important what is said and how it is said. Situations of need brought about by the technification of labour relations deserve their own attention as a whole.

Situations of vulnerability will grow, and we must be cautious with them, with all of them. But emphasis must also be placed on the opportunities that are generated. The pessimistic predictions that are constantly being made must be countered with appropriate and precise tools.

Hence, employment policies have to play a prominent role in all this.

### 3.2 (ii) and the European framework

This impact that the phenomenon of digitalisation and the robotisation of labour relations has on social protection systems is not something that is exclusive to the national territory, as is understandably simplistic. On the contrary, the globalisation of processes, interconnection, the relocation of companies favoured by the former in the face of international tensions and the rise in the price of raw materials, among many other issues, mean that the concerns mentioned above have also been highlighted by various international and European Union bodies and institutions.

For the time being, only superficial attention will be paid to the positions taken on the whole in the European Union, whether by the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee or the European Council.

Thus, firstly, the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on improving working conditions at work on digital platforms [COM(2021) 762 final]<sup>15</sup> notes that

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<sup>12</sup> Although not as much as the proposal for the elaboration of a "National Plan for the Protection of Vulnerable Groups in AI" contained in Component 16. *National Artificial Intelligence Strategy of the Spanish Government's Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan*, 16 June 2021, pages 33 and ss. (retrieved from <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/temas/fondos-recuperacion/Documents/16062021-Componente16.pdf>)

<sup>13</sup> Cfr. with details on the background, Cfr. BOCG Congress of Deputies, number 187, cit., pages 5 and ss.

<sup>14</sup> It is true that the Commission itself alludes in its recommendation to the fact that it is drawing attention to the aspects mentioned above as an "initial approximation" to this new challenge for Social Security, so we will have to wait for future renewals to see how much progress has been made. Long we entrust it.

<sup>15</sup> You can access it electronically at:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52021PC0762&from=ES>.



"many people are subordinate to the digital platforms through which they work and experience varying degrees of control, for example, in terms of pay levels or working conditions. According to one estimate, up to five and a half million people working through digital platforms could be at risk of having their employment status misclassified. These people are particularly vulnerable to poor working conditions and inadequate access to social protection. As a result of misclassification, they do not enjoy the rights and protections to which they are entitled as workers, such as the right to a minimum wage, working time regulations, health and safety protection at work, equal pay for men and women, and the right to paid leave, as well as better access to social protection against accidents at work, unemployment, sickness and old age. It recognises, however, that "platform work can offer opportunities for easier access to the labour market, additional income through a secondary activity or flexibility in the organisation of working time", while stating that "platform work poses challenges, as it can blur the boundaries between the employment relationship and self-employment, as well as between the responsibilities of employers and those of workers. Misclassification of employment status has consequences for the individuals concerned, as it is likely to restrict access to existing labour and social rights. It also creates inequality of status among companies that correctly classify their workers and has implications for industrial relations systems, the tax base, and the coverage and sustainability of Member States' social protection systems".

It therefore advocates, as it states in its rubric, for the improvement of the working conditions of people working on platforms by ensuring that their employment status is correctly determined.

And it achieves this by establishing in its article four, section one, the presumption of employment between a digital work platform that controls the execution of the work and a person who performs work on platforms via that platform (Gil Otero, 2022: 89-121). In the same way as already established in the domestic legal system by Law 12/2021, of 28 September, which amends the revised text of the Workers' Statute Law, approved by the Royal Legislative Decree 2/2015 of 23 October, to guarantee the labour rights of people engaged in delivery in the area of digital platforms.

No guidelines are established on the social protection regime for this group, although there are several occasions in which it refers to the matter in its preliminary text.

However, it cannot be overlooked that the presumption established, in a derivative manner, entails the extension of the subjective scope of, in our case, the General Social Security Scheme, giving rise to their inclusion in it and rejecting from the outset (it must not be forgotten that it is a mere presumption) their inclusion in the Special Scheme for self-employed persons.

Secondly, a few months earlier, in its resolution of 16 September 2021 on fair working conditions, rights and social protection for platform workers, the European Parliament called on the Member States, in cooperation with the social partners and other stakeholders, to "pro-actively assess the impact of new forms of employment linked to digital development": New forms of employment linked to digital development (2019/2186(INI))<sup>16</sup> calls on the Member States, in cooperation with the social partners and other stakeholders, to "assess proactively and in a participatory manner the need to modernise existing legislation, in particular social security

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<sup>16</sup> Retrieved from: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/ TA-9-2021-0385\\_ES.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/ TA-9-2021-0385_ES.html)



systems, in order to adapt them to technological developments", taking the necessary measures to "ensure social protection for platform workers"<sup>17</sup>.

In contrast to the text referred to above, which individualises the relationship between people working on platforms, it refers in broad terms to the modernisation of social security systems. Technification, digitalisation, etc., have a generalised impact on all sectors, in all economies, and therefore their consequences in the sectoral sphere are equally widespread. However, this does not preclude us from focusing once again on the people who carry out their activities on platforms. This is the group of excellence that deserves individualised attention in view of the current boom and future projections. Everything seems to indicate, perhaps rightly so, that this modality of service provision will be strongly deployed in the coming years.

Lastly, and thirdly, to close this section about the Union, the European Economic and Social Committee has also drawn attention in various documents to the impact that the transition to the digital age is having on the economy, labour markets and, in particular, on social protection.

In its Opinion on "The effects of digitalisation on the service sector and employment in the context of industrial change"(exploratory opinion) (2016/C 013/24)<sup>18</sup>, it argues in favour of the European Union, national governments and the social partners engaging in discussions with a view to defining policy measures and laws to ensure an adequate level of mandatory social protection for all workers, including those in the service sector, national governments and social partners to engage in discussions with a view to defining policy measures and laws to ensure an adequate level of mandatory social protection for all workers, including the self-employed, crowdsourced workers and those employed in the sharing economy.

In its Opinion on "Sustainable social security and social protection systems in the digital age" (own-initiative opinion) (2018/C 129/02)<sup>19</sup>, the Committee calls for a global solution to the problems associated with the recognition of the social security rights of people who work in the new forms of work by means of a general reform of the way the system is financed. On this occasion, it calls on the Member States to seek solutions which "respond to the need to provide access [to social security systems] for people working in the new forms of work".

And finally, more specifically, in its Opinion on the "Working Conditions Package - Digital Platforms" Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Better working conditions for a stronger social Europe: making the most out of the full benefits of digitisation for the future of work [COM (2021) 761 final] (SOC/709) where it recalls the traditional industrial relations concerns arising from the platform economy, which result in "more limited access to social protection and social security coverage, health and safety risks, precarious work, fragmented working hours and inadequate levels of income, as well as difficulties in securing recognition of collective rights". The Committee therefore feels that the Directive lacks basic rules and is insufficient, calling for the inclusion of specific provisions on, as far as this work is concerned, social security based on the principle of non-discrimination. Although for this occasion, newly individualised for people who provide services on platforms.

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<sup>17</sup> Concern expressed in Directive (EU) 2019/1152 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on transparent and predictable working conditions in the European Union (DOUE L186, 11.7.2019).

<sup>18</sup> DOUE C13, of 15.1.2016.

<sup>19</sup> DOUE C129, of 11.4.2018.

While there is a preponderant focus on the aforementioned group of people working in the platform economy, it is also necessary to broaden the view and look at all those groups, the society in general, that are affected by the irruption of technology in labour relations with its wide and important consequences in terms of social protection.

However, there are few indications, proposals or demarcation of the lines to be followed beyond the broad call for the modernisation of the regulatory texts on social security and the warning and alerting of the difficulties to be faced<sup>20</sup>.

This fact (along with the traditional aspects that have accompanied it) means that the reform of Social Security is currently, as has been repeatedly pointed out, a major issue at national and communitarian level<sup>21</sup>.

It is therefore commonplace (it is stressed) that the new forms of employment dominated by atypical work generate uncertainty as to the rights and social protection applicable to the people concerned, and that action is urgently needed on the individual, often being identified with platform work. However, their scope of action is much wider, generating large pockets of unemployment, favouring the underground economy or making it difficult for the Labour and Social Security Inspectorate to carry out controls, which ultimately translates into important nuclei of marginalisation and social exclusion.

### 3.3 The other vulnerable groups

Recommendation 20 of the Evaluation and Reform Report of the Toledo Pact (2020), as well as the documents consulted in the European Union as a whole, make it possible to identify, in part, which are these new groups that are vulnerable due to the irruption of technology in the framework of labour relations<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> A different situation is expressed by the International Labour Organisation (hereinafter ILO), which, in pointing out this problem, launches a battery of proposals, diverse and with different variants, among which are the elimination or reduction of the minimum limits of hours, income or duration to be part of the Social Security system; the easing of the requirements regarding contributions to be eligible for benefits and the possibility of transferability of rights between different Social Security systems and employment situations. Cf. ILO: Atypical employment around the world. Challenges and prospects, ILO, Geneva, 2016, p. 5 (retrieved from [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_534522.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_534522.pdf)).

These elements should be complemented by income, insofar as they all favour inclusion in the system and the receipt of benefits, but their correlation, given the preponderance of atypical forms of labour relations, is identified as the best contribution to the system.

<sup>21</sup> But it is not only in these, the impact of the digitalisation phenomenon is being felt globally and beyond the borders of the European Union.

This is why the International Social Security Association (hereinafter ISSA) has also stated that in order to meet the needs of people in atypical employment (the preferred forms of employment in the digital economy) and their families, and to avoid a possible worsening of the financial situation of social security systems, "social security programmes need to be adapted and to be able to extend and ensure effective coverage of the most vulnerable in the labour market, in particular atypical workers, platform workers and workers in the informal economy". Cf. ISSA: *Social security in the digital age. New challenges and new opportunities for social security systems*, ISSA, Geneva, 2019, page 18.

On the other hand, the ILO has for some years now been insisting on the need to guarantee adequate social security benefits, with a significant reference to "platform workers". To this end, it calls (see footnote 41) for the corresponding regulatory adjustments, but not without first warning at the collective level of the risks of these changes for social protection systems.

<sup>22</sup> And in doing so, it continues to follow the path set by international bodies.

In this sense, it points to new forms of atypical work and the intensification of self-employment, to people who provide services or carry out their activity in a marginal or sporadic way, to the false self-employed, the economically dependent self-employed worker and those who find themselves in situations of multiple employment or pluri-activity. Perhaps there is nothing new about what is already known other than its quantitative emergence (Goerlich Peset, 2018: 115).

However, these groups made vulnerable by the use of the tools provided by digitalisation must be accompanied, in an outstanding manner, by all those other groups of people who find it difficult to enter the labour market, significantly, due to a lack of qualifications (Rodríguez Fernández, 2017: 286) or who are expelled from it for the same reason on a permanent basis (Olarte Encabo, 2017: 286 and ss.), as well as by those who cease to be useful to the productive system by simply substituting the modes in the performance of activities (see as an example, although we will return to this later, the carrying out of banking operations and transactions by users without the need to visit any financial institution).

It is worth mentioning in this respect, with regard to the second and third blocks identified, that, as stated in various reports and studies, the scope of these technological changes in the labour market will have an incisive effect on the definitive replacement of the workforce by machines, making the human factor unnecessary.

The figures are mixed. Some reports estimate that 12% of jobs are at risk of disappearing (Arntz, Gregory and Zierahn, 2016: 33). This percentage is raised to 36% by others (Doménech, García, Montañez and Neut, 2018: 1 and 13). And yet it is reduced to a figure somewhere in between the two by others (Nedelkoska, 2018: 49).

It may be too early to venture a precise estimate of the disruptive effect on employment (González-Páramo, 2018: 91 and 96), but the evidence cannot be denied.

As has been insistently indicated by the scientific doctrine, "the majority of current human activity could be carried out by computers and robots, and the human contribution would be entrusted, on the one hand, to management, programming and maintenance tasks, and, on the other, to those tasks which, due to their low value, are not efficient to mechanise" (Goerlich Peset, 2018: 109), with the most threatened vector being that of "medium-skilled work" (Cabeza Pereiro, 2020: 38), subject to repetitive, routine and monotonous tasks, with little or no degree of added value or social interaction.

As a result, large cohorts of working people are displaced from the labour market, requiring a social cover mechanism for longer-term unemployment and high rates of structural unemployment.

Digitalisation must be inclusive, "paying special attention to those groups most at risk of exclusion. This requires ensuring that the digitisation process is accompanied by other measures in the field of welfare and social protection policies, so as to guarantee equal opportunities and access to networks for all social groups" (ESC, 2021).

The first of those identified must be added to this group: those who, due to lack of qualifications or simply lack of access, will not have the opportunity to take up a job except in those activities with low added value, leading to the extreme polarisation of the labour market and its derivatives in the framework of social protection.

As a sector of scientific doctrine has rightly pointed out, "from digital disconnection to social exclusion can be a very short distance nowadays" (Cabeza Pereiro, 2020: 16).

As can be imagined, one is thinking of that group of people who, due to a lack of training and qualifications, do not have the opportunity to access the labour market or are expelled, prematurely or not, from it. This can be accompanied by an endless number of rational, geographical, gender elements... (Cabeza Pereiro, 2020: 21 and ss.).

These groups have been left behind, unconsciously, one would think (possibly because this is their first approach and they have not occupied a central place in parliamentary debates) or deliberately (a perception that is not perceived), by the Follow-up Committee.

Nor is there any mention, except tangentially, of these in the Spanish Government's Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan<sup>23</sup>. Neither in Component 15, Digital connectivity, boosting cybersecurity and 5G deployment; nor in Component 16, National Artificial Intelligence Strategy; nor in Component 19, National Digital Skills Plan; nor in Component 22, Shock Plan for the Economy of the Welfare State and Reinforcement of Equality and Inclusion Policies; nor in Component 23, New Public Policies for a Dynamic, Resilient and Inclusive Labour Market; nor in 30, Sustainability of the public pension system in the framework of the Toledo Pact; where the classic phenomena of vulnerability (long-term unemployed, immigrants, single-parent families, people in a situation of social exclusion, women, young people, low-skilled employment, victims of trafficking and gender-based violence, people with disabilities, etc.) are referred to time and again in global terms without linking them to the phenomena of social exclusion and social exclusion without linking them to the phenomena brought about by the robotisation and digitalisation of productive activity. While recognising that all of them will suffer from a double marginality, due to their lack of qualifications and also due to their starting point (women, immigration...).

It is necessary to emphasise that the shadows that the digitalisation of the economy casts on these groups are also intensely felt, and that they do not even enjoy the opportunity of those precarious, marginal and sporadic jobs that are advocated (Correa Carrasco, 2019: 82).

The point is emphasised. As indicated in the introductory pages, it is not only people employed on platforms, those who provide services under precarious employment formulas or in the form of distance work using technological means who are vulnerable groups in the digital economy. They are also, and perhaps even more markedly so, those who are displaced, completely removed from this service provision environment that is present and which is expected to become more vital in the short and medium term.

Whether due to a lack of training in origin (the high number of school drop-outs cannot go unmentioned), or due to limitations in their availability (mainly in rural areas), or due to a lack of updating or re-qualification, or simply because they are unnecessary in their productive process<sup>24</sup>, or due to, although it may seem distant, elements of gender or disability, there are groups in which

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<sup>23</sup> Retrieved from: <https://planderecuperacion.gob.es/documentos-y-enlaces>

<sup>24</sup> The applications made possible by digitalisation help to ensure that the different actions are carried out directly by the people involved without the intervention of agents to help them, making them completely dispensable in the labour market.

access to or permanence in the labour market that are now projected to be very complex (Fernández Domínguez, 2018: 533-555).

This leads to situations of prolonged unemployment and the creation of large pockets of (structural) unemployment with remote chances of integration into the labour market.

Although employment in certain low-skilled areas may remain unchanged (care work, some tasks in construction and agriculture, etc.), the group of people who lack the necessary basic technological skills must be identified as socially and occupationally excluded (Cabeza Pereiro, 2020: 29-30).

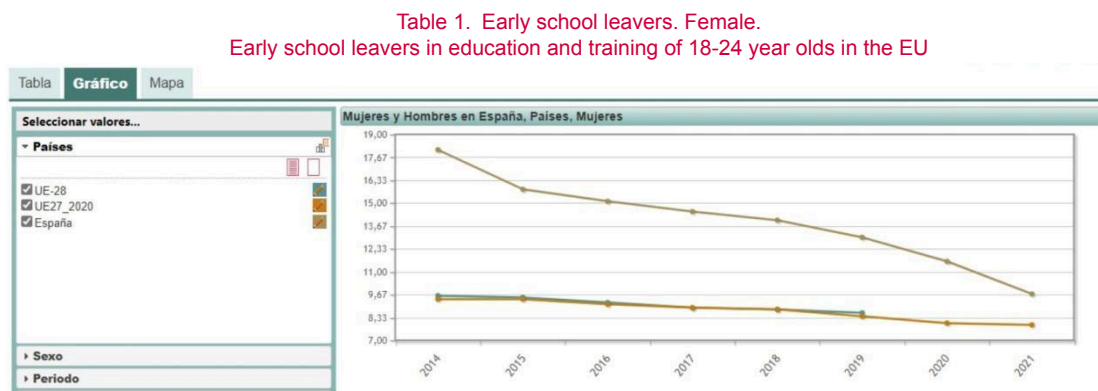
What kind of policies need to be implemented to respond to these situations. Firstly, to avoid being alienated from the productive environments favoured by digitalisation and robotisation, from a training point of view. Secondly, when in spite of everything they are already in irreversible situations, from the field of social protection.

#### 4. Elements on early school leaving and training policies

Despite being a document that has been around for a decade, it is worth recalling that the Commission's Communication Europe 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth [COM(2010) 2020 final] of 3.3.2010 set as a milestone to be achieved, on the one hand, that the school drop-out rate should be below 10 % and, on the other hand, that at least 40 % of the younger generation should have completed tertiary education.

The Spanish reality is currently far from achieving this objective, although it is fair to say that the progress made in recent times has been more than significant.

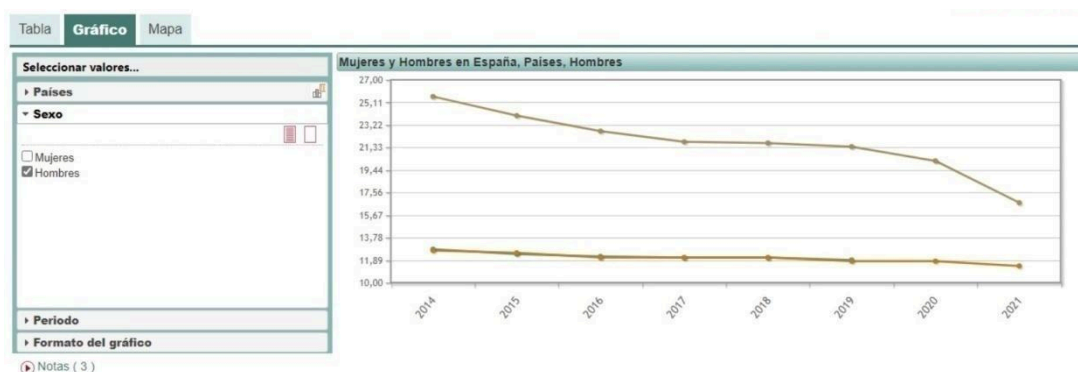
On the one hand, the female population has recently managed to fall below the standard set by the European Union.



Source: National Institute of Statistics (2022).

The men's team, however, is still some way off the target

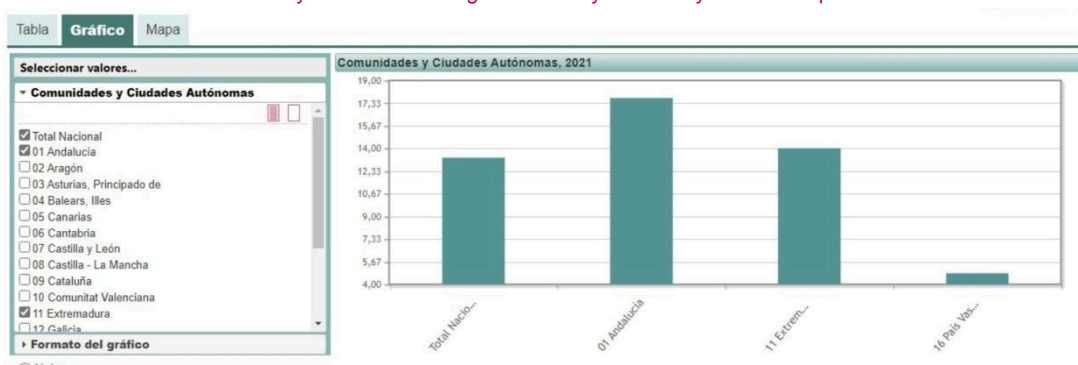
Table 2. Early school leavers. Men



Source: National Institute of Statistics (2022).

In overall terms, therefore, the figures for Spain are still far from the average figures for the European Union as a whole. This is however insisted in the idea of the important positive evolution followed in the last two lustrums with sequences in all the declining years, with a greater pronouncement at times of economic crisis, the downward trend being softened in periods of economic growth.

**Table 3. Early school leavers. Autonomous Communities.**  
Early school leavers aged 18 to 24 years old by CCAA and period.



Source: National Institute of Statistics (2022).

These figures, as can be seen in Table 3, are even more significant when they are approximated from a territorial perspective. As a relevant example, focusing on the existing extremes, the early school drop-out gap between Andalusia and the Basque Country is close to fifteen percentage points. The differences between the Autonomous Community of Extremadura and the Basque are ten.

This makes it possible to identify a vulnerable group in the digital world without great argumentative effort. Unqualified people. In addition to being located in areas with high levels of unemployment.

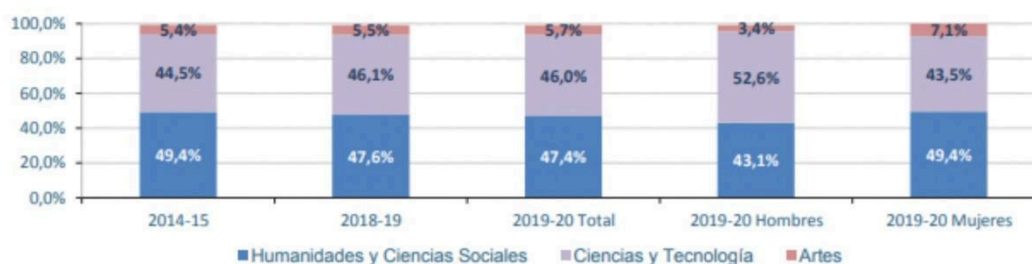
Employment opportunities for this large group are centred on sectors with no or few qualifications, mainly manual and physical work (agriculture, construction, domestic work, etc.), although there is also the risk that in the not too distant future many of these activities may also be mechanised, if not all of the tasks performed by human beings up to now.

Most likely the result of temporary, low-paid jobs and their inclusion in the cycle of non-contributory benefits.

In addition to the still significant number of school drop-outs in Spain as a whole, the educational options followed by those who continue their studies are not always optimal.

In secondary education, there has been a gradual and gradual increase in the number of options in Science and Technology in recent years, with a marked gender bias, where it is the majority option for men, as opposed to women, with the latter having a greater preference for the branch of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Table 4. Percentage distribution of secondary school pupils according to mode studied.  
(Evolution and situation by sex)



Source: Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (2022)

The same statement can be made in the field of regulated Vocational Training. The sum of students enrolled in the professional families of Administration and Management and Socio-cultural and Community Services (with the exception of the Health family) stands out above all others.

However, the professional family of Electricity and Electronics is far from achieving even thirty percent of any of them in terms of the number of students enrolled.

Table 5. Pupils enrolled in Vocational Training Cycles by vocational family, sex and title. 2019-2020 academic year.

	FP Básica			Grado Medio			Grado Superior		
	Total	% Mujeres	% Centros Públicos	Total	% Mujeres	% Centros Públicos	Total	% Mujeres	% Centros Públicos
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76.440</b>	<b>28,3</b>	<b>72,9</b>	<b>368.359</b>	<b>41,5</b>	<b>68,5</b>	<b>446.706</b>	<b>44,1</b>	<b>65,4</b>
Actividades Físicas y Deportivas	93	20,4	93,5	14.046	20,2	51,2	25.103	21,8	56,7
Administración y Gestión	13.370	51,0	67,4	52.080	58,9	69,5	62.483	62,8	76,3
Agraria	4.442	20,1	85,8	7.095	17,4	81,7	7.790	22,2	79,2
Artes Gráficas	764	43,8	85,1	3.508	38,5	73,4	2.398	49,7	77,7
Artes y Artesanías	-	-	-	-	-	-	124	55,6	100,0
Comercio y Marketing	4.755	54,8	72,6	17.146	49,8	68,3	31.219	47,1	65,5
Edificación y Obra Civil	690	9,1	76,2	839	22,2	96,4	3.940	33,3	92,3
Electricidad y Electrónica	10.055	3,5	74,6	26.823	3,5	77,1	24.146	5,9	80,1
Energía y Agua	-	-	-	241	6,6	100,0	2.467	10,3	89,5
Fabricación Mecánica	4.961	2,7	68,3	12.251	4,1	76,2	9.968	10,4	72,4
Hostelería y Turismo	6.887	40,0	78,0	17.252	38,6	84,2	22.725	56,4	82,7
Imagen Personal	6.706	80,9	77,5	17.799	88,3	73,4	8.053	93,5	77,4
Imagen y Sonido	-	-	-	4.129	22,6	53,2	18.473	32,0	53,7
Industrias Alimentarias	487	41,5	92,8	4.420	55,6	89,3	2.432	46,7	88,6
Industrias Extractivas	-	-	-	187	4,3	77,0	-	-	-
Informática y Comunicaciones	12.672	17,4	78,7	36.368	7,7	76,8	56.556	12,4	72,2
Instalación y Mantenimiento	591	3,4	67,5	11.657	2,5	83,2	9.899	3,9	80,8
Madera, Mueble y Corcho	1.724	8,4	85,4	2.362	10,2	89,9	927	25,7	100,0
Marítimo-Pesquera	44	0,0	100,0	1.607	6,6	93,5	1.910	9,2	95,3
Química	-	-	-	3.334	56,5	93,4	6.760	52,7	94,3
Sanidad	-	-	-	82.399	75,3	56,4	63.697	76,0	39,2
Seguridad y Medio Ambiente	-	-	-	1.213	8,8	63,1	7.995	44,3	95,0
Servicios Socioculturales y a la Comunidad	431	56,6	61,5	22.893	86,8	83,9	63.800	86,9	69,9
Textil, Confección y Piel	528	58,5	86,7	1.519	77,3	84,0	1.805	85,5	81,8
Transporte y Mantenimiento de Vehículos	7.163	2,9	77,6	27.111	3,4	78,5	11.982	4,1	79,0
Vidrio y cerámica	77	39,0	100,0	80	28,8	100,0	54	25,9	100,0

(1) Se incluye enseñanza presencial y a distancia.



Source: Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (2022)

And there is no reason to suspect that the figures are very different at university level. The majority tendencies shown in the secondary school and vocational training elections are reproduced when it comes to university studies. The number of students enrolled in the branch of Social and Legal Sciences is much higher than in any other branch of knowledge.

To a large extent, this is an obvious statement, marked by the range of existing Bachelor's Degrees on offer.

Table 6. Undergraduate students by branch of education  
Undergraduate students. access to public on-site universities.

**Tabla 4.2.1** Indicadores de admisión al Grado en universidades públicas presenciales por rama de enseñanza. Curso 2020-2021

	Grados ofertados	Oferta <sup>(1)(2)</sup>	Demanda <sup>(1)</sup>	Matrícula <sup>(1)</sup>	Indicadores de admisión <sup>(1)</sup>		
					Ocupación	Preferencia	Adecuación
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.558</b>	<b>244.793</b>	<b>450.650</b>	<b>224.536</b>	<b>91,7%</b>	<b>184,1%</b>	<b>69,0%</b>
<b>Rama de enseñanza</b>							
Ciencias Sociales y Jurídicas	912	111.297	161.266	103.040	92,6%	144,9%	69,0%
Ingeniería y Arquitectura	717	53.331	63.766	45.043	84,5%	119,6%	70,2%
Artes y Humanidades	390	27.778	34.836	25.019	90,1%	125,4%	82,7%
Ciencias de la Salud	276	34.862	158.358	34.530	99,0%	454,2%	61,6%
Ciencias	263	17.525	32.424	16.904	96,5%	185,0%	60,9%

Source: Ministry of Universities (2020)

With these figures, we can only affirm, with the aim of promoting labour market integration, that the first employment policy goes hand in hand with education policy. Firstly, by fighting tirelessly against school drop-outs. Not only to reach the goal set by the European Union, which has not yet been achieved, but also to reduce it significantly until it is practically eliminated. The opposite, however small, leads inexorably to marginalisation and social exclusion. On the other hand, by promoting educational options in which STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) careers become more prominent. The employment opportunities today and in the near future will be driven by digitisation and robotisation in these fields.

The work of the different governments, both national and regional (insofar as competences in education have been transferred), must not cease in this endeavour.

The existing obstacles are recurrent, the complexity of changing dynamics, the cost of altering spaces, human and material resources from one discipline to another..., but to do otherwise would again lead to unemployment.

## 5. Social protection policies

With regard to the measures to be taken to provide adequate social coverage for these groups, it is clear that this must be provided, at present and almost exclusively (except for future adjustments in the field of non-contributory benefits)<sup>25</sup>, by the minimum living income (Law 19/2021, of 20 December).

<sup>25</sup> Which will certainly happen. It is sufficient to refer to Order ISM/1055/2022, of 31 October, which publishes the Agreement of the Government Delegate Commission for Economic Affairs, approving the Plan for the reorganisation and simplification of the system of non-contributory economic benefits of the General State Administration. It states that this plan "promotes the study and reorganisation of benefits currently aimed at specific groups and their potential integration into the general concept and scheme of the IMV, in the form of complements, which should respond to three of the main causes of economic exclusion: old age, disability and social exclusion: old age, disability and vulnerable families with children".

As stated in its explanatory memorandum, it is an appropriate tool to act as "collective insurance against the challenges that our societies will face in the near future: more uncertain working careers [...] <sup>26</sup> and, in general, greater volatility in income and employment, problems [...] that will particularly affect the most vulnerable social groups". And this, irrespective of its hasty and hurried birth, and to a certain extent erratic, in that "its central justification [lies] in the need to plug a recurrent gap in the social protection system consisting of the absence of a complete coverage, from Social Security, of the real situations of economic need that affect citizens", finally making the commitment established in art. 41 EC to provide coverage for the real situations of economic need that affect citizens a reality. (González Ortega and Barcelón Cobedo, 2020: 17-18).

It should be stressed at this point that this recent benefit is destined to be the non-contributory benefit by excellence, with a structural vocation within the Social Security system, given the announced (and already begun with the elimination of the benefit for a dependent child or foster child with no disability or with a disability of less than 33%, as well as the recent political will to reform <sup>27</sup>) reorganisation of non-contributory benefits.

It is clear from this statement that the rules established in contributory Social Security systems to cover situations of need, especially unemployment in the immediate term (with more or less extensive periods of contribution, even for access to the welfare level), are far removed from the contours present in people who are inactive in the digital economy.

Unemployment protection "was designed for occasional situations of unemployment, between long periods of employment" (Rodríguez-Piñero Royo, 2017: 149), not for the opposite, long periods of inactivity between periods of regular, fragmented and partial employment, which is why it is necessary, here too, to rethink this concept in depth.

Once again, it is clear that the tools that currently make up the protection system are not fully adapted to the shortcomings of the labour market.

This is not a new statement either. Situations of need generated by prolonged periods of unemployment have been around for a long time and have continued over time. Two decades ago, Law 45/2002, of 12 December 2002, empowered the Government to regulate within the protective action for unemployment a specific aid called active insertion income and established its main rules. More recently, Law 6/2018 of 3 July 2018 incorporated an extraordinary unemployment benefit into the legal system. In the meantime, other programmes (Programa temporal de protección and insertion -PRODI- and Programme for the professional requalification of people who have exhausted their unemployment protection -PREPARA-) with related purposes, offer financial assistance to unemployed persons. Finally, Article 24 of Royal Decree-Law 18/2022 of 18 October approving measures to reinforce the protection of energy consumers and to contribute to the reduction of natural gas consumption in application of the "Plan + security for your energy (+SE)", as well as measures concerning the remuneration of public sector staff and the protection of seasonal agricultural workers affected by the drought reduces to 10 the number of actual days of contribution in the twelve calendar months immediately preceding unemployment for access to the agricultural subsidy or income; In other words, it almost eliminates the requirement of being in

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<sup>26</sup> It is also understood, the E. de M. continues, as appropriate to the economic changes associated with robotisation or climate change.

<sup>27</sup> Cfr. Order ISM/1055/2022, of 31 October, which publishes the Agreement of the Government Delegate Commission for Economic Affairs, which approves the Plan for the reorganisation and simplification of the system of non-contributory economic benefits of the General State Administration.

work and contributory in order to be eligible for the benefit. In a more graphic way, it moves towards identification and possible integration into the minimum living income, as has been pointed out.

The new realities of the labour market, marked by long periods of inaction (now generalised)<sup>28</sup>, require the creation of these forms of protection complementary to the traditional ones, given the impossibility for many unemployed people to access them. However, with the necessary adjustments, as their current configuration (limitations due to age, the need to exhaust previous benefits, etc.) makes it impossible for the groups now referred to to take advantage of them.

However, it is not so much a question of reconfirming the current unemployment benefits as of fitting them into the minimum living income benefit. It is understood that it is in this new situation where, sooner rather than later, all the non-contributory benefits of the Social Security system should converge, making financial assistance dependent on the lack of income and not on whether or not there is a link to work (Mone- reo Pérez, Rodríguez Iniesta and Trillo García, 2021: 195-196).

Despite this, it should be noted that among the obligations attributed to the person receiving this non-contributory benefit is that of registering as a job seeker. Its action is bifurcated between the restorative plane and the plane of labour insertion (Ramos Quintana, 2020: 5). That is, linked to employment policies that should be the frontier so that these situations become reversible and facilitate their insertion or reintegration into the labour market.

Alongside the group of people with difficulties

Alongside the group of people with difficulties in finding employment due to a lack of qualifications, requalification, geographic skills, etc., there are those who have been expelled from the labour market at a certain age. Perhaps, of all the examples that can be mentioned, the one that best reflects the effects of digitalisation on the labour market is that of people employed in the banking sector whose employment contracts have been terminated year after year.

The situation for these cases seems, in principle, to be better resolved with the provision contained in Article 51.9 of Royal Legislative Decree 2/2015, of 23 October, which establishes that in the case of collective dismissal procedures of companies not involved in bankruptcy proceedings, which include workers aged fifty-five or over (regardless of the number)<sup>29</sup>, there will be an obligation to pay the contributions intended to finance a special agreement with the Social Security. The core of the legal regime of this special agreement is found in the thirteenth additional provision of Royal Legislative Decree 8/2015, of 30 October, and in article 20 of Order TAS/2865/2003, of 13 October.

In the present case, it should be pointed out that the contributions corresponding to the agreement will be paid by the employer until the date on which the worker reaches the age of 63. From that point onwards, it is the employer who must make the contributions to the special agreement on a compulsory basis and at his sole expense until he reaches the legal retirement age or until the date on which, if applicable, he receives an early retirement pension. Examples which may ultimately lead to situations of worse social security cover.

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<sup>28</sup> And previously circumscribed to certain areas. Allow me to refer once again to rural work and its still unique model of protection against unemployment with an agricultural subsidy and income to cover periods of inactivity.

## 6. Conclusions

The political approach to the effects that the digitisation of the economy is having on the labour market focuses on the new forms of atypical work and the intensification of self-employment: people who provide services or carry out their activity on a marginal or sporadic basis, the bogus self-employed, the economically dependent self-employed and those in marginal or sporadic employment, the false self-employed, the economically dependent self-employed and those in situations of multi-employment or multi-activity.

However, these groups made vulnerable by the use of the tools made possible by digitalisation must be accompanied, in an outstanding way, by the whole other group of people who find it difficult to enter the labour market. Significantly, because of a lack of initial qualifications that makes them unsuitable for jobs that are characterised by training requirements; and also, in the same sequence, because they have been expelled from the labour market for the same reason on a permanent basis. These groups are joined by those who, despite having extensive training and professional experience, cease to be useful to the productive system simply because of the substitution of models in the performance of activities.

This being the case, and with the aim of favouring labour market integration, the first employment policy must go hand in hand with education policy. Reducing school drop-out rates to a minimum must be the goal to be achieved by all governments. This must be accompanied by a change in the training options available to those undergoing training. Careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics must be promoted, which requires not only the identification of the need, but above all public investment in human resources and the replacement of the existing training offer.

At the level of social protection, the expansion of the minimum living income should serve as an element of social protection.

This is a suitable tool that offers complete protection from Social Security to the real situations of economic need that affect citizens.

Progress must be made, perhaps with greater haste than that set out in Order ISM/1055/2022 of 31 October, in the absorption/integration by/into the minimum living income of all the system's non-contributory benefits in order to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency of all the public policies that seek to protect the most unprotected groups. The opposite generates duplication, greater public spending and, more importantly, the neglect of those in need of cover.

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