**Minutes of the 1st Hybrid EU Level Conference of project IMET - Innovating Social Dialogue and Collective Bargaining Toward Artificial Intelligence in the MET Industries**

**Zagreb, Croatia | 7–8 May 2025**

**Day 1: 7th of May 2025**

The conference started with the registration of participants, followed by welcoming remarks delivered by representatives from the project team (SMH-IS). The introductory statements framed the purpose of the event, emphasizing the role of social dialogue in ensuring a human-centric and balanced implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) in the MET industries.

**Project Development and Strategic Framing**

Dr. Nuno Boavida, Project Expert, presented the development of the iMET Project at this conference. The intervention recapitulated previous project phases and underscored the importance of providing tools for capacity building, notably by elaborating e-manuals and national workshops. It emphasized AI's dual nature—as a driver of efficiency and a source of potential deskilling—and the necessity of evidence-based responses through collective bargaining frameworks.

**IndustriAll Europe Presentation**

Ms. Patricia Velicu (Senior Policy Advisor, IndustriAll Europe) articulated a comprehensive approach to integrating AI into industrial relations. She contested the notion of technological determinism, advocating for negotiated and participatory frameworks to manage AI deployment. Her contribution highlighted critical dimensions of a trade union strategy: ensuring transparency, human oversight, equitable training rights, and the incorporation of data protection principles aligned with GDPR and the European AI Act. Examples from Austria, Germany, Spain and the UK demonstrated practical applications of such strategies through collective agreements. Ms. Velicu reiterated the call for a legal initiative targeting algorithmic management at the workplace.

**CEEMET Presentation**

CEEMET representative Ms. Pauline Dubois delivered a complementary perspective reflecting employers' points of view. The intervention reinforced the importance of social dialogue for ethical and effective AI governance. Employers acknowledged both opportunities (e.g., replacing monotonous tasks, enhancing workplace well-being) and challenges (e.g. workforce reskilling and data governance). Emphasis was placed on the need for manuals to present balanced content based on peer-reviewed scientific literature and European MET sector examples. CEEMET proposed improvements to the e-manuals to ensure the language remains neutral and the recommendations are mutually acceptable to both social partners.

**Open Discussion**

The day's final session, moderated by Dr. Nuno Boavida, facilitated an open exchange among all partners. Discussions revolved around strategic convergence and divergence regarding the integration of AI in workplace governance. Key discussion points included:

* The essential role of lifelong learning and digital skills acquisition
* Alignment of manuals with both trade union and employer expectations
* Strengthening joint ownership of project outputs
* Implementation strategies for risk assessment and algorithmic transparency
* Recommendations included: enhancing the participatory role of social partners in algorithm design, institutionalizing regular consultations on AI-related workplace changes and developing sector-specific guidelines for data protection and AI-driven decision-making.

**Day 2: 8th May 2025**

**Strategic Outlook and Next Steps**

The second day began with a presentation by Dr. Nuno Boavida outlining upcoming activities of the iMET Project. These include a series of 32 national workshops, the refinement of e-manuals, the development of infographics and the production of a short multilingual summary video for dissemination. These initiatives aim to consolidate the project's pedagogical materials and broaden stakeholder engagement.

**Thematic Panels**

Subsequent panels provided space for differentiated viewpoints from employer and trade union representatives.

**Employer Perspectives on AI in Social Dialogue** emphasized competitiveness, adaptability, and the pragmatic integration of AI in operational settings. Employer representatives reiterated the importance of skills development and proposed concrete mechanisms for institutional learning.

**Trade Union Perspectives** focused on safeguarding workers' rights, democratic oversight of algorithmic tools, and the integration of transparency and accountability mechanisms within collective bargaining agreements.

**Final Discussion and Synthesis**

A final open discussion was moderated by Prof. António Moniz from NOVA University of Lisbon. Central to this dialogue were reflections on the readiness of social partners to engage in AI-specific negotiations and the role of social dialogue in mitigating inequalities and promoting inclusive technological transitions. Emphasis was placed on:

* The legitimacy of collective bargaining as a means to regulate AI
* Institutional trust and capacity-building at national and European levels
* Shared responsibility for ethical AI use at the workplace.

**Conclusion**

The meeting concluded with remarks from Dr. Nuno Boavida, who repeated the significance of the iMET Project as a pioneering initiative fostering inclusive and informed dialogue around AI in the MET industries. Participants were encouraged to continue collaborative efforts and maintain momentum toward implementing and disseminating the project’s findings.

The conference hosts the SMH-IS project team repeated the central role of social dialogue and collective bargaining in shaping the future of work in the age of AI. The conference helped to lay the groundwork for the co-construction of governance mechanisms that are fair, transparent, and grounded in European social values.