



Alþýðusamband Íslands

ASI Policy on technological development and work organisation

The 43rd ASI Congress demands that new technology and changes in the industrial structure be made on the basis of workers' needs and not those of large corporations, and that the labour market of the future offer opportunities for improved standard of living, reduced working hours and a secure livelihood.

The labour market and society as a whole are facing great challenges. Globalisation means societies become more and more international. At the same time, rapid technological changes, a growing platform economy, increased automation and application of artificial intelligence, as well as ever more financialised ownership of companies, are affecting workers and unions throughout the world. While strengthening workers' position through these changes it must be ensured that the benefit of technological progress and increased productivity goes to workers and society as a whole, not only to corporations.

The effect of technological development on the labour market is nothing new, but the increased pace of change means the labour movement must be alert to the development. Some jobs will disappear, others jobs will change and new jobs created. It is of fundamental importance that new technology and changed industrial structure serve the needs of all employees. It is therefore necessary to make sure that tasks are divided in a manner providing all those who are capable with good and suitable jobs.

Regular forecasts of manpower and skills must be made available and a competence strategy must be formed for Iceland. This strategy should present goals on how industries and labour market should develop, both long term and short term and how to best achieve those goals. Creating such a vision is a common task for authorities, industries and labour organisation, as well as to develop policies for education, employment and labour market to further that vision.

Rapid changes in jobs and employment environment put an increased pressure on individuals to update and improve their skills throughout their working life. Education, continuous education and training will play a large part in securing worker status in the labour market in a world where constant change is the norm. Primary education and continuous education are a common responsibility of society, companies, individuals, unions and employers. The needs of employees and industries must be met by strengthening professional and vocational training at all levels as well as ensuring a continuum in vocational training and education with increased allocations to the Workplace Training Fund. In this respect it is important to offer top level technical colleges and to develop competence validation at secondary school and university levels.

Raising the level of education in the Icelandic labour market should be a priority, especially in rural areas. Special attention should be paid to those who have little basic education, those who have not

completed a secondary education, those who are of foreign origin and individuals with reduced occupational capacity. Competence must be reflected in wages, whereby employees are encouraged to gain new knowledge and increase their competence at work.

Telework, internet work from home, casual jobs, increased contractor work, time-limited work and less clear employment relationships along with inferior rights are challenges that unions throughout the world are facing. Even though the problems are not new their numbers have grown and their nature has changed with new technology and the advent of the platform economy (e.g. Uber, Deliveroo, Airbnb). Experience shows that there is an actual risk that this development could reduce the security of employment and earnings.

Workers demand fewer working hours and less overtime without their pay being lowered. Technical progress, increased productivity and organisation of work have made fewer working hours and more flexible working hours a real option. Workers are entitled to decent wages for moderate daytime work. Wages for daytime work should be enough for workers to provide for themselves and their families.

ASI Policy

- New technology, increased productivity and an altered industrial structure should serve the interest of all workers, the environment and the general population.
 - Wage earners and society as a whole should enjoy the profit of increased productivity and restructuring due to new technology.
 - Companies should be prevented from abusing personal information about their employees.
- Industrial democracy through employee participation on company boards has never been more important, to ensure their influence on how work is organised and how corporations are operated.
- The legal status of wage earners must be ensured and support provided to those who lose their jobs due to technological innovations and changes in work organisation.
- Work should commence immediately on preparing forecasts for manpower and skills, and formulating a competence strategy for Iceland. This work should set a policy on how we want industries and labour market to develop, both in the long and in the short term as well as how best to achieve this policy.
- The needs of workers and industries must be met by greatly improving vocational education and training at all levels, including technical studies and competence validation.
 - Understanding of work and technology should be promoted already in primary school.
 - Bridging gaps between educational levels and vocational and academic studies.
- Raising the level of education in the Icelandic labour market should be a priority, especially in rural areas, with respect to those with little basic education, people of foreign origin, individuals with reduced occupational capacity and others in a vulnerable position in the labour market.
 - It is important for wage earners to be able to attend studies during working hours and that studies are organised to suit their needs.
- Education and competence must be reflected in wages, whereby employees are encouraged to gain new knowledge and increase their competence at work.

- ASI demands a fair platform/gigg economy, respecting the right of all working people to decent wages and terms of employment.
- Any changes in employment relationships creating uncertainty and limiting worker rights must be resisted.
 - Laws should be made to strengthen the legal status of those who work in the platform economy, , do telework, internetwork from the home, casual jobs and contracting work.
 - Workers' co-operative societies should be promoted as the wage earners' response to the platform economy.
- Daytime working hours should be shortened and overtime reduced without cutting wages.
 - Any idea to increase flexibility when it comes to definition of the daytime work period should be rejected.
 - Employment contracts shall state working hours clearly and companies should respect employee personal time.
- Shorter working hours should be provided for by law in order to ensure the rights of all wage earners.

ASI Tasks

- Lead and to form a policy and an emphasis for the labour movement when it comes to adopting new technology and a changed industrial structure.
 - Demand that employees and society as a whole enjoys the profit of increased value creation.
 - Protect employee interest when new technology and organisation of work are introduced.
- Demand industrial democracy and workers' right to appoint representatives to company boards.
- Fight to secure the legal status of wage earners who lose their jobs due to technological innovation and changes in the organisation of work and to strengthen their position in the labour market.
- Initiate and lead work on preparing forecasts for manpower and skills, forming a competence strategy for Iceland and monitor its implementation.
- Lead the debate and policy-making of member unions on educational issues and the labour market in light of technological development and altered industrial structures with a special emphasis on vocational and technical education.
 - Protect, with the member unions, specifically the interest of people in rural areas, with respect to those with little basic education, people of foreign origin, individuals with reduced occupational capacity and others in a vulnerable position in the labour market.
 - Demand that everyone has a right to continuous education and that this education takes place during working hours and be organised to suit their needs.
 - Work to have adequate funds allocated for continuous education such that the cost is not prohibiting for wage earners.
- Push for strengthening of technical colleges and competence validation at secondary school and university levels.
- Form, in cooperation with ASI member unions, proposals for a mechanism and work procedures regarding the assessment of education and competence with respect to wages based on industry standards.

- Lead the debate and the labour movement emphasis on how to hold back non-traditional forms of employment, including the platform economy, and press for legislation to secure the legal status of workers with an employment relationship of that sort.
- Prepare proposals in cooperation with ASI member unions on how to secure rights and union membership for people in non-traditional employment relationships.
- Promote a legislation providing a framework for the platform economy and strengthening the terms and rights of its workers.
 - Protect the interests of employees in the platform economy and map the progress of bringing them into the unions.
 - Only a platform economy that secures the terms and rights of those working within it are acceptable.
 - Promote legal forms (co-operative societies) to serve as employee response.
- Lead the debate and policy-making within the labour movement concerning measures and an approach for reducing working hours, taking into consideration different circumstances and expectations in the labour market.
 - Emphasise that a clear boundary is drawn between private and personal time of wage earners.