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FOREWORD

More and more, the today's economic debates gravitate around the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the global transformation characterized by the digital, physical and biological technologies that interfere and change both the world around us and our perception of the humankind progress.

Important changes are expected regarding size, speed and scope of these transformations that Fourth Industrial Revolution generated. The transformations consist, mainly, of new systems built on the infrastructure of the digital revolution. Also, this will fundamentally change the way in which we produce, consume, move, communicate and interact with one another. Given the new developments of genetic engineering, Nanotechnologies will have a dramatic impact on how we think and behave and on the way we define ourselves¹.

Nevertheless, the fundamental nature of this revolution will affect the labor markets and the future of work, will generate income inequality, so that even social value systems and ethical frameworks will need to be changed.

Also, the environmental changes should be constantly monitored, in order to make us able to take action before something irreversible happened. In the past 20 years, it has become obvious that our major global issues are interconnected and must be approached as a whole. Acting to solve a global problem is a tremendously difficult task and it needs to start from a critical approach to the existing situation. Defining a problem can be more challenging than even finding the solution. But, Buckminster Fuller said: *"you never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete"*.

"These are critical times. We need critical minds", says Menard Gabel, and I am totally agreed with, therefore JEDEP encourages young and critical minds to share their views with our readers and to have the courage to be the first suggesting some new and unconventional approaches to today's global challenges. Linking brilliant minds in a giant network could make the difference for the next centuries. Also, collective work due to the new digital technologies is possible and accessible to a large number of people, and the benefits will emerge in the near future.

¹ adapted from Klaus Schwab, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*, 2016



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This paper discusses: social partnership and also the need to address environmental issues, as well as the dimensions of the atypical employment in Romania and worldwide, offering to the readers a double perspective at a glance. Networking platforms, as digital solutions to encourage collective thinking and work, become more popular among small and medium-sized businesses, and with a small investment, everyone could access the results of collective work.

JEDEP editorial team is seeking new ways to making the work of young researchers more visible internationally, and is working to devise a new collaborative tool, in order to encourage interdisciplinarity and cooperation between “critical minds” , no matter where they are.

Editor in-chief,

Prof. Manuela Epure, PhD