



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
EUROSTAT

Directorate F – Social statistics
F.3 – Labour market and lifelong learning

Luxembourg, 7 May 2024
ESTAT.F.3/MS

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

DIGITAL PLATFORM EMPLOYMENT

The work mediated by online platforms is one of the new forms of work. To measure this emerging phenomenon, an operational definition of this type of employment was agreed by Eurostat's Task Force on Digital Platform Employment (a subgroup of the Labour Market Statistics (LAMAS) expert group). The other objectives of the Task Force were to develop the survey methodology to collect data on digital platform employment as part of the EU Labour Force Survey, including testing the variables and proposing a common model questionnaire.

The experimental statistical product on 'Digital Platform Employment' (DPE) is the result of the work of the Task Force on DPE which began in 2019. The main outputs are the results of the pilot survey conducted in 2022 by 16 [EU](#) and 1 [EFTA](#) country. Due to the partial geographical coverage of the EU countries and to the specific character of the pilot survey, the experimental statistics show figures on DPE at an aggregate level (summed up for all countries that participated in the pilot).

The DPE statistics provide information on the type of digital platform work or service, encompassing details on working conditions and arrangements. Together with demographic characteristics, such as sex and age, these statistics allow the description of the profile of digital platform workers.

1. DIGITAL PLATFORM EMPLOYMENT DEFINITIONS

1.1. Definitions used in the pilot study 2022

The criteria for defining 'employment' in the context of Digital Platform were agreed for the 2022 pilot study as:

'To have worked for pay or profit in tasks/activities organised through an internet platform or a phone app, for at least one hour in at least one week, during the reference period.'

The operational definitions that were used in the pilot survey set out also that:

- Any task or activity that can be considered as 'employment' in the EU Labour Force Survey, i.e., production of goods or provision of services but also time spent in searching for clients or in setting up the working activity, should be considered as digital platform employment when the other criteria are fulfilled. These include in particular, work for pay and profit: (1) for providing taxi or transport services including driving clients, delivery of food for restaurants, or transport or delivery

of any kind of goods or similar, (2) for providing actual services to rent out a house, a room or any other accommodation, (3) for selling any good produced or bought to sell it online, and (4) for providing other kinds of services or work, among others: cleaning, handiwork, child or elderly care, teaching, programming and coding, online support or checks for online content, translation, data or text entry, web or graphic design, medical services (this includes, for example, the use of platforms managing appointments by physicians) and creating contents such as videos or texts (to earn money or other benefits);

- An online platform is a digital online service that facilitates interactions between two or more distinct but interdependent sets of providers and clients who interact through the service via the internet;
- ‘Creating contents’ activity namely refers to Youtubers and Instagrammers among others if they aim to earn money through the platforms (sharing the revenues of the advertisement) or directly from sponsors (enterprises who advertise their products) or ‘patrons’ (users that pay to have access to the contents);
- For all tasks or activities, as far as the matching between the provider and the client is done through an internet platform or a phone app, the task/activity can be considered as DPE.

The applied methodology follows the principles of the [OECD-ILO-Eurostat Handbook on Measuring Digital Platform Employment and Work](#), in particular, the relevant parts dealing with the conceptual framework, concepts and definitions. The Handbook sets out that digital platform employment includes all activities carried out by a person through or on a digital platform with the intention to generate pay or profit,

and:

- the digital platform or a phone app **controls** and/or **organizes** essential aspects of the activities, such as the access to clients, the evaluation of the activities carried out, the tools needed for conducting the work, the facilitation of payments, distribution and prioritization of the work to be conducted;

and:

- the work is for at least one hour in the reference period.

Digital platform employment is independent of the type of services or goods produced by the person, as long as the activities are either carried out directly on the digital platform (e.g. in case of online web-based platforms) or through the digital platform, i.e. activities are carried out outside the digital platform but have been enabled or facilitated by the digital platform (e.g. in case of location-based platforms).

The Handbook also explains that from a statistical point of view, all activities defined as employment are linked to a job, even they are sporadic, for just a few hours, or may be viewed as a hobby or as a way to earn some additional income.

It is also stressed in the Handbook that there is a difference between the legal status of the worker and the statistical definition of status in employment. The legal status of workers is defined by the laws and regulations of each country. The statistical categorization of status in employment rests upon the specific characteristics of the job as defined in the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-18). While the two concepts

are separate, the legal status of a worker will typically influence its statistical status. When, for example, the legal status for a group of workers is changed, and they are all reclassified as employees, then it is likely that the statistical status of these same workers will also change, as the legal change would likely affect the characteristics of the jobs used to define the statistical status of workers.

1.2. Other definitions

In the Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on improving working conditions in platform work ⁽¹⁾ COM (2021) 762 final, the Article 2 Definitions sets out that for the purposes of this Directive, the following definitions shall apply:

- (1) ‘digital labour platform’ means any natural or legal person providing a commercial service which meets all of the following requirements: (a) it is provided, at least in part, at a distance through electronic means, such as a website or a mobile application; (b) it is provided at the request of a recipient of the service; (c) it involves, as a necessary and essential component, the organisation of work performed by individuals, irrespective of whether that work is performed online or in a certain location;
- (2) ‘platform work’ means any work organised through a digital labour platform and performed in the Union by an individual on the basis of a contractual relationship between the digital labour platform and the individual, irrespective of whether a contractual relationship exists between the individual and the recipient of the service;
- (3) ‘person performing platform work’ means any individual performing platform work, irrespective of the contractual designation of the relationship between that individual and the digital labour platform by the parties involved;
- (4) ‘platform worker’ means any person performing platform work who has an employment contract or employment relationship as defined by the law, collective agreements or practice in force in the Member States with consideration to the case-law of the Court of Justice.

The definitions in the proposal for Directive would correspond to the definitions in the pilot 2022 study.

The proposed directive seeks to ease the access of people working through **digital labour platforms** to the legal employment status that corresponds to their actual working arrangements. It provides that a person is presumed to be a worker, if **three of the seven criteria set out below are fulfilled**. The criteria provided in the proposed directive are the following:

The digital labour platform

- determines upper limits for the level of remuneration
- requires the person to respect certain rules with regard to appearance, conduct towards the recipient of the service or performance of work
- supervises the performance of work, including by electronic means
- restricts the freedom to choose one's working hours or periods of absence

⁽¹⁾ [COM \(2021\) 762 final](#)

- restricts the freedom to accept or to refuse tasks
- restricts the freedom to use subcontractors or substitutes
- restricts the possibility to build a client base or to perform work for any third party.

The application of the legal presumption results in the obligation of the digital labour platform to prove in a proceeding where the correct employment status of the person working for the platform is at stake that there is no employment relationship. The Council adopted its position on 12 June 2023. The new rules need to be negotiated with the European Parliament before they can become EU law ⁽²⁾.

The 2022 pilot study included variables aiming to measure determination of remuneration, working hours setting and the freedom to accept or refuse tasks.

2. DATA SOURCES, REFERENCE PERIOD AND AGGREGATES

Source: The pilot data collection on digital platform employment consisted of a small-scale preliminary survey carried out in 2022 in volunteer countries. It was designed to evaluate and refine the research methodology, questionnaire design, data collection procedures, and overall feasibility of a full-scale survey as an ad hoc subject of the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS).

EU-LFS is the largest European household sample survey providing quarterly and annual results on labour participation of people aged 15 years and over as well as on persons outside the labour force. It covers residents in private households. Conscripts in military or community service are not included in the results. The EU-LFS is based on the same target populations and uses the same definitions in all countries, which means that the results are comparable between the countries. The EU-LFS is an important source of information about the situation and trends in the national and EU labour markets. Each quarter around 1.8 million interviews are conducted throughout the participating countries to obtain statistical information for some 100 variables.

Reference period: The pilot survey was conducted in 2022. The questions referred to one year, one month or one week according to the variables of the questionnaire.

Aggregates: ‘Agg 17’ refers to the 17 countries that provided the results from the pilot survey on Digital Platform Employment.

3. VARIABLES AND QUESTIONNAIRE

The list of variables and the model questionnaire proposed for measuring the extent of DPE and the characteristics of this form of employment were designed into three submodules:

- (1) Identification of the digital platform workers and type of platform service or work in the last 12 months,
- (2) Characteristics of the digital platform employment and

⁽²⁾ [EU rules on platform work - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](https://consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/06/12/)

- (3) Organisation of the digital platform employment.

4. INDICATORS

The results of the pilot data collection are published as experimental statistics. In particular, these statistics show the share of digital platform workers, defined as those who have worked for at least one hour through a digital platform in the last 12 months, broken down by type of DPE activity. The profile of the workers can be analysed by age, sex and educational attainment level. For those who reported to be in DPE for at least 1 hour during the last month, indicators on employment characteristics and working arrangements can be also presented by:

- number of hours worked,
- share of income from DPE in total income,
- social insurance coverage,
- type of the assignment of the work, service or task,
- degree of autonomy in accepting work or services, deciding on working hours or price setting.

Statistics Explained article with the first results was published on 5 July 2023: [Employment statistics - digital platform workers - Statistics Explained \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/employment_statistics_-_digital_platform_workers)

5. COVERAGE

The specific questions on digital platform employment were included as a module questionnaire in the EU-LFS in 2022. Countries participated in the pilot data collection on a voluntary basis, therefore the geographical coverage is limited. Data were transmitted by sixteen EU countries: Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Greece, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Finland, and one EFTA country, Norway.

The Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2735 of 28 September 2023 specifies Digital Platform Employment as the ad hoc subject module of the EU-LFS in 2026. This regulation serves as the legal basis, ensuring full geographical coverage of the module across all EU and EEA countries.

6. RESULTS

First results from the 2022 pilot data collection have been published in a Statistics Explained article on 5 of July 2023 (link to the article: [Employment statistics - digital platform workers](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/employment_statistics_-_digital_platform_workers)). The findings show that: considering all 17 countries as a whole, 3.0 % of people aged 15 to 64 performed at least one hour of work through a digital platform in the 12 months preceding the interview. Compared to the total number of employed persons in 2022, the percentage is 4.4 %. The article also includes analysis by sex, age, educational attainment level, task or service provided, social insurance coverage and degree of autonomy in work organisation.

ANNEX 1: List of variables

ANNEX 2: Model Questionnaire

ANNEX 1: LIST OF VARIABLES

Submodule 1: Identification of the digital platform workers

		Platform work or services in the last 12 months	AGE = 15–64
DPE 01 A	1	Taxi services Yes, involving at least one hour of at least one week	
	2	No work involving at least one hour of at least one week	
DPE 01 B	1	Transport services Yes, involving at least one hour of at least one week	
	2	No work involving at least one hour of at least one week	
DPE 01 C	1	Renting out accommodation Yes, involving at least one hour of at least one week	
	2	No work involving at least one hour of at least one week	
DPE 01 D	1	Good selling Yes, involving at least one hour of at least one week	
	2	No work involving at least one hour of at least one week	
DPE 01 E	1	Cleaning Yes, involving at least one hour of at least one week	
	2	No work involving at least one hour of at least one week	
DPE 01 F	1	Handiwork Yes, involving at least one hour of at least one week	
	2	No work involving at least one hour of at least one week	
DPE 01 G	1	Child or elderly care Yes, involving at least one hour of at least one week	
	2	No work involving at least one hour of at least one week	
DPE 01 H	1	Medical services Yes, involving at least one hour of at least one week	
	2	No work involving at least one hour of at least one week	
DPE 01 I	1	Tutorials / teaching services Yes, involving at least one hour of at least one week	
	2	No work involving at least one hour of at least one week	
DPE 01 J	1	Translation Yes, involving at least one hour of at least one week	
	2	No work involving at least one hour of at least one week	
DPE 01 K	1	Programming/coding Yes, involving at least one hour of at least one week	
	2	No work involving at least one hour of at least one week	
DPE 01 L	1	Web or graphic design Yes, involving at least one hour of at least one week	
	2	No work involving at least one hour of at least one week	
DPE 01 M	1	Online support or checks for online content Yes, involving at least one hour of at least one week	
	2	No work involving at least one hour of at least one week	
DPE 01 N	1	Data or text entry/editing Yes, involving at least one hour of at least one week	
	2	No work involving at least one hour of at least one week	
DPE 01 O	1	Creating contents such as videos or texts Yes, involving at least one hour of at least one week	
	2	No work involving at least one hour of at least one week	
DPE 01 P	1	Other platform work or services Yes, involving at least one hour of at least one week	
	2	No work involving at least one hour of at least one week	

Submodule 2: Characteristics of the digital platform employment

DPE 02 (former DPE 05)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Blank	Number of hours worked in the last calendar month From 1 to 9 hours From 10 to 19 hours From 20 to 29 hours From 30 to 49 hours From 50 to 79 hours 80 hours or more 0 or less than 1 hour Don't know	At least one DPE01=1
DPE 03 (former DPE 06)	1 2 3 4 5 Blank	Frequency of days including 1 hour-work in the last calendar month Less than 5 days Between 5 and 9 days Between 10 and 14 days Between 15 and 19 days 20 days and more Don't know	DPE 02 = 1-6, Blank
DPE 04 (former DPE 08)	1 2 2 3 4 5 Blank	Monthly digital platform/app net income or profit in the total monthly net personal income 0% 1-9% 10-24% 25-49% 50-74% 75-100% Don't know	
DPE 05 (former DPE 09)	1 2 3 4 Blank	Coverage by a social insurance in the last calendar month – unemployment Yes, by the platform/app Yes, by another job Yes, by another source No Don't know	
DPE 06 (former DPE 10)	1 2 3 4 Blank	Coverage by a social insurance in the last calendar month – sickness Yes, by the platform/app Yes, by another job Yes, by another source No Don't know	
DPE 07 (former DPE 11)	1 2 3 4 Blank	Coverage by a social insurance in the last calendar month – accident Yes, by the platform/app Yes, by another job Yes, by another source No Don't know	

Submodule 3: Organisation of the digital platform employment

DPE 08 (former DPE 15)	DPE 01 X	Main platform work or services in the last calendar month Code of the main platform work or services	DPE 02 = 1-6, Blank
DPE 09 (former DPE 16)	1 2 3 4 Blank	Assignment of the work or service 1 Work or service received from the platform/app 2 Work or service chosen by the respondent from clients' offers 3 Work or service proposed by the respondent and selected by the client 4 Work uploaded on the platform/app Blank Don't know	DPE 08 is not empty
DPE 10 (former DPE 17)	1 2 3 Blank	Rejection of work or service 1 Yes, always free to reject without major consequences 2 Yes, sometimes free to reject without major consequences 3 No, never free to reject without major consequences Blank Don't know	
DPE 11 (former DPE 18)	1 2 3 4 Blank	Working hours setting 1 Set by the platform/app or the clients 2 Choice in a range of working schedules offered by the platform/app or the clients 3 Possibility to adapt the working hours within certain limits, as defined core hours or precise deadlines 4 Entirely free Blank Don't know	
DPE 12 (former DPE 19)	1 2 3 Blank	Price setting 1 Price is set exclusively by the platform/app or the clients 2 Price is set partially by the platform/app or the clients 3 Price is not set by the platform/app or the clients Blank Don't know	

ANNEX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE

PILOT MODULE ON THE DIGITAL PLATFORM EMPLOYMENT

Introductory text

Option A:

Now, we would like to ask you a few questions on work performed through Internet Platform or Internet App for mobile phones. Please do not consider the teleworking but the work done with the intermediation of digital platforms, like Uber, Deliveroo, AirBnB, Freelancer.com or even Youtube.

Option B:

Now, we would like to ask you a few questions on the work you have maybe performed through Internet Platform or Internet App for mobile phones. We are not referring to telework but to work provided through or mediated by online platforms, such as Uber, Deliveroo, AirBnB, Freelancer.com or Youtube.

Option C:

Now, we would like to ask you a few questions on the work you have maybe performed through Internet Platform or Internet App for mobile phones. Please do not refer to telework for your employer, but to work done in the context of a triangular relationship with you, a client and a digital platform, like Uber, Deliveroo, AirBnB, Freelancer.com or Youtube.

Please answer to the following questions even if it refers to:

- the job you already described (in previous questions), or
- a job you do/did sporadically.

Submodule 1: Identification of the digital platform workers

DPE 01	In the last 12 months,	Yes /No		(If yes) Was there any week in which you carried out this work for at least one hour in total? Yes/No	(If yes) What is the name of the main platform/app you used for this work?
A	Did you carry out paid taxi services, through an internet platform or a phone app like for example XX or YY?				
B	Did you carry out paid delivery services for instance delivery of food or any other goods, through an internet platform or a phone app like for example XX or YY?				
C	Did you rent out a room, a house, or any accommodation for pay or profit, through an internet platform or a phone app like for example XX or YY?		(If yes) Did you work to provide rental services, such as cleaning the rented premises, catering for tenants, advertising the rental services, etc.?		
D	Did you sell (or advertise for sell) any good through an internet platform or a phone app like for example XX or YY?		If yes, why did you put these goods up for sale? (a) I didn't need them anymore (b) I collected / bought / produced them with the specific aim of selling them (c) For any other reason	If (b), was there any week in which you worked in collecting, buying or producing these goods for at least one hour in total? Yes/No	

DPE 01	In the last 12 months,	Yes /No		(If yes) Was there any week in which you carried out this work for at least one hour in total? Yes/No	(If yes) What is the name of the main platform/app you used for this work?
	Did you use an internet platform or a phone app to carry out any of the following services or work for pay or profit?				
E	- Cleaning like for example XX or YY?				
F	- Handiwork (including plumbing, electrician works or similar) like for example XX or YY				
G	- Child or elderly care (e.g. baby-sitting, shopping for elderly people) like for example XX or YY?				
H	- Medical services like for example XX or YY?				
I	- Tutorials / teaching like for example XX or YY?				
J	- Translation like for example XX or YY?				
K	- Programming / Coding like for example XX or YY?				
L	- Web or graphic design like for example XX or YY?				

DPE 01	In the last 12 months,	Yes /No		(If yes) Was there any week in which you carried out this work for at least one hour in total? Yes/No	(If yes) What is the name of the main platform/app you used for this work?
M	- Online support or checks for online content like for example XX or YY?				
N	- Data or text entry / editing like for example XX or YY ?				
O	- Creating contents such as videos or texts (with the purpose of pay or profit) like for example XX or YY?				
P	- Other service or work carried out through an internet platform or phone app		Please specify the service or work you carried out through the internet platform or phone app		

Submodule 2: Characteristics of the digital platform employment

FILTER FOR DPE 02: at least one of the variables DPE 01 X is equal to 'Yes, involving at least one hour of at least one week'

DPE 02

In [insert the last calendar month], how many hours in total did you spend on all these platform/app work and services?

- From 1 to 9 hours
- From 10 to 19 hours
- From 20 to 29 hours
- From 30 to 49 hours
- From 50 to 79 hours
- 80 hours or over
- No work, 0 or less than 1 hour

FILTER FOR ALL VARIABLES FROM DPE 03 TO DPE 07: DPE 02 not equal to 'No work, 0 or less than 1 hour'

DPE 03

During [insert the last calendar month], how many days did you work for at least 1 hour for all these platform/app work and services?

- Less than 5 days
- Between 5 and 9 days
- Between 10 and 14 days
- Between 15 and 19 days
- 20 days and more
- Don't know

DPE 04

In [insert the last calendar month], which proportion of your total personal monthly net income (including personal benefits) represents your net income or profit from these platform/app work and services?

- 0%
- 1-9%
- 10-24%
- 25-49%
- 50-74%
- 75-100%
- Don't know

DPE 05

In [insert the last calendar month], when working for this platform/app, were you covered in case of unemployment?

- Yes, through a social insurance provided by the platform/app
- Yes, through a social insurance provided by another job
- Yes, through another source than the platform/app or another job (e.g. personal insurance, state, etc.)
- No
- Don't know

DPE 06

In [insert the last calendar month], when working for this platform/app, were you covered in case of work-related accident?

- Yes, through a social insurance provided by the platform/app
- Yes, through a social insurance provided by another job
- Yes, through another source than the platform/app or another job (e.g. personal insurance, state, etc.)
- No
- Don't know

DPE 07

In [insert the last calendar month], when working for this platform/app, were you covered in case of sickness through paid leave?

- Yes, through a social insurance provided by the platform/app
- Yes, through a social insurance provided by another job
- Yes, through another source than the platform/app or another job (e.g. personal insurance, state, etc.)
- No
- Don't know

Submodule 3: Organisation of the digital platform/app employment

FILTER FOR DPE 15: at least one of the variables DPE 01 is equal to ‘Yes, involving at least one hour of at least one week’

DPE 08

CASE 1: The respondent recorded only one type of work or service

Then, an “import” of the type of work or service and the corresponding platform/app is suggested.

CASE 2: The respondent recorded several types of work or service

Then, ask the respondent to select the main type of work or service done through internet platforms or phone apps:

Which of the above platforms / applications corresponds to the main work or service you provided in [insert the last calendar month]?

DPE 01 X

FROM DPE 09 → DPE 13: The respondent only refers to the aforementioned work or service (DPE 08)

DPE 09

How did you get or choose your work or service to provide?

- I got the work from the platform/app
- I choose my work or service based on offers from clients
- The clients contacted me because they selected my offer
- I uploaded my work on the platform/app
- Don’t know

DPE 10

Were you free to reject the work or service without any major consequences (for instance change in ratings, less valuable tasks, disconnection from the platform/app, dismissal)?

- Yes always
- Yes sometimes
- No
- Don’t know

DPE 11

How were your working hours set?

- My working hours were set by the platform/app or the clients with no possibility for change
- I could choose between several fixed working schedules determined by the platform/app or the clients
- I could adapt my working hours within certain limits, as defined core hours or precise deadlines
- My working hours were entirely determined by myself
- Don't know

DPE 12

How was the price set?

- Precise price set by the platform/app or the clients
- Range of price given by the platform/app or the clients
- Price exclusively set by me
- Don't know

DPE 13

Did you provide this work or service during the reference week?

- Yes, as my main job; as already described in the beginning of the interview (core LFS)
- Yes, as a second job; as already described in the beginning of the interview (core LFS)
- Yes, as additional/occasional job; not described in the beginning of the interview (core LFS)
- No