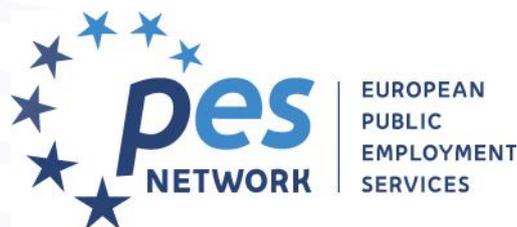# European Network of Public Employment Services

Platform work

Background paper of the
Working Group on New Forms of Work

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[1] DECISION No 573/2014/EU

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1. What is platform work?

Features of platform work have gained much attention in the public debate on the future of work. The current COVID-19 crisis has increased the demand for some types of platform work, such as delivery services, and threatens the income source of others, such as platform-based taxi drivers. The increased digitalisation of work prompted by the current pandemic might add to the demand for digitally-delivered services in the future. Platform work itself is a relatively new form of work, and regulators and institutions are still searching for the right approaches and strategies to cope with the new opportunities and challenges it brings.

There is no standard definition of platform work in Europe and, therefore, the delineation of platform work varies from one country to another, as well as from one study to another (Eurofound, 2018). Different descriptions are used, such as 'crowd worker', 'click work', 'online talent platform', 'sharing economy' and 'collaborative economy', which focus on specific aspects and usually have neither positive nor negative connotations. Concepts like 'the gig economy' encompass different forms of activities in different countries.

The notion of 'platform work' or 'digital labour platforms' is neutral. Eurofound (2018) describes the main features of platform work as follows: (i) paid work is organised through online platforms; (ii) there is involvement of three parties: the online platform, the worker and the client (see also Ellmer et al., 2018); (iii) work is contracted out; (iv) jobs are broken down into tasks; (v) services are provided on demand. From the point of view of Public Employment Services (PES), the aspects of paid employment, the triangular relationship and the platform-based labour intermediation are key aspects that pose fundamental questions on the way labour intermediation is organised and the type of work and employment relationship that is contracted.

The aim of this document is to use PES' experiences as input into mutual learning among PES and to further policy discussions on how to ensure fair conditions for platform workers. The document is part of the work of the PES Network working group on new forms of work.[2]

1.1 Labour intermediation

Pesole et al (2018) define 'digital labour platforms' as digital networks that coordinate labour service transactions in an algorithmic way. Similarly, the OECD (2019) describes platform workers as 'individuals who use an app (such as *Uber*) or a website (such as *Amazon Turk*) to match themselves with customers, in order to provide a service in return for money. They offer a diverse range of services including transport, coding and writing product descriptions'. Matching is organised mainly through offers posted on a platform by clients, and workers can usually simply opt to participate. Selection can be done either directly through the platform, by the client or with a combination of both. Matching through contests appears to be the exception in most EU countries for which information is available (Eurofound, 2018). One major difference between this and traditional labour intermediation is that it is not a work contract – whether permanent or temporary – that is intermediated, but a specific task or service (many tasks or services, thus many matches, could constitute a 'job').

1.2 Forms of work

From the perspective of PES, the contractual arrangements of the employment relationship are the most important element. In principle, platform workers can be employees or self-employed. However, boundaries are blurred. The types of tasks, dependency on one client and autonomy in the work organisation can be decisive features.

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[2] Participating PES included Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Germany, Norway, Italy, Slovenia and Sweden.

A key distinction between types of platform work concerns whether tasks are performed or delivered online, or on location. A distinction can also be made with regard to the scale of the tasks, which can be comprehensive or fragmented into microtasks. Microtasks may be an element of wider Artificial Intelligence (AI) projects. AI tends to reorganise problems so that they can be: (i) partially automated and (ii) outsourced to a low-cost, flexible, algorithmically-managed workforce. As Berg et al. (2018) put it: "Paradoxically, some microtask platforms specialise in providing human-labelled data sets that are used to train machine-learning algorithms in the hope that they will be able to function independently of human input in the future."

In most countries, smaller tasks dominate platform work, although platforms offering microtasks are not common in Europe (Eurofound, 2018; Pesole et al., 2018). Larger tasks are more prevalent in Bulgaria (notably ICT tasks) and in the Netherlands (notably online tasks), according to a study conducted by Eurofound (2018). Professional services are the most widespread type of platform work in the majority of the EU countries analysed by Eurofound (2018). Skills requirements tend to be linked to the complexity of tasks performed. Other relevant distinctions for the PES are the number of hours spent, the regularity with which work is performed and the level of earnings.

The results of a survey conducted in 14 EU countries via the European research project Collaborative Economy and Employment (COLLEEM[3]), launched in 2017, allow one to distinguish between the following 10 tasks of platform work (Urzí Brancati et al., 2019): online clerical and data-entry tasks (e.g. customer services, data entry, transcription); online professional services (e.g. accounting, legal, project management); online creative and multimedia work (e.g. animation, graphic design, photo editing); online sales and marketing support work (e.g. lead generation, posting ads, social media management, search engine optimisation); online software development and technology work; online writing and translation work; online microtasks (e.g. object classification, tagging, content review, website feedback); interactive services (e.g. language teaching, interactive online lessons, interactive consultations); transportation and delivery services (e.g. driving, food delivery, moving services); and on-location services (e.g. housekeeping, beauty services, photography).

1.3   Volume and characteristics of platform work

There is huge uncertainty about the number of platforms in Europe and the number of workers using them. As the definition is not homogeneous, assessments range from there being 173 active labour platforms in Europe to several hundred platforms in single European countries, e.g. in France, also including non-paid work. While studies identify between 9% and 22% of the population in different European Member States as having at some point performed platform work, only 0.3% to 4% of the working age population are active platform workers, who are registered at the platforms (for an overview, see Eurofound, 2018). Data from the Eurobarometer shows similar results.[4] In 2018, 2% of respondents from across the EU-28 indicated that they regularly offered services on a platform. The proportion of those offering such services occasionally, or having done it once, was significantly higher.

It is particularly difficult to assess the share of platform workers who are employees or self-employed. Survey results are subjective and the self-perception of the employment status (e.g. subordination, autonomy at work) may not reflect the legal aspects of the contract. The COLLEEM survey data suggests that even though a very large proportion of platform workers consider their platform-related work as a form of self-employment (either

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primary or as a side activity) across all different types of tasks, a significant share (between 30% and 42%, depending on the type of task) still perceive themselves as employees (Urzi-Brancati et al., 2019). In those cases where respondents perceive themselves as self-employed, it is not clear how many could be regarded as 'bogus self-employed'.

The majority of platform workers provide more than one type of service, and are active on two or more platforms, often combining high and low-skilled activities (Pesole et al., 2018). This would indicate the prevalence of income risks as well as over-education and, thus, skills mismatches (concerning around one third of workers). Those working for several platforms may show fewer features of bogus self-employment. The COVID-19 crisis might lead to structural distortions in the labour market in some countries, and skills mismatches related to platform work may become more important.

According to the COLLEEM survey data, workers who are performing platform work as their main job were those who earn 50% or more of their income via platforms and/or work via platforms more than 20 hours a week. The UK has the largest proportion of main-job platform workers among the adult population (3.6%), followed by the Netherlands (2.8%), Spain (2.7%), Germany (2.6%), Italy (2.4%) and France (1.9%). They were only 0.9% in Finland and Slovakia. On average, 2.3% of the adult population is performing platform work as a main job and another 2.3% as a secondary job, while 4.8% are performing it sporadically.

The COLLEEM survey results indicate that in 2017, 31% of platform workers performed 'on-location platform-determined routine work' (*Uber*-type of work). In this case, the platform (at least partially) takes the role of an employer without, in most cases, providing workers with an employment contract. These workers, therefore, may find themselves in a precarious situation. Another 30% perform online client-determined specialist work (as a freelancer). They usually have a medium to high skills level, and are not primarily selected by the platform, but by the clients. Around 5% of platform workers are 'online moderately-skilled click-workers', who are performing microtasks and are selected through the platform on behalf of their clients. Online platform-determined higher-skilled work, with a platform as the selector, only represents 2% of platform workers (Eurofound, 2018).

A typical platform worker is likely to have a family and children, according to the COLLEEM survey. This would indicate that platform work presents advantages to those trying to reconcile work and family lives – however, more evidence would be needed to support this assumption. A survey of case studies conducted by Eurofound finds that platform workers are predominantly young (below the age of 45), male, mainly without children, highly educated and urban (Eurofound, 2018). In terms of gender distribution, the COLLEEM survey finds that the representation of women progressively decreases as the intensity of platform work increases (Pesole et al., 2018). The proportion of women among platform workers varies considerably between countries. Furthermore, regardless of age, platform workers tend to have fewer years of labour market experience than the average worker. This would indicate the role of platform work in entering the labour market more easily.

The advantages of platform work based on performing mainly microtasks include gaining easier access to the global market, an increased flexibility as regards the location at which the work can be performed (e.g. working from home) and, depending on the task, flexibility and an improved work-life balance (Rani and Furrer, 2019). At the same time disadvantages may exist around: the need to work online at unusual hours; working in isolation; payment based on task performance, as determined by the client or algorithms; low pay levels in general; an absence of channels for complaint; and risks of being penalised for declining to accept some offered tasks, e.g. where platforms have technical problems. Gaps in social protection is another issue of platform work (Behrendt et al., 2019).

2.   Why should PES be concerned with platform work?

2.1   New actors and forms of private labour intermediation

Digital labour platforms largely use technology and algorithms. The intermediation is often non-transparent, and may significantly affect working conditions, for example, via its impact on the allocation and organisation of work, and the evaluation of platform workers. There has been evidence that the algorithms of a labour intermediation platform implemented by Amazon had discriminatory effects on female employment.[5] Algorithms also determine the quality of some jobs. Killhofer et al. (2019) point to the 'black box of intermediation' as a distinguishing feature of platform work.

Digital labour platforms are often characterised by a triangular relationship between the platform, workers and clients. While regulations exist for temporary work agencies that are also characterised by a triangular relationship, there are no regulations for platform work, unless platform work is performed on the basis of a regular employment relationship. In several countries, there are covenants or agreements between PES and temporary work agencies (see e.g. Nunn, 2015). For example, in Germany a temporary work agency needs to get permission from the Federal Employment Agency.

Regulations governing the matching services of digital platform work are rare. One exception is France, which has regulations for self-employed workers in place (Law 2016–1088). The platforms targeted by the law must determine the main features of the goods or services (conditions and technical modalities of the service provided) and set a price (directly or indirectly) based on a scale, remuneration scheme or other reference base (Eurofound, 2018). This example shows that regulation is possible. While regulation of platforms seems to be important, it is challenging, as appropriate criteria need to be defined.

2.2   Contractual conditions

The majority of platform workers have not signed a regular employment contract. None of the 18 countries analysed in the study conducted by Eurofound (2018) have clear regulations specifying the employment status of platform workers. In practice, it is the platforms' terms and conditions that determine the status of the workers. Most countries only make the distinction between dependent employment and self-employment. In some countries, one or more additional categories or subcategories of these two statuses exist – such as the subcategory of temporary agency worker, micro-self-employed or student – but, in reality, these categories are not applied to platform work. In general, platform workers have to sign an adhesion contract to the platform, and in this respect the contracts do not resemble traditional civil contracts either.

Workers with platform work as their main income are often self-employed but, in reality, their status is frequently unclear (Eurofound, 2018 and Pesole et al., 2018). Depending on the labour law applicable in a particular country, several characteristics must be met to constitute a regular employment contract. False self-employment poses a problem and engenders claims at labour courts, and in recent cases platform work has been identified as dependent employment (e.g. for *Uber* drivers in France[6]). In June 2016, the European Commission adopted its European Agenda for the Collaborative Economy, which provided some guidance on the employment status of platform workers and the EU definition of

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[5]   https://www.zeit.de/arbeit/2018-10/bewerbungsroboter-kuenstliche-intelligenz-amazon-frauen-diskriminierung

[6]   https://www.lepoint.fr/justice/uber-la-cour-de-cassation-reconnait-qu-un-chauffeur-est-un-salarie-04-03-2020-2365752_2386.php

workers.[7] Under the European Pillar of Social Rights agenda, in December 2017 the European Commission presented a proposal for a new Directive on transparent and predictable working conditions, and in March 2018 a proposal for a Council Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed[8]. One of the priorities of the European Commission's 2020 work programme is to improve the labour conditions for platform workers[9].

The status of employment may not only affect the matching and counselling services that PES offer, but also the rules for implementing conditionality of job search (i.e. should an unemployment benefit or social assistance benefit recipient be required to accept platform work?). Clear guidance for PES counsellors would be useful.

2.3   Quality of platform work

Major aspects of the quality of platform work are linked to the contractual arrangements (see section 2.2). In most cases, independent contractors are not covered by the labour rights and welfare support that is applicable to dependent employment. Health and safety regulations and social security contributions are typically the responsibility of independent contractors alone.

There are only a few examples of countries in which the self-employed may be covered by the social security scheme. Examples include France, where platform workers can have the status of a micro-entrepreneur and have to contribute to the social security scheme. The law on platform work aims to extend social security coverage against accidents at work to platform workers. France also provides platforms with a voluntary system for paying social security contributions for their workers. In Austria, an 'employee-like' status can apply to platform workers, where the criteria for economic dependence are met. In Croatia, platform workers can work under a contract for services, in which case they have to pay some pension contributions (Eurofound, 2018).

The quality of platform work suffers from the occurrence of skills mismatch (see section 1.3). The over-qualification of platform workers may be linked to the taking up of platform work out of necessity. Another aspect is that linked to the fragmentation of work, more comprehensive and complex tasks may be less frequently intermediated through digital platforms. Skills mismatch is not satisfying for the individual and is not efficient from a macro-economic perspective. Skills mismatch typically increases in times of economic restructuring and is linked to weaknesses in the skills governance system of a country. It is not only linked to the way work is organised through platforms. More information would be needed to gain insights into patterns of skills mismatch as well as on occupational mobility in platform work.

2.4   Cross-border work

Platforms for services performed or delivered online – the so-called Online Labour Markets – are, in principle, global labour markets (e.g. Amazon Mechanical Turk). This again raises the question of controlling fair working conditions. One question would be whether there is a specific role for Eures to play in this respect and whether, more generally, transparency for global workers should be increased.

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[7]   https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/services/collaborative-economy_en. Whether an employment relationship exists or not has to be established on the basis of a case-by-case assessment, considering the facts characterising the relationship between the platform and the underlying service provider and the performance of the related tasks, looking cumulatively, in particular, at the following three essential criteria: the existence of a subordination link; the nature of work; and the presence of a remuneration.

[8]   https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0132&from=en

[9]   https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar%3A7ae642ea-4340-11ea-b81b-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

2.5 Access to out-of-work benefits

Self-employed platform workers are, in general, uninsured against risks such as unemployment and are not eligible to receive short-time work allowances. In a few countries, specific (voluntary) schemes exist. In Austria, the self-employed have the opportunity to voluntarily opt-in to unemployment insurance, for which they are eligible after making 12 months of contributions over a period of 24 months. In Germany, the self-employed have, in principle, the possibility of voluntary unemployment. In France, platform workers working under the micro-entrepreneur status can join a social insurance scheme for accidents at work and occupational diseases, funded by the platforms as required by the new law for self-employed platform workers. In Denmark, as of 1 October 2018, special employment benefit rules for self-employed freelancers exist. In Belgium, the federal government is due to decide shortly on a legal framework for platform workers (survey conducted by the PES Network).

To respond to the income risks linked to the current crisis, some platforms have provided drivers and couriers who are diagnosed with COVID-19 or placed in quarantine with sick leave for a period of 14 days, or have established emergency funds to assist. However, the practices of platforms are mostly found to be insufficient and many workers may not be eligible for the income support they need[10]. More generally, the crisis shows weaknesses within the current systems in place in European countries when it comes to protecting the solo self-employed from income losses caused by an external shock. This calls for the reform of social protection systems to align them with the features of new forms of work.

2.6 Bringing jobseekers with employment barriers into work

On the positive side, platform work has the potential to offer employment opportunities and ease access to the labour market for specific groups, such as workers with strong family responsibilities, people with disabilities or health conditions, youth, people not in education, employment or training, older workers, the long-term unemployed and people with a migrant background (Pesole et al., 2018).

For platform work to be a good opportunity for disadvantaged groups to enter the labour market, progress is needed as regards social protection, working conditions and access to training. There is a danger that new segmentation lines appear between core workers and outsourced platform work. The PES may consider supporting transitions from bogus self-employed platform work to regular employment.

3. What approaches are European PES adopting to deal with platform work?

This section mainly presents results from a survey conducted by the PES Network among PES in EU Member State countries, Iceland and Norway, in 2019. Five PES did not participate (Romania, Estonia, Spain, Portugal and the Czech Republic).

3.1 Types of services provided to jobseekers and platform providers in relation to platform work

Information

Only nine PES provided information on employment and/or self-employment opportunities offered through platform work.

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[10] https://www.politico.eu/article/coronavirus-pandemic-leaves-gig-economy-workers-exposed/

Table 1: Does your PES inform jobseekers about platform work?

Information on…	…employment and self-employment opportunities	…employment opportunities only	…self-employment opportunities only	No information at all	Don't know/no answer
PES/Member States	FR, IT, IE, FI BG	LT, NL, PL	HR	13	IS, SK

Source: PES Network Survey

Vacancy intake and matching services

Most PES have not yet integrated platform work into their services, mainly because it is regarded as being self-employment. They are not advertising platform work to their clients. The PES in Iceland notes that most platform jobs are not formally registered, and thus fall outside their scope. Most PES see their role as promoting dependent employment. Nevertheless, a few PES have been advertising self-employment opportunities linked to platform work:

- France advertises self-employment opportunities but does not actively advise jobseekers to take them up.
- Finland and Ireland encourage self-employment opportunities, depending on experience and skill levels of jobseekers.
- In Sweden, jobseekers are encouraged to look for all kinds of different types of jobs (within the bounds of the law).
- In the French-speaking part of Belgium, platform work can be advertised on the website. However, Actiris adds a disclaimer to these vacancies to inform jobseekers that Actiris is not responsible for the classification of the employment relationship (independent worker, contracted) as chosen by the employer, given the current legal uncertainties. Actiris does not include platform work in its pre-selection/matching services.
- The Netherlands is the only PES that has quality requirements for platform work mediated through the PES, related to the earnings level.

With the exception of the Netherlands, PES state that they either do not know whether requirements are applicable (16) or do not have such requirements (7).

3.2 Conditionality rules for unemployment benefits and platform work

Only a few PES stated in the survey that unemployment benefit recipients were obliged to take up platform work vacancies that come with an employment contract (Croatia, France and Poland). In the Netherlands, Italy and Bulgaria there was no such obligation. The PES of Lithuania and Finland stressed that benefit recipients do not have an obligation to take up self-employment opportunities offered through platforms. Fifteen PES stated they did not know how conditionality was implemented with regard to platform work, again indicating that the topic is new for the PES and that no specific guidelines have been established.

3.3 Access to PES services for platform workers

In general, platform workers looking for employment have access to PES services if they have been a dependent employed platform worker and if specific rules exist for the self-employed.

The German PES provides advisory and support services for the self-employed. The PES Actiris (covering the Brussels-Capital region, Belgium) is awaiting the pending federal government decision on a legal framework for platform workers.

The evolution of the legal employment and social protection status of platform workers impacts the way the PES can deal with these jobseekers and vacancies.

A jobseeker registered at the PES who is occasionally performing platform work would still have access to the PES in 12 countries or regions (SI, IE, LU, BE-VDAB, SE, BE-Actiris, IT, CY, AT, MT, SK, FR). Access would depend on various factors in 12 other countries (BG, HR, HU, DK, IS, NO, FI, PL, LV, NL, LT, DE). For example, in Norway, as a general rule, part-time (50% or less) workers would have access to support while looking for a different job, or seeking more work. In Poland, as a general rule, a person (self-employed or employed) is entitled to PES support and may receive unemployment benefit where their monthly income does not exceed half of the minimum wage. In the Slovak Republic and Cyprus, an occasional platform worker could be registered as a jobseeker but not as unemployed.

To conclude, no specific rules apply to jobseekers who are performing platform work as their main job rather than any other type of dependent employment or self-employment. Countries apply different rules as concerns the combination of unemployment benefits and self-employment.

3.4   Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs)

Overall, the PES do not report any specific regulations that would define platform work as a specific type of employment that is eligible for employment incentives or job creation, although this should be possible as long as workers are regular employees of the platform. In general, start-up incentives exist as a regular ALMP, however, these are usually small programmes. According to Peters (2017), some PES have specialist counsellors for advice on self-employment (e.g. Croatia), but not particularly focusing on platform work. The PES Actiris offers a comprehensive set of measures for older workers, including training and assistance in starting a business, but also including outplacement for those aged 45 and over. It is not known whether platform work is proposed as one of the options.

Another question is whether platform workers who want to find better employment can access ALMPs. According to the survey results, PES have not yet established any specific rules. The Swedish PES has been looking into this question but its legal department does not yet have a clear position on whether an online platform worker would be eligible to participate in an ALMP. In 2018, a working group in the legal department concluded that a 'gigger' should be seen as a business person if they are registered for business person tax. This is relevant for the PES as ALMPs should not be used for business people (with some exceptions), and should instead be reserved for the unemployed. Note that in Sweden, all jobseekers have access to basic services of the PES. The Italian PES reports that regions in charge of implementing ALMPs at local level are currently studying the new Law on Platform work released in November 2019 (Legge 2 novembre 2019, n. 128 - G.U. 2 novembre 2019, n. 257).

3.5   Capacity building at PES

Staff training and counselling

Only the Finnish PES reports that it provides training to PES counsellors on issues related to platform work. It carried out a pilot project in 2017-2018 to advertise new forms of work to jobseekers and to train staff. As part of this, training was provided to interested PES staff on platform work. With respect to jobseekers, the pilot project reached fewer of them than expected, and service providers did not attract new customers.

3.6   Supervising role for dependent employment/social security

The Irish PES reports that the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection has a monitoring role in ensuring that employment or self-employment is correctly categorised, which may include platform working. This ongoing scrutiny not only safeguards the worker's social insurance record, where applicable, but also ensures a level playing field for employers. Combating bogus self-employment is an issue.[11]

3.7   Plans for the future

When asked about their plans for the future on approaching platform work, seven PES stated they had no plans (SK, DE, AT, BE-VDAB, LU, PL, NO) and only a few had already started taking action or had concrete plans.

Many PES are still observing the development of the platform economy. The PES Actiris reports it is reflecting on how to monitor platform work. In their view, it could be useful to increase the knowledge of job counsellors on the variety of jobs on platforms, labour conditions, possible impact on employment benefits for the jobseeker, and to analyse how to treat these atypical forms of employment[12] as a step towards sustainable labour market inclusion. Additionally, it could be beneficial for the PES to gain insight into the type of questions jobseekers have concerning platform work and the responses job counsellors give (in absence of specific guidelines).

In Sweden, 'Jobtech Gig' is an initiative to work proactively for sustainable growth of the gig economy through digital infrastructure. The three sustainability factors considered are: (i) the power balance between the gig worker and the platform; (ii) the social security system and (iii) the access to learning systems. Sweden is running an initiative called 'Open Platforms'[13], which is a digital infrastructure enabling portability of data in the gig economy. Within Jobtech Gig there are two ongoing projects in cooperation with other actors:

- The project *Cooperative Combinator* is concerned with designing and testing a 'platform for platforms', specifically in matching gigs to make it easier for contractors to come together and create a solution that meets the needs. A solution might aim at building platform cooperatives or blockchain-based structures. Further, research on Artificial Intelligence and automation is carried out.
- The project *Gig policy lab* is developed in cooperation with other authorities e.g. tax authority, pension authority, unions, platforms and other stakeholders in the gig economy. In January 2020, the Swedish PES initiated the policy lab to foster sustainable growth in the gig economy.

The Finnish PES states it will monitor labour market trends. Generally, platform work can offer extra income or a path towards the labour market and a permanent job, especially for young people or immigrants who would not normally have substantial work experience.

4.   Emerging issues for PES and the way forward

Generally, PES treat platform work like any other job and do not have specific guidelines or quality requirements. Accordingly, for most PES the decision of whether or not platform work is an appropriate employment opportunity is determined by their general legal framework and how it shapes the requirements on working hours and access to social protection, amongst others. However, the employment status of platform workers is often unclear. A portion of self-employed platform workers is badly protected against labour market risks and works under precarious conditions. The PES may need to define eligibility in a way that offers these (bogus) self-employed people access to its services and promotes

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[11]   https://www.rte.ie/news/courts/2019/1220/1102450-dominos-drivers-paye/

[12]   Atypical employment includes e.g. part-time work, temporary contract, solo-self-employment.

[13]   https://www.openplatforms.org/

transition into better employment opportunities. Thus, a challenge for PES is defining their client and target group in a way that accounts for new forms of work.

As bogus self-employment and the digitalisation of the economy and emergence of new forms of work involve different policy areas, it would be advisable for PES to take part in the economy-wide discussions on the future of work and exchange views with key stakeholders (see also section 2 above). PES can contribute to defining adequate regulation of platform work, based on their experience.

At the same time, PES may need to define what type of platform work they would consider as 'good' work and whether they would conclude covenants or cooperation with specific platforms. This would require establishing criteria for 'good', 'decent' or 'fair' platform work. Platform work, if reasonably regulated, may offer labour market access to some disadvantaged people (e.g. older workers).

PES have opportunities to support political efforts to improve the quality of platform work, for example, via a framework inspired by Graham's principles (Graham et al., 2019). Academics, policymakers and trade unions jointly have defined five principles for fair platform work[14], consisting of: (i) **fair pay**: the platform pays the local minimum wage (basic); pay is high enough to also cover costs (advanced); (ii) **fair conditions**: task-specific risks are mitigated (basic); the platform is actively improving working conditions and workers' health and safety (advanced); (iii) **fair contracts**: the platform's terms and conditions are transparent, concise and available for workers (basic); contracts, preferably, genuinely reflect the nature of the employment relationship (advanced); (iv) **fair managemen**t: the platform has a documented process for decisions affecting its workers through which workers can be heard, consulted and informed (basic); the platform additionally provides evidence of equity and/or informed consent for data collection (advanced); (v) **fair representation**.

Eurofound (2018) has formulated similar policy pointers, in particular regarding enhanced transparency before tasks are matched, as well as fair rating systems.

The PES could reflect on whether they have a role to play in regulating on whether platforms are operating fairly in their position as labour intermediators. Furthermore, PES could consider their role in increasing transparency in the labour platforms and improving their regulatory infrastructure (e.g. by supporting fair rating systems, providing information, etc.). The asymmetry of information and power is one of the reasons that platform workers can find themselves in precarious employment conditions.

The relevant ministries need to review their schemes of voluntary unemployment insurance, or introduce such schemes, to adequately cover the risks faced by platform workers. PES can contribute to such a reform process by sharing their experiences. As platform workers often do not receive continuous paid training from the platform, the PES could target training measures towards those platform workers who need such support.

Although labour laws, regulations and the business model of the PES vary between countries, PES will benefit from exchanging experiences through the PES Network. This exchange can give new important insights into regulations as well as into practices such as how PES include platform work in their activities and on partnerships with digital platforms. Updating and sharing relevant information on the development of platform work on a regular basis (e.g. every two years) would be useful.

Beyond these activities they may find common interests and could voice their position in the EU-wide debates on regulating employment.

Points for action for PES may include:

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[14] Fairwork Framework, see https://fair.work/

- Agree on a common definition of platform work.

- Exchange knowledge on the legal aspects of platform work and share this information with platform workers within each country, as well as making the information easily accessible for global platform workers.

- Agree on messages for consultation procedures on EU regulations for non-standard forms of employment, as well as on reforms of the social protection systems, including unemployment insurance.

Some of these issues will form part of further discussions in the PES Network working group on new forms of work. On some issues, PES experiences can be useful input into the ongoing processes at European level, and this has been brought forward in the PES Network opinion paper 'A contribution to the topic - New forms of work – platform work'.

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