

## Policy proposal summary – Platform Work

### Western perspective

#### Definition and data

Given by how diverse platform work can be, multiple definitions can be found among authors of academical literature, or policy making institutions. The two most concerning and apt for this summary are two definitions given by the European Commission:

*"providing services via online platforms, where you and the client are matched digitally, payment is conducted digitally via the platform and the work is **location-independent**, web-based"*

*"providing services via online platforms, where you and the client are matched digitally, and the payment is conducted digitally via the platform, but work is **performed on-location**"*

(EC Joint Research Centre, 2018)

Research done by the European Commission in 2018 shows, that on-location performed platform work makes up the majority of platform work in Europe, with an estimated €14 billion of revenue generated by platform work in the EU in 2020, where 75% of this revenue is said to be generated by taxi driving platforms and food delivery platforms (European Council, 2024)

#### Policy issues connected with platform work

The most pressing issues faced by western countries regarding platform work lie currently in categorizing platform work within the existing legal framework, that is how to correctly define a platform worker. Some western countries categorize platform workers as *self-employed*, such as Denmark for example. In France, platform workers fall under the category of *independent work*, a category similar to *self-employed*.

The main current issue lies in the fact, that since platform workers are not clearly categorized as employees, there is little legal grounds to ensure that they have access to their legal rights like a certain amount of sick leave or working hour limits.

The leading western country in regard to platform work policy reforms is Spain, where political efforts are being exerted to change platform workers' status from *self-employed* to *employee*. This would make them eligible for protection under existing labor laws, also making their compensation more stable and clearly definable.

There is also an ongoing effort on the EU policy making level to pass directives for all EU countries to follow regarding the legal categorization of platform work, with new laws waiting to pass in the EU Parliament (European Council, 2023)

## **Policy proposals**

- 1) **Establishing clear legal definitions** – by unifying legal definitions, governments can ensure that platform work can become a safe way to make a living. As of now, it is a very flexible source of income, but unfortunately, due to insufficient legal coverage, it can be hard for certain people to exist within the working frame that it creates.
- 2) **Enhancing worker protection** – closely connected to the first point, a lack of worker protection can very negatively affect those making a living via platform work. The scale of the negative effects can be difficult to measure due to a lack of data, but labor protection laws, such as a limit on working hours, exist for very clear and research backed reasons, and platform workers' needs are no different from any other worker. The absence of such laws can trap certain people in very demanding work, with no way to fend for themselves.
- 3) **Facilitating collective representation** – both policy makers across western countries and actual platform workers as well, face a lack of information and data from platforms. This leads to difficult measuring of their operations, and from the workers' perspective, it means that they have no means to negotiate wages effectively. Facilitating workers of each specific platform to form unions in order to communicate their needs with platforms could improve the working environment as well as push platforms to provide more data to policy makers, data that will be crucial in future policy making initiatives.

## **References**

European Council, European Union, 2023, available online at:

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