

Labour market change  
**New forms of employment:  
2020 update**





# New forms of employment: 2020 update



European Foundation  
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Eurofound (2020), *New forms of employment: 2020 update*, New forms of employment series, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

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**Research project:** Timely Information for EurWORK – topical updates (190302)

**Peer reviewers:** Christine Aumayr-Pintar, David Foden, Barbara Gerstenberger (Eurofound)

**Provider:** National information was provided by the Network of Eurofound Correspondents (see Annex)

**Acknowledgements:** The author would like to thank Chantal Botos (Eurofound) for administrative support provided in this project.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

**Print:** ISBN 978-92-897-2125-7 doi:10.2806/177981 TJ-04-20-635-EN-C

**PDF:** ISBN 978-92-897-2126-4 doi:10.2806/278670 TJ-04-20-635-EN-N

This report and any associated materials are available online at <http://eurofound.link/ef20027>

It is part of Eurofound's new forms of employment series. See the full series at <http://eurofound.link/efs009>

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*This report presents the results of research conducted largely prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Europe in February 2020. For this reason, the results do not fully take account of the outbreak.*

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite European Union Agency established in 1975. Its role is to provide knowledge in the area of social, employment and work-related policies according to Regulation (EU) 2019/127.

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## Country codes

|           |          |           |            |           |                |
|-----------|----------|-----------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| <b>AT</b> | Austria  | <b>FI</b> | Finland    | <b>NL</b> | Netherlands    |
| <b>BE</b> | Belgium  | <b>FR</b> | France     | <b>PL</b> | Poland         |
| <b>BG</b> | Bulgaria | <b>HR</b> | Croatia    | <b>PT</b> | Portugal       |
| <b>CY</b> | Cyprus   | <b>HU</b> | Hungary    | <b>RO</b> | Romania        |
| <b>CZ</b> | Czechia  | <b>IE</b> | Ireland    | <b>SE</b> | Sweden         |
| <b>DE</b> | Germany  | <b>IT</b> | Italy      | <b>SI</b> | Slovenia       |
| <b>DK</b> | Denmark  | <b>LT</b> | Lithuania  | <b>SK</b> | Slovakia       |
| <b>EE</b> | Estonia  | <b>LU</b> | Luxembourg |           |                |
| <b>EL</b> | Greece   | <b>LV</b> | Latvia     | <b>NO</b> | Norway         |
| <b>ES</b> | Spain    | <b>MT</b> | Malta      | <b>UK</b> | United Kingdom |

# Introduction

## Background and objectives

Societal and economic developments, such as increased flexibility in the labour market and in company policies or the broader use of advanced information and communication technology (ICT), can result in new forms of employment. These differ from established forms, either as regards the formal employer–employee (or client–self-employed) relationship or as regards work patterns and work organisation, including working time, place of work or the use of ICT.

In 2013, Eurofound mapped the emerging trends across the EU Member States, Norway and the United Kingdom (UK) from the year 2000 (Eurofound, 2015). Drawing widely on the information provided by the Network of Eurofound Correspondents, Eurofound clustered the reported new forms of employment into nine categories and outlined their main characteristics. Supplementing this mapping with a large number of qualitative case studies on policy frameworks and individual employment relationships allowed Eurofound to derive the initial implications of these new labour market trends for the labour market and working conditions, as well as to flag policy pointers relating to the identified opportunities and risks. In subsequent years, this baseline mapping was further developed by conducting individual research studies to learn more about the new forms of employment that had been identified.

As the topic of ‘the future of work’ remains high on the policy agenda both at a European level and in individual Member States, this report aims to update Eurofound’s previous mapping of 2013 on the incidence of new forms of employment. Nevertheless, the orientation of this report compared with that of Eurofound (2015) is slightly different. While earlier the aim was to identify for each country the forms of employment that were new or of increasing importance from about 2000, this report investigates the *prevalence* of the identified forms of employment, irrespective of whether they are newly emerging or long established. National experts were also asked to identify further employment forms that have since emerged or have gained importance in their country since 2015, but no other trends have been reported.

Between May and August 2020, the Network of Eurofound Correspondents conducted desk research (research and policy literature, data analysis) to indicate the following for the nine forms of employment:

- whether they exist in the correspondent’s country (that is, EU Member States, Norway and the UK)
- the regulatory and support framework
- the scale and scope
- the main opportunities and risks as identified in research or discussed in policy debate

- any impact arising from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in 2020

This information forms the core part of this report. After an overview of the existence of the nine forms of employment across Europe, each of them is discussed in more detail. It should be noted that it is not possible to provide in-depth information on these employment forms, as while most of them are present in most countries, available data and research continue to be scarce. Administrative and registration data on the scale and scope of the forms of employment investigated here are almost non-existent, and surveys differ in terms of quality (such as scale and representativeness).

A discussion of opportunities and risks from employers’ perspectives is also rare, as most research and policy debate that has been identified focuses on labour market and working conditions and job quality issues for workers. Similarly, very little information could be identified as regards the impact of these forms of employment, for example, on industrial relations and social dialogue, social insurance systems, or other labour market actors such as public employment services or labour inspectorates.

The report closes with concluding remarks and policy pointers.

## Concepts and definitions

Eurofound (2015) refers to ‘new forms of employment’ as employment that is characterised by one or several of the following elements.

- Relationships between employers and employees that are different from the established one-to-one employment relationship. Consequently, employment relationships involving multiple employers for each employee, one employer for multiple employees for one specific job, or even multiple employer–multiple employee relationships are relevant. However, temporary agency work, which could also qualify under this definition, was not considered for the purpose of this project.
- The provision of work on a discontinuous or intermittent basis or for very limited periods of time rather than on a continuous or regular basis. Conventional fixed-term work, part-time work and seasonal work are not considered unless there are other features that make the employment relevant to this project.
- Networking and cooperation between the self-employed, especially freelancers, going beyond the usual types of relationships along the supply chain, the sharing of premises or the traditional conduct of project work.

In addition, the relevant forms of employment could be, but do not necessarily have to be, characterised by:

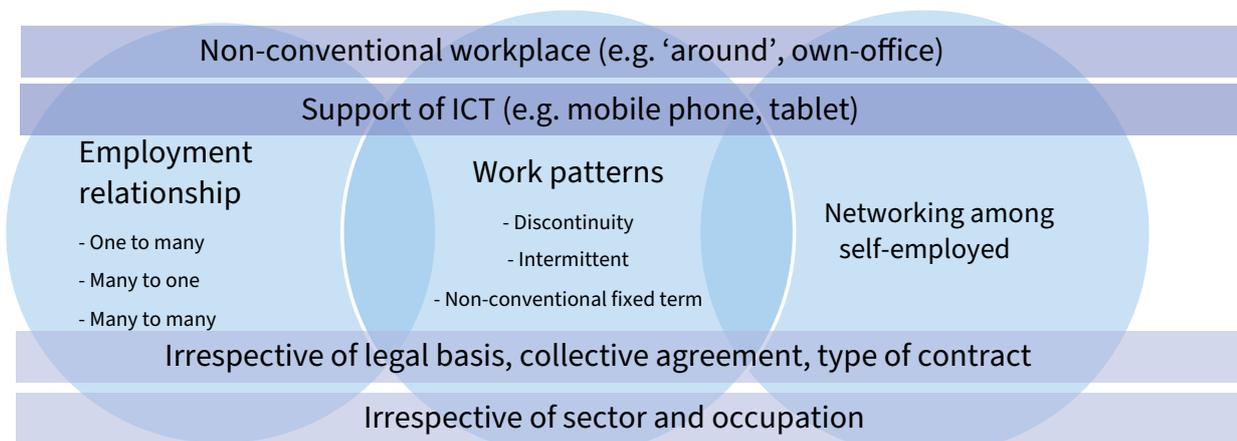
- a place of work other than the premises of the employer, where the employee is mobile and works from multiple locations, possibly including their own office (traditional teleworking is not considered)
- strong or prevalent support from ICT, including mobile phones, personal computers, tablets or similar, where this technology changes the nature of working relationships or patterns of work

The new form of employment can be subject to general labour laws or specific regulations, regulated on the basis of collective agreements, or not regulated at all. New forms of employment in Eurofound’s understanding are not limited to employees (that is, labour law contracts), but can also refer to the self-employed (that is, civil law or service provision contracts). Accordingly, forms of employment based on all kinds of contracts are considered. See Figure 1 for a general framework for identifying new forms of employment.

Specifically, Eurofound (2015) identified the following nine new forms of employment.

- **Employee sharing** (see Eurofound, 2016): A group of employers hires workers and is jointly responsible for them. The concept is similar to temporary agency work, with the purpose of sharing staff to balance the human resources (HR) needs of companies while providing secure employment to workers, and the network itself does not aim to make a profit. This employment form refers to employees only.
- **Job sharing**: One employer hires several workers to jointly fill a single full-time position. It is a form of part-time work, the purpose of which is to ensure that the shared job is permanently staffed. This employment form refers to employees only.
- **Voucher-based work**: The employment relationship and related payment are based on a voucher (generally acquired from a third party such as a governmental authority) rather than on an employment contract. In most cases, workers have a status between employee and self-employed.
- **Interim management**: A form of employment in which a company ‘leases out’ workers to other companies temporarily and for a specific purpose. Unlike in a temporary employment agency, its staff are highly specialised experts who are sent to the receiving companies to solve a specific management or technical challenge or to assist in economically difficult times. Interim management has some elements of consultancy, but the expert has the status of an employee rather than of an external advisor. In practice, however, interim management is undertaken on the basis of self-employment in some countries.
- **Casual work** (see Eurofound, 2019a): A type of work where the employment is not stable and continuous, and the employer is not obliged to regularly provide the worker with work but has the flexibility of calling them in on demand. This employment form refers to employees only.
- **ICT-based mobile work** (see Eurofound and ILO, 2017; Eurofound, 2020a): The employee or self-employed worker operates from various possible locations outside the premises of their employer (for example, at home, at a client’s premises or ‘on the road’), supported by modern technologies such as laptop and tablet computers. This is less ‘place-bound’ than traditional teleworking.
- **Platform work** (see Eurofound, 2018a, 2018b, 2019b): This involves the matching of supply and demand for paid labour through an online platform or an app. Employment status is not clarified, but in most cases the worker is considered self-employed or freelance.
- **Portfolio work**: This refers to small-scale contracting by freelancers, the self-employed or micro enterprises who work for a large number of clients.

Figure 1: General framework for identifying new forms of employment



Source: Adapted from Eurofound, 2015

- **Collaborative employment** (see Eurofound, 2019c): This refers to specific forms of cooperation or networking among the self-employed that go beyond traditional supply chain or business partner relationships.

In practice, a specific employment relationship can fall into more than one of the above categories (for example, platform workers tend to be portfolio workers).

## Overview

The mapping exercise conducted by the Network of Eurofound Correspondents revealed that as of 2020 most of the analysed forms of employment exist in the majority of EU Member States, Norway and the UK, even if on only a marginal scale (Table 1). The two digitally enabled employment forms, ICT-based mobile work and platform work, are prevalent in almost all countries. In line with the trend of an increase in the number of solo self-employed workers and freelancers, coworking is found in as many as 24 countries (part of ‘collaborative employment’). Another form of collaborative employment, worker cooperatives, exists in 22 countries.

Casual work, in particular intermittent work, and job sharing exist in about two-thirds of the countries. Employee sharing and interim management, which are best suited to specific circumstances rather than being broadly applicable, have been identified in just over half of the countries. Voucher-based work and umbrella companies (a form of collaborative employment), which are similarly applicable to specific employment situations rather than being widely deployable, are each in use in one-third of countries.

In Croatia, all nine analysed forms of employment exist, and in a further 48% of the countries seven or eight forms are prevalent. In Luxembourg and Spain, only three of the explored employment forms are deployed.

In most of the EU Member States and the UK, the majority of the identified forms of employment pertain to employees. In Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania, Malta, Spain, Sweden and Norway, more of the analysed prevalent forms of employment pertain to self-employed workers. In Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Slovenia, the number of forms of employment relevant to employees equals that of those relevant to the self-employed.

**Table 1: Prevalence of new forms of employment in the EU27, Norway and the UK, 2020**

| Country | ICT-based mobile work | Platform work | Casual work | Employee sharing | Job sharing | Voucher-based work | Collaborative employment | Interim management | Portfolio work |
|---------|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| AT      | X                     | X             |             | X                | X           | X                  | X                        | X                  |                |
| BE      | X                     | X             | X           | X                | X           | X                  | X                        |                    | X              |
| BG      | X                     | X             | X           | X                | X           |                    | X                        | X                  | X              |
| CY      | X                     | X             | X           |                  |             |                    |                          |                    | X              |
| CZ      | X                     | X             | X           | X                | X           |                    | X                        | X                  | X              |
| DE      | X                     | X             | X           | X                | X           |                    | X                        |                    |                |
| DK      | X                     | X             | X           |                  |             |                    | X                        | X                  | X              |
| EE      | X                     | X             | X           |                  |             |                    | X                        | X                  | X              |
| EL      | X                     | X             | X           |                  | X           | X                  | X                        | X                  |                |
| ES      | X                     | X             |             |                  |             |                    | X                        |                    |                |
| FI      | X                     | X             | X           |                  |             | X                  | X                        | X                  |                |
| FR      | X                     | X             | X           | X                | X           | X                  | X                        | X                  |                |
| HR      | X                     | X             | X           | X                | X           | X                  | X                        | X                  | X              |
| HU      | X                     | X             | X           | X                | X           |                    | X                        | X                  |                |
| IE      | X                     | X             | X           |                  | X           |                    | X                        | X                  |                |
| IT      | X                     | X             | X           | X                |             | X                  | X                        | X                  |                |
| LT      | X                     | X             |             | X                | X           | X                  | X                        |                    | X              |
| LU      | X                     |               |             | X                |             |                    | X                        |                    |                |
| LV      | X                     | X             | X           | X                | X           |                    | X                        | X                  | X              |
| MT      | X                     | X             | X           |                  | X           |                    | X                        |                    | X              |
| NL      | X                     | X             | X           |                  | X           |                    | X                        | X                  | X              |

| Country | ICT-based mobile work | Platform work | Casual work | Employee sharing | Job sharing | Voucher-based work | Collaborative employment | Interim management | Portfolio work |
|---------|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| PL      | X                     | X             | X           | X                | X           |                    | X                        | X                  | X              |
| PT      | X                     | X             | X           | X                | X           |                    | X                        |                    | X              |
| RO      | X                     | X             | X           | X                |             |                    | X                        |                    |                |
| SE      | X                     | X             | X           |                  |             |                    | X                        |                    | X              |
| SI      | X                     | X             | X           |                  | X           | X                  | X                        |                    |                |
| SK      | X                     | X             | X           | X                | X           |                    |                          |                    |                |
| NO      | X                     | X             | X           |                  |             |                    | X                        | X                  | X              |
| UK      | X                     | X             | X           |                  | X           |                    | X                        | X                  | X              |

Source: Network of Eurofound Correspondents, 2020

# 1 ICT-based mobile work

ICT-based mobile work may be described as the work pattern of a worker (whether employed or self-employed) operating from various possible locations outside the premises of their employer (for example, at home, at a client's premises or 'on the road'), supported by modern technologies such as laptop and tablet computers (Table 2). This is different from traditional teleworking in the sense of being even less 'place-bound'. Eurofound differentiates between the following types of ICT-based mobile work (Eurofound, 2020a):

- occasional ICT-based mobile work (employees): high intensity of ICT use; one or more places outside the employer's premises, with a relatively low degree of mobility
- highly mobile ICT-based mobile work (employees): high intensity of ICT use; work conducted in at least two locations, several times a week
- self-employed ICT-based mobile work: high intensity of ICT use; work conducted in more than one location

**Table 2: National terminology for ICT-based mobile work in Member States, Norway and the UK**

| Country | Terminology   |
|---------|---|
| AT      | Mobile Arbeit, IKT-basierte mobile Arbeit, IKT-gestützte mobile Arbeit      |
| BE      | Plaats- en tijdsafhankelijk werken, travail indépendant du lieu et du temps |
| BG      | Мобилна работа  |
| CY      | Εξ αποστάσεως εργασία υποστηριζόμενη από ΤΠΕ                                |
| CZ      | Práce na dálku s využitím IT  |
| DE      | Mobiles Arbeiten  |
| DK      | Distancearbejde, hjemmearbejde  |
| EE      | IKT-põhine mobiilne töö   |
| EL      | No specific terminology used  |
| ES      | Trabajo a distancia basado en el uso intensivo de nuevas tecnologías        |
| FI      | Etätyö  |
| FR      | Travail mobile, travailleur nomade  |
| HR      | Mobilni rad temeljen na IKT-u   |
| HU      | Bedolgozói munkaviszony   |
| IE      | ICT-based mobile work   |
| IT      | Lavoro agile, smart working   |
| LU      | Travail nomade via les TIC, travail mobile                                  |
| LT      | Nuotolinis darbas, kilnojamojo pobūdžio darbas                              |
| LV      | Ar IKT saistīts mobilais darbs, vai Mobilais e-darbs                        |
| MT      | Xogħol mobbli bbażat fuq I-ICT  |
| NL      | Mobiel werken   |
| PL      | Praca zdalna (oparta na technologiach informacyjnych i telekomunikacyjnych) |
| PT      | Trabalho virtual móvel, trabalho remoto                                     |
| RO      | Munca mobilă bazată pe TIC  |
| SE      | It-baserat mobilt arbete  |
| SI      | Delo na daljavo podprto z IKT   |
| SK      | Domácka práca a telepráca   |
| NO      | Fjernarbeid, hjemmekontor   |
| UK      | Remote working, homeworking   |

**Note:** Table includes countries with a prevalence of this new employment form as identified in Table 1.

**Source:** Network of Eurofound Correspondents, 2020

## Scale and scope

According to the European Working Conditions Survey 2015, around 16% of workers in the EU were ICT-based mobile workers (8.5% occasional, 4.6% highly mobile, 3% self-employed) (Eurofound, 2020a). The incidence of ICT-based mobile work differs considerably across countries, with national ICT usage, cultural aspects and regulation identified as major influencing factors. ICT-based mobile work is most widespread in the Nordic countries, Estonia, France and Luxembourg. In southern Europe, where the share of ICT-based mobile workers is substantially lower,

the number of self-employed workers using this work pattern tends to be higher.

Owing to variations in definitions, methodologies and time references, cross-national comparisons based on national data should be avoided, but Table 3 provides an overview of existing indications of the scale of ICT-based mobile work by country. What can be learned from this table, however, is that available data are found in fewer than half of the countries, relatively recent, and collected following different approaches (focusing on the workforce versus employers).

**Table 3: National data on the prevalence of ICT-based mobile work in Member States and Norway**

| Country | Prevalence of ICT-based mobile work   | Sources   |
|---------|---|---|
| AT      | In 2019, 18% of companies allowed one-quarter of their employees to undertake mobile work (beyond telework) (15% in 2017)<br>In 9% of companies, about half of the staff were allowed to undertake mobile work (8% in 2017)<br>In 8% of companies, around 75% of staff were allowed to undertake mobile work (7% in 2017)<br>In 6% of companies, all staff were allowed to undertake mobile work (7% in 2017)<br>In total, in 79% of companies at least a few employees were allowed to undertake mobile work (81% in 2017) | Deloitte, 2017 and 2019   |
| BG      | About 7% of surveyed workers have worked this way (2019)  | Center for Economic Development, 2019   |
|         | 67% of surveyed employers are aware of ICT-based mobile work and 18.3% have introduced it (2019)  | Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2019                                    |
| CZ      | 60% of employees and the self-employed are aware of this employment form, 16% had personal experience and 8% do it in their current job (2018)  | Kyzlinková et al, 2018  |
| DE      | 37% of companies offered mobile working schemes (2015)<br>43% of companies offered mobile working schemes (2018)  | BMFSFJ, 2019  |
| ES      | 15% of companies have employees connected to the company's ICT systems by external telematic networks (2008)<br>27% of companies had employees working outside the company premises on a regular basis (at least half their work week) and connected to the company's ICT systems through external telematic networks (2013)  | Survey about ICT and electronic commerce use in companies, INE, 2008 and 2013 |
| FI      | 4% of workers stated they worked this way (1997, 2003)<br>7% of workers stated they worked this way (2008)<br>13% of workers stated they worked this way (2013)<br>29% of workers stated they worked this way (2018)<br>3% of workers undertake ICT-based mobile work on a daily basis (2018)   | Statistics Finland, 2019  |
| FR      | 5% of workers classified as this type of worker (2005)<br>17% of employees classified as this type of worker (2013)   | Morel, 2005<br>DARES, 2018  |
| IT      | About 2% of employees classified as 'smart workers' (2017)<br>Slightly less than 3% of employees classified as smart workers (2018)<br>Slightly more than 3% of employees classified as smart workers (2019)<br>About 60% of large enterprises and 12% of small and medium-sized enterprises have smart working arrangements (2019)   | Observatory on Smart Working, 2019  |

| Country | Prevalence of ICT-based mobile work   | Sources                           |
|---------|---|-----------------------------------|
| LT      | In the second quarter of 2019, 18.5% of employed people aged 15+ worked outside their employer's premises (9% without a fixed workplace, 5% on customers' premises, 3% from home, 1.5% from other places) | Lithuanian Statistical Department |
| LU      | 11% of employees fall into ICT-based mobile work category (2017)  | Schütz and Harand, 2017           |
| PL      | 23% of workers aged 18–65 have worked under this arrangement, and 28% would be willing to do so (2018)  | Owczarek, 2018                    |
| SE      | 57% of the working age population in the past year have used modern technology to work from another place than where the work is usually performed (2017)   | SOU, 2017                         |
| SK      | 0.2% of workers are involved in this form of work (2015–2019)   | ISPP, 2019                        |
| NO      | 9% of employees work remotely (from home) as a permanent solution and an additional 27% have the opportunity to do so when needed – in total 36% (2017)   | Nergaard et al, 2018              |

**Notes:** Data are not available for all countries for which this employment form was identified as 'existing'. Owing to different definitions and methodologies, caution needs to be applied when comparing national data.

Although longitudinal data are widely missing, there is a general perception that at least occasional ICT-based mobile work has been growing, particularly for the self-employed (Eurofound, 2020a). Given the indications that more workers would be willing to work under this arrangement and that more employers might offer it in the future (a substantially higher share of employers are aware of the concept than are currently using it, as found in Bulgaria, Czechia and Poland), it can be expected that ICT-based mobile work will continue to be an increasing trend in European labour markets. For this to be realised, however, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the widely related restricted mobility will develop in the medium to long run, that is, whether working 'more mobile' than telework will be a feasible option.

## Sectors and occupations

ICT-based mobile work is most prevalent in the ICT sector, professional and scientific activities, real estate and financial services (Eurofound, 2020a). In Spain, for example, about two-thirds of all companies in the ICT sector employ workers under this arrangement; the proportion for those working in professional and research activities is about 40% (INE, 2013). In Norway, remote working is most widespread in the ICT sector (82% of employees), scientific and technical services (79%) and finance and insurance sector (69%) (Nergaard et al, 2018).

Data for Luxembourg show a higher prevalence of mobile working in the public sector (19.6%) than in the private sector (8.7%) (Schütz and Harand, 2017), while for Norway the opposite is observed (Nergaard et al, 2018).

Occasional ICT-based mobile work is undertaken by a large number of clerical support workers, and the category of highly mobile workers includes technicians, services and sales workers and craft workers (Eurofound, 2020a). In Norway, remote working is most common among managers and academia (Nergaard et al, 2018).

## Sociodemographic characteristics of workers

Eurofound (2020a) found that, in most countries, men make up a large share of highly mobile workers, while occasional ICT-based mobile work is equally common

among both genders. Data for Finland, in contrast, indicate a male dominance in ICT-based mobile work (Statistics Finland, 2019). Among white-collar non-managerial staff, 19% of women and 29% of men were ICT-based mobile workers in 2018. Among those in white-collar managerial roles, the shares were 56% and 63%, respectively. Similarly, according to the Lithuanian Statistical Department while almost 30% of Lithuanian men were ICT-based mobile workers in the second quarter of 2019, only 7.5% of women worked under such an arrangement. Data for Luxembourg show that ICT-based mobile work is much more common among men (10% occasional, 12% regular) than among women (6% for both types) (Schütz and Harand, 2017).

Young workers make up the majority of occasional ICT-based mobile workers, while highly mobile and self-employed ICT-based mobile workers include a higher number of those aged 35+. Data from Czechia show that the number of ICT-based mobile workers decreases with increasing age (9.5% of those aged 18–29 years were ICT-based mobile workers in their current job, compared with 6% of those aged 45+) (Kyzlinková et al, 2018). A similar pattern is found for Latvia, where 16% of those aged 20–24 are ICT-based mobile workers, compared with less than 10% of those aged 50+ (CIVITTA, 2018). In contrast, Swedish data indicate that older people more commonly work from a different location from the 'normal' workplace with the support of modern technology (SOU, 2017).

Data from Czechia show that the share of ICT-based mobile workers increases with the level of educational attainment (Kyzlinková et al, 2018). While about 4% of those with basic or secondary education without a school leaving certificate were ICT-based mobile workers in their current job, the proportion was about 16% among those with a university degree.

## Policy frameworks

### EU-level regulations

While there are no EU-level regulations that specifically address ICT-based mobile work, a range of other

regulations are highly relevant for this form of employment (Eurofound, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c).

- The European Working Time Directive (2003/88/EC) defines 'working time', sets a maximum number of weekly working hours and minimum daily rest periods and establishes some requirements regarding the recording of working time.
- The European framework agreement on telework (2002) that was negotiated by the European cross-industry social partners aims to establish a framework regarding the employment conditions of teleworkers, as well as reconciling the needs for flexibility and security shared by employers and workers at European level.
- The European Framework Directive on Safety and Health at Work (89/291/EEC) establishes principles on the prevention of, and protection of workers against, occupational accidents and diseases, irrespective of the place of work.
- The Work-life Balance Directive (EU) 2019/1158 highlights remote working and flexible working hours as facilitators for improved work-life balance.
- The Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions Directive (EU) 2019/1152 requires that provisions on the place of work and work patterns form part of employment contracts.
- The autonomous framework agreement by European social partners on digitalisation deals with the potential 'always on' nature of digitally enabled remote work, with the intention of limiting negative effects on workers' health and work-life balance.

With regard to the last of these points, the emerging initiatives relating to the 'right to disconnect' (R2D) are relevant. While this idea is not yet formally conceptualised, it is generally understood as relating to a worker's right to switch off their technological devices after work without facing consequences for their employment (Eurofound, 2020b). In August 2020, the responsible rapporteur of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee of the European Parliament published his proposal for an EU draft directive on R2D. The proposal suggests that Member States should encourage social partners at a sectoral level or company level to enter into negotiations on the issue and includes a list of items that must be included in any agreements reached. Employers are to issue workers with a written statement setting out how they can avail of the right. In the absence of a social partner agreement, such a statement must still be provided. The proposal will be debated in a plenary session of the European Parliament in December 2020. As of September 2020, the Commission has indicated that it considers the issue to be covered by existing legislation and does not see the need for new EU-level legislation.

## National legislation

The general regulations of the national labour codes are also relevant for employed ICT-based mobile workers. Accordingly, in practice, ICT-based mobile work is widely

applied as company practice, agreed at a company level or in individual employment contracts, and is often also agreed informally.

More specific regulations relating to telework might also be applicable to this form of employment (for an overview, see Eurofound, 2020b, 2020c). However, it is not always clear whether the 'more mobile' character of ICT-based mobile work is covered by these regulations (Eurofound, 2020c).

The Bulgarian Labour Code acknowledges this to some extent by not limiting 'work at a distance' to telework. It provides employers and employees with the opportunity to agree on more than one workplace, whereby 'workplace' can be defined in wide terms, thus also allowing for more mobile working (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2019).

In Italy, Law No. 81 of 22 June 2017 bases 'smart working' on an individual agreement between the employer and the employee as a means to organise work. In contrast to telework, it is not considered as a different type of work requiring a different employment contract. The COVID-19 emergency measures have suspended the need to reach an agreement and empowered employers to implement smart working unilaterally.

Focusing on a specific group of employees, in Czechia, the Civil Service Act (Act No. 234/2014 Coll.) states that the authority may conclude an employment contract with the employee for the performance of work from a different location on the condition that the nature of the duties of the employee allows for such.

As of mid-2020, Belgium (law on strengthening economic growth and social cohesion of 2018), France (Law No. 2016-1088 of 8 August), Italy (Law No. 81 of 2017) and Spain (Organic Law No. 3/2018 on data protection) have legislation on R2D. In all four Member States, legislation requires collective agreements or individual employment contracts to set out the modalities for disconnection. In the Netherlands and Portugal, legislation has been drafted but not adopted. In Ireland in 2019, the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation stated the intention to explore the introduction of such legislation (Crowley, 2019), and in Germany the public debate on ICT-based mobile working made reference to the possibility of introducing legislation (Eurofound, 2020b).

## Collective agreements

Few collective agreements refer to ICT-based mobile work beyond telework (as with legislation, a focus on telework is more widespread; see Eurofound, 2020c). In Austria, for example, the collective agreement for non-university research mentions 'mobile work'. While this goes beyond telework, the emphasis on working from home remains.

In Czechia, based on the Civil Service Act (see above), a collective agreement for civil service employees was concluded in 2016 between the government and five trade unions to promote remote working as a means by which to reconcile work and personal life. It encourages the negotiation of agreements for the performance of services from a location different from the employer's premises

on the condition that this does not impede the proper performance of the service.

In Norway, several agreements stipulate that remote working should be voluntary and based on an agreement between the employer and employee. The collective agreements of the Federation of Norwegian Enterprises (Virke) tend to cover remote working more comprehensively. One example is the National Agreement with the Norwegian Union of Commerce and Office Employees (HK), which includes a suggested framework agreement with provisions on working time and working conditions.

## Main opportunities and risks

As a form of work organisation based on considerable workplace (and thus, often, working time) flexibility, ICT-based mobile work has the potential to structurally transform how work is carried out in the organisation applying it, and, if it continues to become more widespread, in the economy and labour market more generally. Whether this proves beneficial for both employers and employees, or affected self-employed workers, depends on how it is implemented in practice (Table 4).

From a macro perspective, the potential to contribute to inclusive labour markets, job creation and job retention is an opportunity of ICT-based mobile work. This has a spatial dimension (for example, in rural or remote areas such a place-independent work arrangement can be favourable for both employers and workers) and a demographic one (for example, workers with disabilities or care responsibilities might find flexible working patterns supportive, and for companies facing difficulties attracting employees, as often experienced by small and medium-sized enterprises, offering ICT-based mobile work might increase their attractiveness). At the same time, the application of ICT-based mobile work requires some pre-conditions to be met by both employer and worker (for example, relating to technical solutions, the characteristics of corporate culture and work organisation and certain skills), which excludes certain groups like low-skilled workers, older people, and people in place-bound occupations.

From a micro perspective, the main advantages of ICT-based mobile work are its inherent flexibility and autonomy, which may be expected to result in a better work-life balance and increased productivity (for example, due to avoiding commuting time and benefiting from less disruption in the workplace) and reduced costs (for office space and commuting). At the same time, particularly in the case of a high intensity of ICT-based mobile work, available evidence indicates a potential risk of 'limitless work' in terms of long working hours, (perceived) 24/7 availability, a blurring of private and work spheres and a high level of work intensity and stress. This is caused by a combination of potentially stricter monitoring and control (including the monitoring of working time and workers' activities, also through the use of modern technologies, see Eurofound, 2020d) and what is referred to as the autonomy paradox (that is, the fact that autonomy can make work more rewarding but at the same time incentivise workers to work longer hours, thus disrupting their work-life balance; Eurofound, 2020a).

The technology that constitutes an important element of ICT-based mobile work provides the opportunity for improved information and communication flows, as well as skills development. However, if not managed well, it also poses the risk of information overload, inefficient coordination and cooperation, and social and professional isolation (in terms of a lack of informal contact with colleagues and formal support from colleagues or superiors).

Finally, a risk that increasingly receives attention in public and policy debate is the potential outsourcing of employer responsibilities to staff. While in the traditional workplace the employer provides the required equipment, in ICT-based mobile work it is not always clear who covers the costs of technical equipment, internet connectivity or electricity. Similarly, established health and safety standards are more difficult to ensure at a remote workplace where employers (and in many cases even labour inspectorates) have limited, if any, ability to intervene. In addition, concerns regarding data protection and cybersecurity are being discussed as regards employee, client and corporate data.

**Table 4: Main opportunities and risks of ICT-based mobile work for work and employment**

| Opportunities  | Risks   |
|--|---|
| Potential transformation of work organisation  |   |
| Contribution to inclusive labour markets<br>Addressing (regional) labour shortages<br>Job creation and retention | Potential exclusion of certain groups from the labour market<br>(for example, low-skilled workers, older people, place-bound occupations)   |
| Flexibility and autonomy   | Advanced monitoring and control<br>Increased work intensity and stress  |
| Improved work-life balance   | 'Limitless work'<br>Potential expected 24/7 availability<br>Long working hours, limited rest time<br>Blurring spheres of work and private life  |
| Productivity, costs, results-based remuneration  |   |
| Improved communication and collaboration   | Information overload<br>Conflicts due to a lack of coordination   |
| Skills development (technical applications)  | Social and professional isolation<br>High demands for self-management and self-organisation<br>Outsourcing of employer responsibilities (equipment, health and safety, data protection) |

**Sources:** Lipnjak, 2012; Sardeshmukh et al, 2012; Benítez, 2013; Belenguer, 2015; Eurofound, 2015; Eurofound and ILO, 2017; Felstead and Henseke, 2017; SOU, 2017; DARES, 2018; Kun, 2018; Martinez and Vanroelen, 2018; Nergaard et al, 2018; BMFSFJ, 2019; Butković and Samardžija, 2019; CBS, 2019a; CIPD, 2019; Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, 2019; Ministry of Social Affairs, 2019; Schafferhans and Sturm, 2019; UGT, 2019; CIPD, 2020; CSL, 2020; Eurofound, 2020a; hSo, 2020; Local Government Employers, 2020

## 2 Platform work

Platform work is a form of employment that uses an online platform to enable organisations or individuals to access other organisations or individuals to solve problems or to provide services in exchange for payment (Eurofound, 2018a) (Table 5). The main characteristics of platform work are as follows:

- paid work is organised through an online platform
  - three parties are involved: the online platform, the client and the worker
  - the aim is to carry out specific tasks or to solve specific problems
  - the work is contracted out
  - jobs are broken down into tasks
  - services are provided on demand
- Eurofound (2018a) found that, as of 2017, in Europe there were 10 distinctive types of platform work with active platforms and workers, which differed as regards the combination of the following elements:
    - the scale of tasks (ranging from micro-tasks to larger projects)
    - the format of service provision (whether the tasks are delivered on-location or online)
    - the level of skills required for particular tasks (routine tasks require little complex skill or background knowledge, whereas specialist work requires a higher level of skill and presumably experience or training)
    - the party that determines the work allocation (client, worker or platform)
    - the matching process (offer or a contest structure)

**Table 5: National terminology for platform work in Member States, Norway and the UK**

| Country | Terminology  |
|---------|--|
| AT      | Plattform-basierte Arbeit, Plattformarbeit, Crowdwork  |
| BE      | Platform economie, économie de plateforme  |
| BG      | Работа чрез онлайн платформа   |
| CY      | Εργασία μέσω ηλεκτρονικής πλατφόρμας   |
| CZ      | Platformová práce  |
| DE      | Plattformarbeit  |
| DK      | Platforms økonomi, deleøkonomi   |
| EE      | Platvormitöö   |
| EL      | Εργασία μέσω ηλεκτρονικής πλατφόρμας ή σε ηλεκτρονική πλατφόρμα (Ergasia se ilektroniki platforma or ergasia meso ilektronikis platformas) |
| ES      | Trabajo de plataformas   |
| FI      | Alustatyö  |
| FR      | Travailleurs de plateforme   |
| HR      | Rad putem on-line platformi  |
| HU      | Platform alapú, internetes munkavégzés   |
| IE      | Platform work  |
| IT      | Lavoro tramite piattaforma digitali  |
| LT      | Paslaugų teikimas per platformą  |
| LV      | Pūļa nodarbināšana, kopplatformas darbs  |
| MT      | Xogħol fuq pjattaforma digitali  |
| NL      | Platform werk, kluseconomie  |
| PL      | Praca platformowa  |
| PT      | Trabalho ligado a plataformas eletrónicas  |
| RO      | Muncă pe platforme digitale, muncă intermediată de platforme digitale  |
| SE      | Plattformsarbete   |

| Country | Terminology                              |
|---------|--|
| SI      | Delo na platformah                       |
| SK      | Platformová ekonomika- platformová práca |
| NO      | Plattformarbeid                          |
| UK      | Platform work, gig economy work          |

**Note:** Table includes countries with a prevalence of this new employment form as identified in Table 1.

**Source:** Network of Eurofound Correspondents, 2020

## Scale and scope

Owing to the particularities of platform work and the lack of a harmonised definition and measurement approach, no pan-European data exist on the scale of platform work. The available evidence indicates that it is, in general, a marginal but growing phenomenon. Most research (see Table 6) cites 1–2% of the workforce being engaged in platform work as a main job, and around 10% doing it occasionally.

Substantial differences are found in the extent of platform work across Europe. In contrast to ICT-based mobile work, however, the level of ICT usage in a country seems to be less of an influencing factor; the labour market

and employment situation seem to be more decisive. This hypothesis is supported, for example, by data from Denmark indicating that unemployed people, non-ethnic Danes and young people at the start of their careers are more likely to engage in platform work (Ilsøe and Larsen, 2020). A recent report by Nordic Co-operation (2020) also indicates that a prolonged economic crisis as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic could lead to increased engagement in platform work.

It is interesting to note that data on the number of platforms active across Europe are even more scarce than those on the number of platform workers. For those countries for which such information is available, the number ranges between about 5 (Cyprus) and 300 (France).

**Table 6: Data on the prevalence of platform work in Member States, Norway and the UK**

| Country  | Prevalence of platform work   | Sources                               |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| AT   | 18.9% of those aged 18–65 have done work via platforms at least once in the past<br>12.7% find paid work at least once a month through online platforms<br>9.5% find paid work at least once a week through online platforms<br>2.2% earn at least 50% of their income through online platforms | Huws and Joyce, 2016                  |
| BE   | About 110 acknowledged platforms in operation in the country as of summer 2020, compared with 12 in 2018  | FOD Economie, 2020                    |
| BG   | About 3% of surveyed workers have worked via platforms  | Center for Economic Development, 2019 |
|  | 4.4% of the population aged 18–64 have tried platform work  | Piasna and Drahokoupil, 2019          |
|  | 1.5% do it at least monthly   |                                       |
|  | 0.8% do it at least weekly  |                                       |
| 1.1% earned at least 50% of their income through platform work the last time they did it |   |                                       |
| CY   | About 1.1–1.6% of the workforce are doing platform work at least occasionally   | Expert assessment, 2020               |
|  | At least five platforms operate in the country  |                                       |

| Country | Prevalence of platform work   | Sources                       |
|---------|---|-------------------------------|
| CZ      | 19.1% of employed and self-employed workers are aware of platform work<br>6.5% have personal experience in platform work<br>2.3% are currently engaged in platform work   | Kyzlinková et al, 2018        |
|         | 5.9% of the population have done platform work<br>1.5% are sporadic platform workers (have tried platform work, but it is not a consistent part of their working life)<br>1.6% are marginal platform workers (less than 10 hours per week and less than 25% of income)<br>1.9% are secondary platform workers (10–19 hours per week and/or 25–50% of income)<br>0.9% do it as their main job (more than 20 hours per week and/or at least 50% of income)  | Urzi Brancati et al, 2020     |
|         | 44.2% of those aged 18–55 have done work via platforms at least once in the past<br>33.9% find paid work at least once a month through online platforms<br>28.5% find paid work at least once a week through online platforms<br>8.2% earn at least 50% of their income through online platforms  | Huws et al, 2019              |
| DE      | 0.6% of adults work via platforms   | Bonin and Rinne, 2017         |
|         | 11.9% of the population have done platform work<br>3.2% are sporadic platform workers (have tried platform work, but it is not a consistent part of their working life)<br>3.4% are marginal platform workers (less than 10 hours per week and less than 25% of income)<br>4.2% are secondary platform workers (10–19 hours per week and/or 25–50% of income)<br>1.5% do it as their main job (more than 20 hours per week and/or at least 50% of income) | Urzi Brancati et al, 2020     |
|         | 11.9% of those aged 16–70 have done work via platforms at least once in the past<br>7.8% find paid work at least once a month through online platforms<br>6.2% find paid work at least once a week through online platforms<br>2.5% earn at least 50% of their income through online platforms  | Huws et al, 2019              |
|         | About 40 platforms operate in the country   | Fabo et al, 2017              |
| DK      | About 1% of the population reports income from platform work  | Ilsøe and Larsen, 2020        |
| EE      | 19.5% of the population have done platform work at least once in the past<br>10.2% perform platform work at least once a month<br>8.1% perform platform work at least once a week (3.6% if applying a narrower definition of platform work)<br>3.1% earn at least 50% of their income through platforms<br>For 76.4% of platform workers platform work represents less than half of their income  | SSCU, 2019a; Huws et al, 2019 |
|         | About 50 platforms operated in the country in 2016, compared with fewer than 10 in 2012   | Eljas-Taal et al, 2016        |

| Country | Prevalence of platform work   | Sources                   |
|---------|---|---------------------------|
| ES      | 18.1% of the population have done platform work<br>4.1% are sporadic platform workers (have tried platform work, but it is not a consistent part of their working life)<br>4.7% are marginal platform workers (less than 10 hours per week and less than 25% of income)<br>6.7% are secondary platform workers (10–19 hours per week and/or 25–50% of income)<br>2.6% do it as their main job (more than 20 hours per week and/or at least 50% of income)     | Urzi Brancati et al, 2020 |
|         | 27.5% of those aged 16–65 have done work via platforms at least once in the past<br>20.5% find paid work at least once a month through online platforms<br>17% find paid work at least once a week through online platforms<br>6.3% earn at least 50% of their income through online platforms  | Huws et al, 2019          |
|         | About 40 platforms operate in the country   | Fabo et al, 2017          |
| FI      | 0.3% of the population aged 15–74 earn at least one-quarter of their income via platforms   | Statistics Finland, 2017  |
|         | About 8% of the population aged 18–65 work through platforms at least once per week<br>For three-quarters of these workers, the income earned through platforms is less than half of their total income<br>For 8% of them, platform work is their only income source  | SSCU, 2019b               |
|         | 6.7% of the population have ever done platform work<br>3.1% are sporadic platform workers (have tried platform work, but it is not a consistent part of their working life)<br>1.4% are marginal platform workers (less than 10 hours per week and less than 25% of income)<br>1.8% are secondary platform workers (10–19 hours per week and/or 25–50% of income)<br>0.6% do it as their main job (more than 20 hours per week and/or at least 50% of income) | Urzi Brancati et al, 2020 |
|         | 15% of those aged 18–65 have done work via platforms at least once in the past<br>9.5% find paid work at least once a month through online platforms<br>8.2% find paid work at least once a week through online platforms<br>2.8% earn at least 50% of their income through online platforms  | Huws et al, 2019          |
|         | 37% of professionals are interested in platform work  | Rouhiainen, 2018          |
|         | About 40 platforms operate in the country   | PwC, 2017                 |
|         |   |                           |

| Country | Prevalence of platform work   | Sources                      |
|---------|---|------------------------------|
| FR      | 0.4% of those in employment are working by means of customer contact exclusively via a platform   | INSEE, 2019                  |
|         | 7.8% of the population have done platform work<br>1.5% are sporadic platform workers (have tried platform work, but it is not a consistent part of their working life)<br>2.6% are marginal platform workers (less than 10 hours per week and less than 25% of income)<br>2.8% are secondary platform workers (10–19 hours per week and/or 25–50% of income)<br>0.9% do it as their main job (more than 20 hours per week and/or at least 50% of income)  | Urzi Brancati et al, 2020    |
|         | 15.4% of those aged 16–75 have done work via platforms at least once in the past<br>10.2% find paid work at least once a month through online platforms<br>7.7% find paid work at least once a week through online platforms<br>3% earn at least 50% of their income through online platforms   | Huws et al, 2019             |
|         | About 50 platforms operate in the country   | Fabo et al, 2017             |
|         | About 250–300 platforms operate in the country  | IGAS, 2016; Pipame, 2015     |
|         | 10% of survey respondents participated in platform work   | Butković, 2019               |
| HR      | 10.7% of the population have done platform work<br>3.3% are sporadic platform workers (have tried platform work, but it is not a consistent part of their working life)<br>2.8% are marginal platform workers (less than 10 hours per week and less than 25% of income)<br>3.5% are secondary platform workers (10–19 hours per week and/or 25–50% of income)<br>1.1% do it as their main job (more than 20 hours per week and/or at least 50% of income) | Urzi Brancati et al, 2020    |
|         | 6.5% of the population have done platform work<br>1.7% are sporadic platform workers (have tried platform work, but it is not a consistent part of their working life)<br>1.4% are marginal platform workers (less than 10 hours per week and less than 25% of income)<br>2.2% are secondary platform workers (10–19 hours per week and/or 25–50% of income)<br>1.4% do it as their main job (more than 20 hours per week and/or at least 50% of income)  | Urzi Brancati et al, 2020    |
|         | 7.8% of the population aged 18–64 have tried platform work<br>3% do it at least monthly<br>1.9% do it at least weekly<br>3.4% earned at least 50% of their income through platform work last time they did it   | Piasna and Drahokoupil, 2019 |
|         |   |                              |
|         |   |                              |

| Country | Prevalence of platform work  | Sources                        |
|---------|--|--------------------------------|
| IE      | <p>13% of the population have done platform work</p> <p>2.6% are sporadic platform workers (have tried platform work, but it is not a consistent part of their working life)</p> <p>3.2% are marginal platform workers (less than 10 hours per week and less than 25% of income)</p> <p>5.2% are secondary platform workers (10–19 hours per week and/or 25–50% of income)</p> <p>2% do it as their main job (more than 20 hours per week and/or at least 50% of income)</p>     | Urzi Brancati et al, 2020      |
| IT      | 0.5% of the population aged 18–74 works via platforms  | INAPP, 2019                    |
|         | <p>8.8% of the population have done platform work</p> <p>1.5% are sporadic platform workers (have tried platform work, but it is not a consistent part of their working life)</p> <p>2.5% are marginal platform workers (less than 10 hours per week and less than 25% of income)</p> <p>3.9% are secondary platform workers (10–19 hours per week and/or 25–50% of income)</p> <p>0.9% do it as their main job (more than 20 hours per week and/or at least 50% of income)</p>  | Urzi Brancati et al, 2020      |
|         | <p>21.7% of those aged 16–70 have done work via platforms at least once in the past</p> <p>15.4% find paid work at least once a month through online platforms</p> <p>12.4% find paid work at least once a week through online platforms</p> <p>4.9% earn at least 50% of their income through online platforms</p>  | Huws et al, 2019               |
|         | About 30 platforms operate in the country  | Fabo et al, 2017               |
|         | About 125 platforms operate in the country   | TRAILab and Collaboriamo, 2017 |
|         |  |                                |
| LT      | <p>11.8% of the population have done platform work</p> <p>3.8% are sporadic platform workers (have tried platform work, but it is not a consistent part of their working life)</p> <p>3.6% are marginal platform workers (less than 10 hours per week and less than 25% of income)</p> <p>2.7% are secondary platform workers (10–19 hours per week and/or 25–50% of income)</p> <p>1.2% do it as their main job (more than 20 hours per week and/or at least 50% of income)</p> | Urzi Brancati et al, 2020      |
| LV      | <p>4% of the population aged 18–64 have tried platform work</p> <p>0.8% do it at least monthly</p> <p>0.5% do it at least weekly</p> <p>0.7% earned at least 50% of their income through platform work last time they did it</p>   | Piasna and Drahokoupil, 2019   |
| MT      | 1% of the population have provided products/services via platforms   | CEPS and IZA, 2018             |

| Country | Prevalence of platform work  | Sources                       |
|---------|--|-------------------------------|
| NL      | 0.4% of the population are employed in platform work<br>Most workers work less than 20 hours per week  | CBS and SEO Onderzoek, 2019   |
|         | 14% of the population have performed platform work<br>2.8% are sporadic platform workers (have tried platform work, but it is not a consistent part of their working life)<br>3.4% are marginal platform workers (less than 10 hours per week and less than 25% of income)<br>5.1% are secondary platform workers (10–19 hours per week and/or 25–50% of income)<br>2.7% do it as their main job (more than 20 hours per week and/or at least 50% of income)   | Urzi Brancati et al, 2020     |
|         | 9% of those aged 16–70 have performed work via platforms at least once in the past<br>6.3% find paid work at least once a month through online platforms<br>4.9% find paid work at least once a week through online platforms<br>1.5% earn at least 50% of their income through online platforms   | Huws et al, 2019              |
|         | About 40 medium to large platforms operate in the country  | Werf&, 2018; Fabo et al, 2017 |
| PL      | 11% of those aged 18–65 have worked via platforms<br>4% have worked regularly via platforms<br>24% worked fewer than 10 hours, 23% between 10 and 20 hours, 14% between 20 and 40 hours and 9% more than 40 hours per week via platforms   | Owczarek, 2018                |
|         | 1.9% of the population aged 18–64 have tried platform work<br>0.4% do it at least monthly<br>0.4% do it at least weekly<br>0.1% earned at least 50% of their income through platform work last time they did it  | Piasna and Drahokoupil, 2019  |
| PT      | 13% of the population have performed platform work<br>4.2% are sporadic platform workers (have tried platform work, but it is not a consistent part of their working life)<br>3.7% are marginal platform workers (less than 10 hours per week and less than 25% of income)<br>3.9% are secondary platform workers (10–19 hours per week and/or 25–50% of income)<br>1.5% do it as their main job (more than 20 hours per week and/or at least 50% of income)   | Urzi Brancati et al, 2020     |
| RO      | 10.5% of the population have performed platform work<br>2.2% are sporadic platform workers (have tried platform work, but it is not a consistent part of their working life)<br>3.4% are marginal platform workers (less than 10 hours per week and less than 25% of income)<br>3.5% are secondary platform workers (10–19 hours per week and/or 25–50% of income)<br>1.4% do it as their main job (more than 20 hours per week and/or at least 50% of income) | Urzi Brancati et al, 2020     |

| Country | Prevalence of platform work  | Sources                      |
|---------|--|------------------------------|
| SE      | 2.5% of the working age population have performed platform work in the past year   | SOU, 2017                    |
|         | 10.2% of the population have performed platform work<br>3% are sporadic platform workers (have tried platform work, but it is not a consistent part of their working life)<br>2.6% are marginal platform workers (less than 10 hours per week and less than 25% of income)<br>3.7% are secondary platform workers (10–19 hours per week and/or 25–50% of income)<br>0.9% do it as their main job (more than 20 hours per week and/or at least 50% of income) | Urzi Brancati et al, 2020    |
|         | 9.5% of those aged 16–65 have performed work via platforms at least once in the past<br>6.2% find paid work at least once a month through online platforms<br>4.9% find paid work at least once a week through online platforms<br>2.6% earn at least 50% of their income through online platforms   | Huws et al, 2019             |
|         | 12% of the population have earned income via platforms   | Unionen, 2018                |
| SI      | 36.3% of those aged 18–55 have performed work via platforms at least once in the past<br>23.6% find paid work at least once a month through online platforms<br>18.5% find paid work at least once a week through online platforms<br>5.7% earn at least 50% of their income through online platforms  | Huws et al, 2019             |
|         | 6.1% of the population have done platform work<br>1.2% are sporadic platform workers (have tried platform work, but it is not a consistent part of their working life)<br>2.2% are marginal platform workers (less than 10 hours per week and less than 25% of income)<br>1.8% are secondary platform workers (10–19 hours per week and/or 25–50% of income)<br>0.9% do it as their main job (more than 20 hours per week and/or at least 50% of income)     | Urzi Brancati et al, 2020    |
|         | 7.1% of the population aged 18–64 have tried platform work<br>1.1% do it at least monthly<br>0.4% do it at least weekly<br>1% earned at least 50% of their income through platform work last time they did it  | Piasna and Drahokoupil, 2019 |
|         |  |                              |
| NO      | 0.5–1% of working age population have performed platform work in the past year<br>30–40 platforms operate in the country   | Alsos et al, 2017            |
|         | 10% of the population aged 18+ have done platform work<br>2% perform platform work on a weekly basis   | Jesnes et al, 2016           |
|         |  |                              |

| Country   | Prevalence of platform work  | Sources                   |
|---|--|---------------------------|
| UK  | About 3% of adults aged 15+ have worked in the gig economy   | RSA, 2017                 |
|   | 12.8% of the population have done platform work  | Urzi Brancati et al, 2020 |
|   | 2% are sporadic platform workers (have tried platform work, but it is not a consistent part of their working life) |                           |
|   | 3.5% are marginal platform workers (less than 10 hours per week and less than 25% of income)                       |                           |
|   | 5.7% are secondary platform workers (10–19 hours per week and/or 25–50% of income)                                 |                           |
|   | 1.6% do it as their main job (more than 20 hours per week and/or at least 50% of income)                           |                           |
|   | About 4% of the population have worked in the gig economy  | CIPD, 2017; BEIS, 2018    |
|   | 15.3% of those aged 16–75 have performed work via platforms at least once in the past                              | Huws et al, 2019          |
|   | 11.8% find paid work at least once a month through online platforms  |                           |
|   | 9.6% find paid work at least once a week through online platforms  |                           |
| 3.5% earn at least 50% of their income through online platforms |  |                           |
| 1–2% of the labour force do platform work as main employment    | Codagnone et al, 2016  |                           |
| 3–4% work regularly through platforms                           |  |                           |
| 10% have done platform work at least once                       |  |                           |
| About 50 platforms operate in the country                       | Fabo et al, 2017   |                           |
| About 120 platforms operate in the country                      | LSE, 2020  |                           |

**Notes:** Data are not available for all countries for which this employment form was identified as ‘existing’. Owing to different definitions and methodologies, caution needs to be applied when comparing national data.

## Sectors and occupations

The best-known examples of labour platforms, which are probably also the most widespread, match supply and demand in relation to transport services, that is, taxi services and food delivery (Eurofound, 2018a). In addition, platforms relating to household services, notably cleaning, maintenance or gardening, are becoming more widespread. As regards household services, in Greece it is observed that self-employed technicians such as electricians and plumbers have jointly created online platforms to provide their services.

While these types of tasks are mediated online but conducted on-location, platform work that relates to services provided online also exists and covers a wide variety of tasks, from low-skilled, small-scale routine tasks (‘micro tasks’, such as validating or tagging photos) to high-skilled large projects (such as in the creative industries or professional business services). In Croatia, for example, Bjelinski Radić (2017) finds that platform work is most commonly used for tasks relating to journalism and marketing research. Latvian experts mention programmers, finance service specialists and project managers as the most common platform workers.

In the first half of 2020, COVID-19 affected platform work quite differently from other forms of employment. Delivery services experienced an increase in demand during lockdown, and some platforms expanded their scope, from the delivery of prepared meals to the delivery of groceries,

medicine or parcels (for example, Liftago in Czechia and Wolt and Bolt Food in Estonia). Restaurants started or increased their delivery offers, resulting in a higher workload for delivery riders such as those affiliated to Deliveroo (in several countries), Thuisbezorgd in the Netherlands, and Wolt, Bolt Food, Barbora and Lastmile in Lithuania. In Cyprus, two platforms mediating such services emerged in spring 2020. With the reopening of restaurants and the lifting of mobility restrictions in many countries mid-year, the demand for such platform services started to normalise again.

Similarly, mediation of health care services through platforms saw some increase in demand (for example, Helpper in Belgium). In Malta, a new platform that matches individuals with private healthcare professionals was established.

In contrast, demand for taxi and household services declined due to the government restrictions, and several platforms made large-scale job cuts.

The demand for tasks relating to clerical and data entry, professional services, creative and multimedia services, sales and marketing support dropped in March and April 2020 compared with the same period in 2019 and 2018. Demand for software development and technology services remained relatively stable and demand for writing and translation services increased. Since mid/late April, demand increased again in all areas (Online Labour Index, undated).

## Sociodemographic characteristics of workers

Available data indicate that men undertake platform work more often than women (Eurofound, 2018b). In Austria, for example, 57% of platform workers are male and 43% are female (Huws and Joyce, 2016). Similarly, in the Netherlands, about 60% of platform workers are male, compared with about 53% in the overall labour market (CBS and SEO Onderzoek, 2019). In their survey of five eastern European countries, Piasna and Drahokoupil (2019) found that 58% of platform workers were male. In Czechia, 8% of male and 5% of female workers have experience with platform work (Kyzlinková et al, 2018). In Estonia, about 26% of male compared with 13% of female workers had performed platform work at least once in the past (SSCU, 2019a).

Platform workers tend to be young, with the highest shares of workers among under-35-year-olds (Eurofound, 2018b). However, some studies also point to a non-negligible share of older platform workers. In their survey covering 16 European countries, Urzi Brancati et al (2020) found that 5% of platform workers are aged 56–65. In Austria, 13% of platform workers are 55–65 years old (Huws and Joyce, 2016). In Estonia, the respective share is 6% (SSCU, 2019a). In Czechia, 4% of 45- to 59-year-olds and 1% of those aged 60+ have experience with platform work (Kyzlinková et al, 2018).

In general, platform workers are highly educated (Eurofound, 2018b). In Czechia, however, a lower proportion of workers with experience in platform work have high levels of education; while 8% of workers without school leaving certificates have performed platform work, the share is about 6% for those with school leaving certificates and 4% for those with university degrees (Kyzlinková et al, 2018).

## Policy frameworks

### EU level

In recent years, a range of policy initiatives at EU level and national level that are relevant for platform work have emerged (Hauben et al, 2020; European Commission, 2020a). Most of these address general issues that also arise in platform work (notably as regards working conditions, social protection or data protection), rather than specifically targeting this employment form. In many cases, platform work is not explicitly mentioned in the scope of the initiatives. An exception to this is EU Directive 2019/1152 on transparent and predictable working conditions which clearly stipulates that platform workers fall within the scope of the directive if they fulfil the criteria that determine the status of a worker.

However, as the opportunities and risks relating to platform work are increasingly discussed in public and policy debate, there are also examples of explicit policy interventions. At the European level, President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen has expressed the intention to ‘look at ways of improving labour conditions of platform workers’ (von der Leyen, 2019); this also features in the Commission Work Programme 2020

(European Commission, 2020b). A few EU-level expert groups and observatories are exploring related issues. EU-level worker representatives, such as the European Trade Union Confederation, and business organisations, such as BusinessEurope, are also referring to platform work/the platform economy when voicing their concerns and discussing and requesting solutions (Hauben et al, 2020).

### National level – Overview

At a national level, governments, trade unions, employer organisations and the platform economy community itself (platforms, workers and grassroots organisations) have established initiatives that tackle the emerging issues. Most of these initiatives are newly established and small in scale. Eurofound’s web repository on the platform economy (Eurofound, 2018c) gathers information on such initiatives. It provides examples of measures taken in the following areas.

- Advice and exchange: recommendations for platform workers are provided, for example, how to secure decent tasks, how to profile them best on a specific platform, what platform workers’ rights and entitlements are. Recommendations are often organised by the platform workers’ community.
- Arbitration: examples of court cases to clarify employment status or sector affiliation are provided.
- Awareness raising, campaigns, information provision: hard evidence is provided for platform workers, for example, on health and safety standards, or on the platform economy (such as statistics and measurements).
- Codes of conduct, standards: voluntary agreements that are made among platforms on behaviour towards workers and clients.
- Industrial action: includes, for example, strikes by platform workers, which are often supported by trade unions.
- Legislation: includes, for example, taxation or sector-specific legislation (such as taxi regulations explicitly including ride-hailing).
- Negotiation of working conditions: examples include collective agreements with individual platforms.
- Provision of insurance and social protection: may be offered by individual platforms (special packages negotiated with insurance companies) or through third parties such as trade unions.
- Ratings, reputation systems: includes systems allowing platform workers to rate platforms.
- Organising and representing platforms: umbrella organisations for platforms, which are often intended for the wider platform economy.
- Organising and representing platform workers: umbrella organisations for platform workers – either traditional trade unions or grassroots organisations.
- Taxation: includes specific regimes or procedures for platform workers.

- Training: mainly organised within the platform community and focusing on how to increase efficiency and effectiveness when working on a platform (for example, creating the profile); there are few examples of occupational training.

Overall, the actual effectiveness of such measures is still unknown, given their relative recency and often narrow scope, as well as the lack of evaluations.

## National legislation

The French Law No. 2016-1088 provides a legal definition of ‘electronic platform’ and provides platform workers with some individual and collective labour rights (for example, the right to create or join a union or to organise and participate in a strike and the provision of occupational accident insurance by the platform). Furthermore, Law No. 2019-1428 establishes that platforms mediating transport services can voluntarily draft a corporate social responsibility charter, aiming to prohibit exclusivity clauses and the unilateral breaking of a contract without compensation, and to guarantee a decent income, working conditions and opportunities for career advancement. Similarly, in Italy, Decree No. 101/2019 targets delivery platform workers. It obliges platforms to provide a written employment contract, prohibits them from unduly excluding workers from tasks, allows for collective bargaining and establishes access to social protection.

In terms of taxation, the Belgian government introduced a favourable tax regime for platform workers. However, this was recently overturned by the Constitutional Court as contrary to the principle of equality and non-discrimination. The act will be abolished at the end of 2020. In Estonia, simplified taxation procedures have been introduced for Uber drivers. In Sweden, Uber’s growth prompted revisions to the taxi regulation, including taxation issues. In France, Law No. 2018-898 introduced specific tax-reporting requirements for platforms. In Norway, the Sharing Economy Committee, appointed by the government, suggested measures to simplify the taxation of platform work, including a deregulation of the taxi market, which is being implemented at the time of drafting this report.

From a sector regulation perspective, platform-based taxi services are included in the Estonian Public Transport Act. It requires, for example, that if for platform-based transportation services a ride is ordered and the price is calculated online, clients are given the option to reject it if they deem it too expensive. Price limits set by local governments are not applied to platform-based services. In Portugal, Law No. 45/2018 stipulates that Uber cannot have a direct employment relationship with individual drivers, but must contract a third party, of which the driver can be an employee, or which represents a legal entity of the self-employed. In Slovenia, the Road Transport Act obliges Uber drivers to obtain a taxi licence.

Across Europe, a range of court proceedings have been initiated to explore the employment status of platform workers or the sector affiliation of platforms. Courts base their decisions on the specific characteristics of each case and the national frameworks and hence come to different decisions. As regards employment status, however,

recent decisions (as at mid-2020) tend to declare platform workers as employees.

## Trade union interventions

In some countries, trade unions have become engaged in providing a collective voice for platform workers. Initiatives by business or employer organisations are less common.

Most frequently, trade union involvement relates to allowing membership for platform workers (even if they are considered self-employed), awareness raising, information provision and supporting platform workers in organising industrial action. Only a few examples of collective agreements for platform workers exist. In Sweden, collective agreements have been realised, but it is observed that they are still not the norm. In 2018, the Danish trade union 3F and the platform Hilfr, mediating cleaning services, signed a collective agreement that establishes a minimum hourly pay rate, an obligatory welfare supplement and information exchange between the platform and tax authorities. In Norway, since 2019, an agreement between the United Federation of Trade Unions (Fellesforbundet) and Foodora (mediating bicycle food delivery), covering employed platform workers, established a pay increase and extra pay during wintertime, reimbursement for equipment and a collectively agreed early retirement pension. In Austria, a collective agreement for bicycle couriers, employed by a platform or by a traditional company, has been operational since 2020. It regulates a monthly minimum wage, holiday and Christmas remuneration and compensation for deliveries carried out with workers’ own bikes.

## Grassroots organisations

In a few European countries, such as Czechia, Estonia, Ireland and Spain, associations have emerged that aim to strategically cooperate with governments, social partners and society. They conduct awareness raising and information provision activities, participate in policy discussions, commission research projects and publish codes of conduct.

In addition, in some Member States, such as Belgium and Finland, initiatives to improve employment and working conditions are driven by groups of workers, notably in relation to food delivery services mediated through platforms.

## Main opportunities and risks

In spite of the relatively small scale of platform work, it is characterised by a considerable degree of diversity, with different types of platform work resulting in different implications for work and employment. No one type has exclusively positive or negative features. However, platforms that strongly determine the service provision of small-scale tasks with low skills requirements cause more concerns for the labour market and for workers than other forms (Figure 2).

Access to the labour market and to generating (additional) income, as well as the flexibility of this employment form, are widely discussed as the main advantages for workers.

The potential of platform work to foster self-employment is less commonly addressed but should be recognised for those types of platform work that offer a high level of discretion to workers who strategically use them to try out or enhance a self-employed activity. This type of work can, therefore, be related to the development of transversal skills, such as communication or self-management.

The most often discussed challenge relates to the often unclear employment status of platform workers, and the associated lack of protections (as regards working conditions, including notice periods, minimum pay or health and safety standards, but also social protection or access to representation), which received an additional impetus in policy debate during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the first half of 2020. This holds particularly true when the platform works with self-employed workers but determines the work organisation, employment and working conditions. This tends to result in limited autonomy and flexibility and unfavourable working time (either in terms of lengths or schedules).

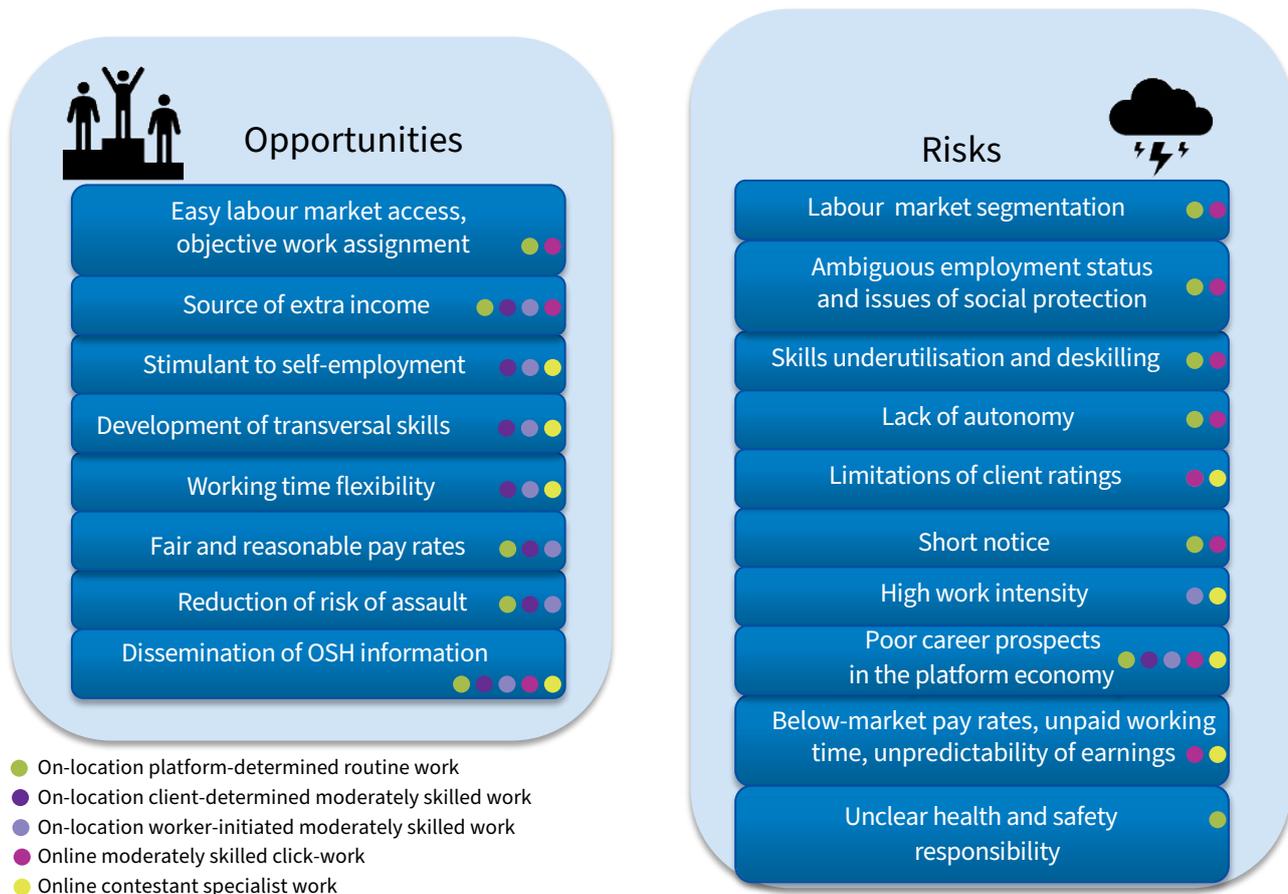
Pay is another challenge in platform work. While the worker in some types of platform work has the discretion to set pay rates, in other types this is not possible. In such cases, this might result in pay rates below market rates. In online platform work, there is also a risk of low pay due

to global competition, unpaid working time due to search and bidding time or, in the case of contests, of the work being provided without the payment being awarded.

The lack of transparency of the algorithm that is often responsible for task assignment, the influence of automated or clients' ratings on workers' access to tasks, and a lack of redress facilities if the worker feels unfairly treated constitute additional issues that are often discussed.

Owing to platform work in Europe being in its infancy, assessments on its long-term impact are rare to non-existent. These would be important for exploring the potential 'side effects' of some of the identified opportunities. For example, while platform work offers easy and unbureaucratic labour market access, including for disadvantaged groups, it is unknown if in the longer run this will enable workers to transition to standard jobs in the traditional labour market if they so wish, or if it contributes to increasing labour market segmentation. Similarly, it is not clear whether the digital nature of this employment form and the related data gathering will contribute to a reduction in undeclared work, or whether it will increase it owing to the fragmented and often international character of task realisation.

Figure 2: Main opportunities and risks of platform work for work and employment, by type of platform work



**Note:** Definitions of each type of platform work are available in Eurofound, 2018a. OSH stands for occupational safety and health.

**Sources:** Eurofound, 2015; Eljas-Taal et al, 2016; IGAS, 2016; Rácz, 2017; Rodríguez-Piñero Royo et al, 2017; RSA, 2017; Eurofound, 2018a, 2018b; Grgurev and Vukorepa, 2018; Helsingin Sanomat, 2018; Stefancic and Zirnstein, 2018; ABU, 2019; Baethge et al, 2019; CBS and SEO Onderzoek, 2019; Eurofound 2019b; Gyulavári, 2019; INAPP, 2019; Rodríguez-Piñero Royo, 2019; Aloisi and De Stefano, 2020; Eurofound 2020e; Hauben et al, 2020; Ilse and Larsen, 2020; Kanjuo-Mrčela and Črtalič, 2020; Nordic Council of Ministers, 2020

### 3 Casual work

Casual work is a type of work where the employment is not stable and continuous, and the employer is not obliged to regularly provide the worker with work but rather has the flexibility of calling them in on demand (Eurofound, 2015, 2019a) (Table 7). In practice, employers applying casual work tend to recruit a pool of workers from which to draw when workload requires. Eurofound differentiates between two types of casual work.

Intermittent work involves an employer approaching workers on a regular or irregular basis to conduct a specific task, often related to an individual project or seasonally occurring jobs. The employment is characterised by a fixed-term period, which either involves fulfilling a task or completing a specific number of days' work. Across Europe, this employment form is found in 22 countries. In Slovenia, two forms of intermittent casual work exist: student work and work of economically dependent persons. In Estonia, intermittent casual work can be done through an authorisation agreement (which is similar to an employment contract, but with more discretion on the part of the worker as regards the contract execution) or a contract for services. In France, intermittent work is limited to the entertainment industry.

On-call work involves a continuous employment relationship between an employer and an employee, but the employer does not continuously provide work for the employee. Rather, the employer has the option of calling the employee in as and when needed. There are employment contracts that indicate the minimum and maximum number of working hours, as well as what are referred to as 'zero-hours contracts' that specify no minimum number of working hours, and the employer is not obliged to ever call in the worker. On-call work exists in fewer countries (16) than intermittent work, as in some countries the labour code strictly obliges the employer to provide work on a continuous basis. In the Netherlands, there are two types of on-call contracts: zero-hours contracts and minimum-maximum contracts (which stipulate a minimum and a maximum of working hours).

In Croatia, Czechia, Italy, Malta, Poland, Portugal and Sweden, the national concept does not differentiate between the two forms of casual work.

In Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia and the UK both types of casual work exist, with specific particularities. In Finland, different terms are used to refer to intermittent and on-call work but are often applied interchangeably.

**Table 7: National terminology for casual work in Member States, Norway and the UK**

| Country | Intermittent  | On-call                                     |
|---------|---|---|
| BE      | Gelegenheidsarbeid, travail occasionnel   |   |
| BG      | Случайна работа   |   |
| CY      | Περιστασιακή εργασία  |   |
| CZ      | Příležitostná práce   |   |
| DE      |   | Arbeit auf Abruf                            |
| DK      | Vikarbureauansatte vikarer  | Tilkaldevikarer                             |
| EE      | Juhutöö (lühiajaline töö)   | Juhutöö (töö väljakutsel)                   |
| EL      | Διαλείπουσα εργασία, σύμβαση ετοιμότητας  |   |
| FI      | Vaihteleva työaika, keikkatyö   | Nollatuntityö                               |
| FR      | Intermittent du spectacle   |   |
| HR      | Povremeni rad rad na poziv (ugovor za nulti broj sati) ili gig ekonomija  |   |
| HU      | Egyszerűsített foglalkoztatás   | Munkavégzés behívás alapján                 |
| IE      | Intermittent casual work  | On-call casual work                         |
| IT      | Lavoro intermittente  |   |
| LV      | Gadījuma darbs – neregulārs   | Gadījuma darbs – pēc izsaukuma              |
| MT      | Xogħol każwali – intermittenti jew on-call  |   |
| NL      |   | Een nulurencontract, en een min-maxcontract |
| PL      | Praca dorywcza  |   |
| PT      | Contrato de trabalho de muito curta duração, e contrato de trabalho intermitente – incluindo trabalho à chamada |   |
| RO      | Contract cu zilieri   |   |

| Country | Intermittent   | On-call                          |
|---------|--|----------------------------------|
| SE      | Allmän visstidsanställning   |                                  |
| SI      | Občasno delo – študentsko, Občasno delo – ekonomsko odvisna oseba  |                                  |
| SK      | Dohody o prácach vykonávaných mimo pracovného pomeru -Dohoda o vykonané práce (Dohoda o pracovnej činnosti, Dohoda o brigádnickej činnosti zamestnancov) |                                  |
| NO      |  | Ringevikarer, tilkallingsvikarer |
| UK      | Intermittent casual work   | Zero-hours contracts             |

**Note:** Table includes countries with a prevalence of this new employment form as identified in Table 1.

**Source:** Network of Eurofound Correspondents, 2020

## Scale and scope

In spite of the legal basis of casual work in many countries, data on this employment form are not very common. In many cases its prevalence is captured jointly with other employment forms, such as temporary or part-time work and cannot be singled out from statistics. Where data are available, they hint towards an extent of up to 10% of the workforce, but this varies considerably across countries (Table 8).

It seems to be particularly prevalent in sectors and occupations characterised by fluctuation in demand and hence workload. Examples are agriculture, tourism, care, retail and the entertainment industry.

As regards development over time, it is noted that casual work is sensitive to the business cycle, that is, it is particularly used in economically challenging times.

**Table 8: National data on the prevalence of casual work in Member States, Norway and the UK**

| Country | Prevalence of casual work  | Sources  |
|---------|--|--|
| BE      | 8.5% of workers in the hotel, restaurant and catering (Horeca) sector (2017)   | Rekenhof, 2019                                 |
|         | 57% of the employers in the Horeca sector make use of it (2017)  | SERV, 2017                                     |
| BG      | 15% of surveyed workers have worked under this employment form (2019)  | Center for Economic Development, 2019          |
|         | 58% of surveyed employers are aware of this employment form; 22.5% have introduced it in their company (2019)  | Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2019     |
| CY      | 16% of public service employees (2009)   | Government of Cyprus, undated                  |
|         | 31% of public service employees (2020)   |  |
|         | 24% of employees in Horeca sector (2009)   |  |
|         | 26.5% of employees in Horeca sector (2018)   |  |
| CZ      | About 1.8% of the labour force (2016)  | Labour Force Survey                            |
|         | 67% of employed and self-employed workers are aware of casual work; 24% have personal experience in casual work; 7% do casual work in their current job (2018) | Kyzlinková et al, 2018                         |
| DE      | 7% of employees work on call (2015)  | BAuA, 2019                                     |
| DK      | 4% of employees (2017)   | Danish Agency for Labour and Recruitment, 2018 |
|         | 1% of full-time employees  |  |
| FI      | 65% of shop stewards report that casual work exists at their workplace (2018) – for 33% it is common and for 32% occurs sometimes                              | Sutela et al, 2019                             |
| FR      | 274,000 artists, workers and technicians in the entertainment industry (2018)  | Pôle Emploi, 2019                              |
|         | From 2018 to 2019, the number has increased by 0.5% (+11.9% since 2010)  |  |

| Country | Prevalence of casual work  | Sources                                      |
|---------|--|--|
| HR      | 65% of students did casual work (2014)<br>About 4% of people in employment (2015)<br>4% service contracts, 3% author's contracts and 5% student contracts (2016) | Grgurev and Vukorepa, 2018                   |
| HU      | 6% of employees (2015)<br>7% of employees (2019)   | Belügyminisztérium, 2020                     |
| IT      | About 0.9% of total employment (Q1/2020)   | Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, 2020 |
| MT      | About 9,000–10,000 workers (2015–2019)<br>About 3,500–3,700 employers (2015–2019)  | Jobsplus, 2020                               |
| NL      | 7% of the labour force work on call (2018)   | CBS, 2019b                                   |
| PL      | 54% of 18- to 65-year-olds have done casual work; 40% would be willing to do so (2018)   | Owczarek, 2018                               |
| PT      | 0.7% of the workforce in agriculture, forestry and fishing, and accommodation and food services (2015)   | Instituto de Informática                     |
| RO      | About 4% of the population worked at least one day as a day labourer (2019)  | Romanian government                          |
| SI      | About 40% of students do casual work (2015–2016)<br>About 16% of the workforce are economically dependent persons (2016)   | Statistical Office (SURS)                    |
| SK      | 21% of the workforce (2019)  | Social Insurance Agency                      |
| NO      | 3% of wage earners worked on call (2015)   | Nergaard et al, 2015                         |
| UK      | 3% of the workforce had zero-hours contracts (October–December 2019)   | Office for National Statistics, 2020         |

**Notes:** Data are not available for all countries for which this employment form was identified as 'existing'. Owing to different definitions and methodologies, caution needs to be applied when comparing national data.

In general, available data indicate that casual work is more common among young people, unskilled employees and other groups who resort to this employment form due to a lack of alternatives (Eurofound, 2019a). Data for Latvia, for example, show a share of casual workers of 16% among 20- to 24-year-olds, while for the 25+ years age groups it ranges between 4% and 5% (CIVITTA, 2018). Similarly, in Czechia, almost 11% of 18- to 29-year-olds conduct casual work in their current job, while the share is almost half as high for those aged 30+ (Kyzlinková et al, 2018).

Differences by gender are very low in Czechia, while across other countries a rather diverse picture exists. Data for the UK show that more women than men work on zero-hours contracts (560,000 versus 414,000) (Office for National Statistics, 2020) and in Germany casual work is dominated by women (Eurofound, 2019a). In contrast, in France, 63% of the intermittent employees in the entertainment industry are male (Pôle Emploi, 2019) and in Romania slightly more men than women are involved in casual work (Eurofound, 2019a). This indicates occupational gender segregation and casual work being applied for different jobs/tasks across Europe.

## Policy frameworks

### Legislation

Casual work is widely based on legislative frameworks, as summarised in Table 9. In Belgium and Cyprus these

are valid for specific sectors or occupations (such as tourism and public services). Legislation aims to ensure employment and job quality for casual workers and to avoid misuse by employers, for example, by establishing a maximum number of working hours during a specified period or a maximum duration of casual work contracts, by requiring certain information standards to be met by the employer (on employment terms, minimum periods of advance notice before starting work), by requiring a justification for applying casual work, or by providing casual workers explicitly with employment rights-like protection with regard to discrimination, remuneration or access to training.

In Germany, since 2019 employers are no longer allowed to ask employees to be 'on request' for more than 25% of their weekly working hours. If no weekly working hours are agreed between the employer and the employee, the law stipulates 20 hours as the basis for calculation. In Ireland, the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018 prohibits zero-hours contracts in most cases. When they can be applied, the worker must receive a minimum payment (25% of the possible hours or for 15 hours, whichever is less) if called in to work but sent home without work without good justification. In Italy, intermittent workers are not allowed to work more than 400 hours over 3 years in this employment form (unless they are younger than 24 or older than 55 and active in tourism, bars and restaurants, or the entertainment sector). If the limit is not respected, the contract shall be

transformed into a permanent full-time contract. Similarly, in Czechia, working under an ‘agreement to complete a job’ (DPP) is limited to a maximum of 300 hours per calendar year for the same employer, and for the ‘agreement to perform work’ (DPC) the maximum permitted average working time is half of the defined weekly working time for the period for which the agreement is concluded (maximum of 52 weeks). In Portugal, the employer should inform the worker about the starting date of the execution of the task at least 20 days in advance.

In Bulgaria, Greece, Latvia, Malta, Norway, Poland and the UK, however, no legal basis for intermittent work exists and casual work is conducted as company practice, using the flexibility of the general labour law. That said, in several of the countries for which legislation on casual work exists, expert assessment and policy debate hint towards the employment form not being properly or sufficiently regulated to effectively protect workers.

**Table 9: Legislative frameworks for casual work in Member States**

| Country | Legislation   |
|---------|---|
| BE      | Act of 11 November 2013 containing various amendments introducing a new social and fiscal regulation for occasional workers in the hotel and catering industry<br>Law of 20 November 2013 amending section 3 of chapter 7 of Title IV of the Programme Law (I) of 24 December 2002<br>Royal Decree of 12 November 2013 on the employment of occasional workers in the hotel and catering sector |
| CY      | Law on the regulation of employment of indefinite and fixed-term employees in the public service, No. 70 of 2016<br>Regulations for hotel employees (terms of employment) 136/1972, 215/1978, 254/2002, 277/2002, 126/2016  |
| CZ      | Act No. 262/2006 Coll. the Labour Code  |
| DE      | Law on the further development of the part-time law, taking effect on 1 January 2019<br>Social security legislation   |
| DK      | Regulations on temporary workers’ rights of 2008  |
| EE      | Employment Contracts Act<br>Law of Obligations Act  |
| FI      | Employment Contracts Act  |
| FR      | Multi-employer intermittent employee scheme for performing artists and technicians<br>Law No. 2015–994<br>Labour Code   |
| HR      | Act on Student Work (OG 96/18, 16/20)   |
| HU      | Labour Code   |
| IE      | Organisation of Working Time Act 1997<br>Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act 2001<br>Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act 2003<br>Protection of Employees (Temporary Agency Work) Act 2012<br>Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018  |
| IT      | Legislative Decree 81/2015 June 2015<br>Law 30/2003 and Legislative Decree 276/2003   |
| NL      | Balanced Labour Market Act 2020<br>Civil Code Book 2020<br>Work and Security Act 2014   |
| PT      | Labour Code   |
| RO      | Law No. 52/2011 regarding the exercise of occasional activities carried out by day labourers, republished in the Official Gazette No. 947 of 22 December 2015, subsequently amended repeatedly  |
| SE      | Employment Protection Act 1982  |
| SI      | Employment Relationship Act 2013  |
| SK      | Act No. 311/2001 Coll. Labour Code  |

**Sources:** Network of Eurofound Correspondents, 2020; Eurofound, 2019a

## Collective agreements

Across Europe, few collective agreements covering casual work have been identified. They do not seem to be very common and focus on sectors characterised by fluctuating workloads. Some examples include the following:

- Cyprus: sectoral collective agreement between Cyprus Hotels Association (PASYXE)/Association of Cyprus Tourist Enterprise (STEK) and Union of Hotel and Recreational Establishment Employees of Cyprus (SYXKA-PEO)/Hotel, Catering and Restaurant Employees Federation (OEXEKA-SEK); the trade union Isotita (equality) has also been established to address the interests of casual employees in the public sector
- Denmark: agreement between the Association of Danish Industries and the trade union FOA (2017–2020), covering healthcare workers, nursing home assistants, social and health-care assistants and non-trained social and healthcare workers
- Finland: many collective agreements, for example, in the retail sector
- France: social partner agreement in the entertainment, film and audiovisual industries signed in 2016
- Norway: national collective agreements concerning hotel and restaurant workers, retail, and the municipal sector
- Slovakia: agreement on temporary work of students

## Main opportunities and risks

The population of casual workers is polarised between those who opt for this employment form as it suits their personal situation and those for whom it is the only option to participate in the labour market (Eurofound, 2019a). Accordingly, whether the impact is (perceived as) positive or negative will strongly depend on the individual worker (Figure 3).

That said, what is often considered an advantageous feature of casual work is that it provides workers with access to the labour market and the possibility to generate (additional) income and to balance work and private obligations. In Cyprus, for example, it has been observed that casual work is a pathway to enter into public services without having to undergo the complex recruitment processes necessary for permanent staff; between 2013 and 2017 this was the only way to start working in public services due to a prohibition of permanent hiring.

On the negative side, there is the lack of employment and job security caused by the fragmentation of work, along with related income and social protection insecurity. This might require workers to take on multiple casual jobs in order to secure income (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2015). A survey among UK zero-hours contract workers, for example, found that only 12% receive sick pay, 7% would get redundancy pay and 43% do not get holiday pay. Furthermore, at £7.25 (€7.98 as at 21 October 2020) per hour, these workers are paid substantially less (£3.80 (€4.18)) than standard employees (TUC, 2019).

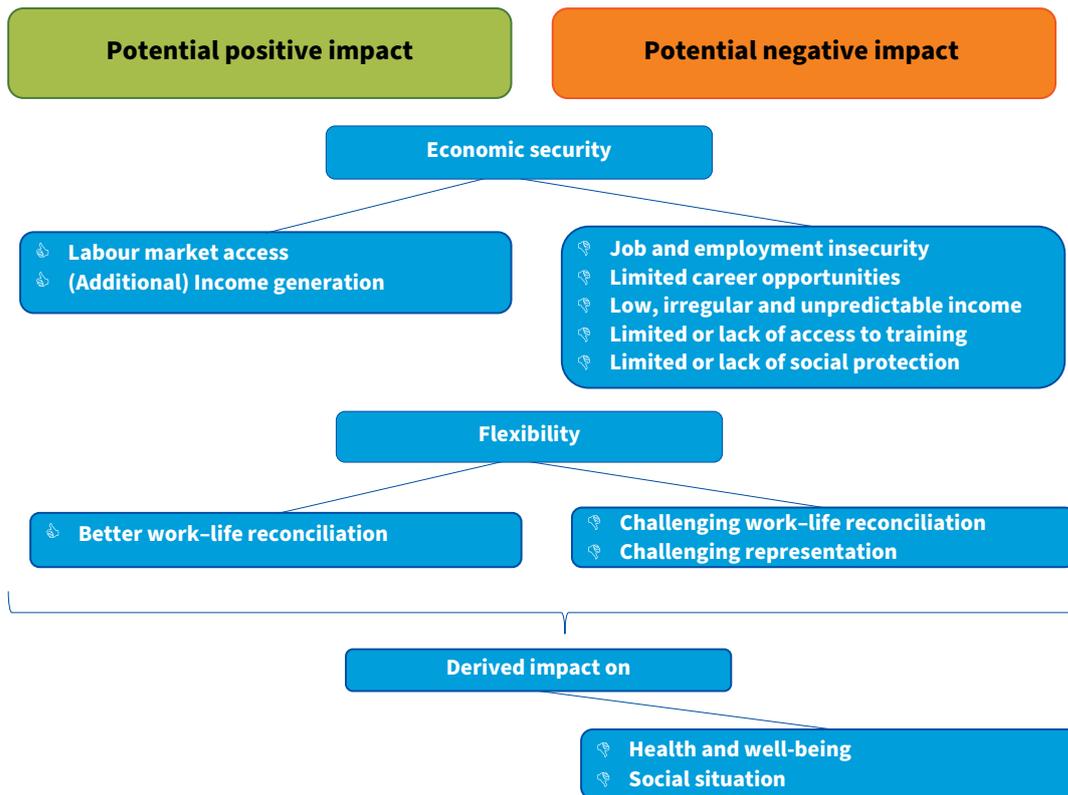
In practice, it is often observed that access to training and career development, as well as discretion at work are limited. Accordingly, current and future precariousness, in-work poverty and labour market segmentation are often raised in the context of casual work (Eurofound, 2019a). Anecdotal evidence relating to the impact of COVID-19 also suggests that casual workers are among the most vulnerable groups in a labour market crisis situation in terms of being the first dismissed (or not activated) and confronted with limited social protection and access to welfare benefits (observed, for example, in Czechia, Estonia, Malta, Poland and Slovenia).

The inherent flexibility can turn out negatively for workers if they are called in at short notice or at an unsocial working time, and also challenges the collective voice as it is more difficult for their representatives to explore their needs.

Jointly, these factors tend to negatively affect workers' health and well-being, as well as their social situation. Some research finds that the irregularity and unpredictability of working time and income and limited meaningfulness of and recognition at work can cause mental stress, which can not only lead to physical problems but also influence life decisions such as family planning (Eurofound, 2019a). SOU (2019) also notes that casual work is problematic in Sweden as it might disqualify workers from renting property or taking out loans.

From a macro perspective, as for many other non-standard forms of work, there is the potential for casual work to replace standard employment, but research on respective crowding out effects is widely lacking. One available example is Rekenhof (2019), which finds for Belgium that about 28% of casual work in the Horeca sector (hotel, restaurant and catering) is not new employment but replaces regular employment.

Figure 3: Main opportunities and risks of casual work from workers' perspective



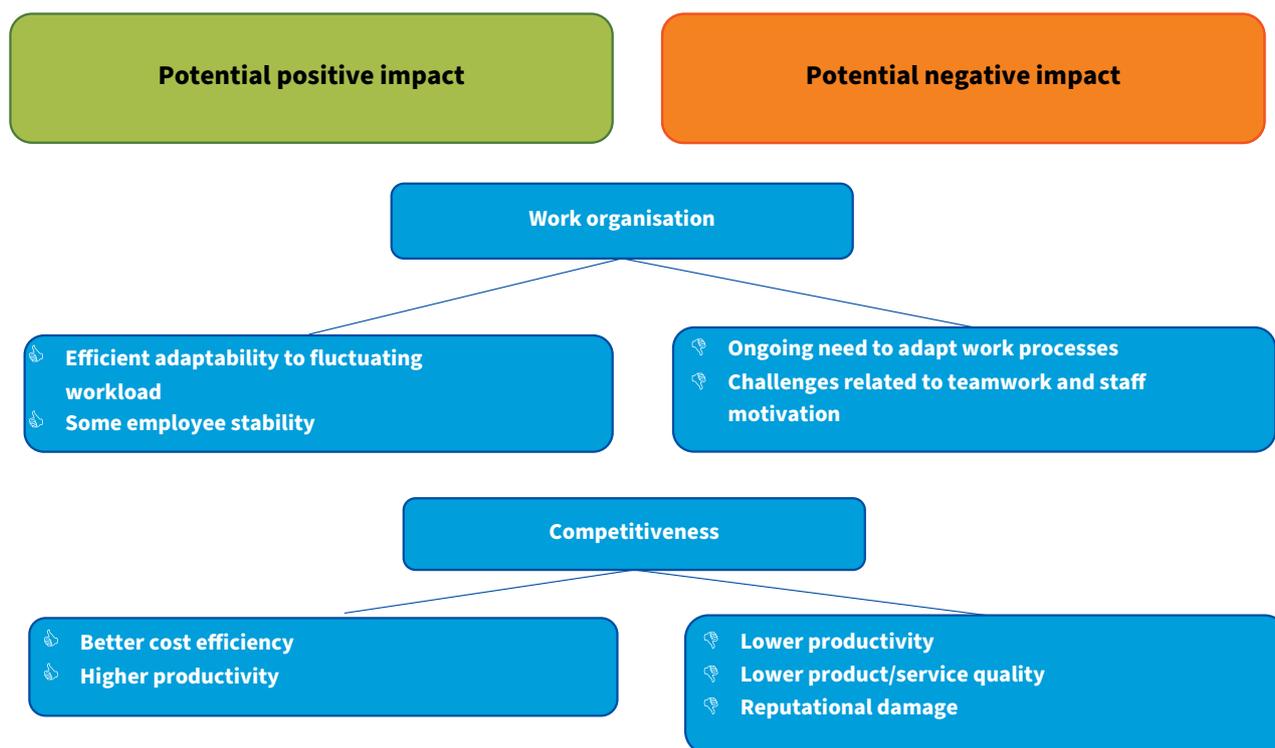
**Sources:** Nicolaisen and Bråthen, 2012; Eurofound, 2015; Kemmy Business School, 2015; Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2015; Nergaard et al, 2015; Trimikliniotis, 2016; Ministry of Social Affairs, 2017; ERR, 2018; Grgurev and Vukorepa, 2018; BAuA, 2019; Eurofound, 2019a; Hegyi, 2019; Nieuweoogst.nl, 2019; SOU, 2019; CBS (undated)

From the employers' perspective, the flexibility of casual work can help them to better adapt to fluctuations in workload, which in turn can result in better cost efficiency and productivity (see Figure 4). Working with a pool of workers who have already been screened and can be activated relatively quickly when needed saves resources relating to repeated recruitment and induction of staff and helps with the effective management of HR costs.

However, if not managed well, casual work can actually lower productivity due to unsuitable staff or

work organisation or issues relating to staff turnover and motivation (for example, also requiring higher investment in monitoring and control). This can lead to inferior product or service quality and, in turn, to reputational damage, which might threaten a company's competitiveness in the medium to long term. Some available research also indicates lower innovative capacity in companies working with a high share of casual workers, which also results in lower competitiveness (Eurofound, 2019a).

Figure 4: Main opportunities and risks of casual work from employers' perspective



**Sources:** Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2015; Nergaard et al, 2015; ETKL, 2016; Eurofound, 2019a; Hegyi, 2019; Nieuweoogst.nl, 2019; CBS (undated)



## 4 Employee sharing

Employee sharing involves a group of employers hiring workers jointly and being jointly responsible for them (Eurofound, 2015, 2016) (Table 10).

Strategic employee sharing refers to a situation in which a group of employers forms a network that hires one or several workers to be sent on individual work assignments with the participating employer companies. The structure is similar to temporary agency work, with the difference that the workers regularly rotate among the participating

employers and work exclusively for these employers, and the network itself does not aim to make a profit.

Ad hoc employee sharing, in contrast, is a temporary solution to balance HR needs in one company with insufficient workload in another. An employer – not being a temporary work agency – sends their staff for a limited period to work in another company, with no changes in the employment contract and the understanding that staff take up their previous duties in the sending company again after the secondment.

**Table 10: National terminology for employee sharing in Member States**

| Country | Strategic                                      | Ad hoc                                     |
|---------|--|--|
| AT      | Arbeitgeberzusammenschluss (AGZ)               |  |
| BE      | Werkgeversgroepering, groupements d'employeurs |  |
| BG      | Споделяне на служители                         |  |
| CZ      |  | Sdílení zaměstnanců                        |
| DE      | Arbeitgeberzusammenschluss (AGZ)               |  |
| FR      | Groupement d'employeurs                        |  |
| HR      |  | Dijeljenje zaposlenika                     |
| HU      | Több munkáltató által létesített munkaviszony  |  |
| IT      | Codatorialità, assunzione congiunta            |  |
| LT      | Darbas keliems darbdaviams                     |  |
| LU      |  | Prêt temporaire de main d'œuvre            |
| LV      |  | Darbinieku dalīšana, Kopīga nodarbināšana  |
| PL      |  | Dzielenie się pracownikiem                 |
| PT      | Pluralidade de empregadores                    |  |
| SK      |  | Zdieľanie zamestnancov, dočasné pridelenie |

**Notes:** With the exception of Romania, table includes countries with a prevalence of this new employment form as identified in Table 1. No specific terminology is used in Romania (strategic employee sharing).

**Source:** Network of Eurofound Correspondents, 2020

### Scale and scope

Very few data on employee sharing are available. Overall, however, it is a marginal phenomenon, covering a very low share of employers and employees (Table 11). Over time, an increasing trend has been observed in Austria, Belgium, France and Hungary. In Czechia, Luxembourg and Slovakia, ad hoc employee sharing gained some prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic in the first half of 2020, as a tool to cope with a situation in which some employers did not have sufficient workload for their employees while others experienced a shortage of workers.

In Austria, the existing employer groups cover companies active in tourism, craft and trade, manufacturing and metal working. In Latvia, employee sharing is most

common in education (12%) and wholesale and retail trade (10%) (CIVITTA, 2018).

In Hungary, it is noted that shared employees mainly work in accounting, administration and counselling positions (Teszéri-Rácz Ildikó, 2019). In Latvia, employers use employee sharing most often for hiring technicians and associate professionals (28%), followed by service and trade occupations (20%) (CIVITTA, 2018). A total of 7% of employers use it for managers and plant and machine operators and assemblers and 6% for craft and related trade workers.

In Austria, genders are distributed evenly among shared employees, and all age groups and education levels are represented. In Latvia, an even distribution of shared workers across all age classes is observed (CIVITTA, 2018).

**Table 11: National data on the prevalence of employee sharing in Member States**

| Country | Prevalence of casual work   | Sources  |
|---------|---|--|
| AT      | 9 employer groups have been founded, with a total of about 50 companies involved (2020)   | progressNETZ, 2020   |
| BE      | 17–20 employer groups (2017)<br>30–35 employer groups (2020)<br>280 employees (2019)  | Federal Government Department Economy,<br>Federal Government Department<br>Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue,<br>2020 |
| BG      | 55% of surveyed employers are aware of the existence of employee sharing;<br>18.3% of employers have introduced it in their company (2019)  | Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2019   |
|         | 5% of the surveyed workers have worked in employee sharing (2019)   | Center for Economic Development, 2019  |
| CZ      | 28% of employees and the self-employed are aware of employee sharing, 8% have personal experience with employee sharing and 4% do it in their current job (2018)  | Kyzlinková et al, 2018   |
| DE      | 1 employer group, involving 4 companies and 3 employees (2019)  | AGZ Infozentrum, 2019  |
| FR      | 2,400 employer groups (1998)<br>5,600 employer groups (2014)<br>5,774 employer groups (2016)<br>11,400 involved companies (1998)<br>100,000 involved companies (2014)<br>8,100 employees (1998)<br>35,000–40,000 employees, or 0.2% of the active workforce (2014)<br>25,723 employees (2016) | CESE, 2018   |
| HR      | 244 employees (2015)  | Grgurev and Vukorepa, 2018   |
| HU      | 54 cases of employee sharing (2012)<br>About 14,000 employees or 0.12% of all employees (2015)  | Bankó and Ferencz, 2018  |
| LT      | 464 employment contracts or 0.07% of all employment contracts (2018)  | SLI, 2019  |
| LU      | 38 requests for advice on employee sharing sent to the Ministry of Labour, Employment, and the Social and Solidarity Economy by companies (2018)  | Ministry of Labour, Employment, and the<br>Social and Solidarity Economy, 2019   |
| PL      | 15% of 18- to 65-year-olds have worked in employee sharing, 17% would be willing to do so (2018)  | Owczarek, 2018   |

**Notes:** Data are not available for all countries for which this employment form was identified as 'existing'. Owing to different definitions and methodologies, caution needs to be applied when comparing national data.

## Policy frameworks

### Legislation

In a few Member States, specific legislation regulates employee sharing:

- Belgium: Law of 12 August 2000 on social, budgetary and other provisions, workable and durable work law; later amended
- Croatia: Labour Act, Articles 10/3 and 18/4
- Czechia: Labour Code, §43a
- France: Law No. 85–772 of 25 July 1985; later amended and included in the Labour Code, Articles L1253–1 to L1253–24
- Hungary: Labour Code (Act 1/2012), Article 195; Act 150/2017 on taxation, §8
- Italy: Legislative Decree No. 276 of 10 September 2003, modified by Decree Law No. 76 of 28 June 2013, Articles 30 and 31
- Lithuania: Labour Code (No. XII-2603), Article 96
- Luxembourg: Labour Code, chapters II and III, Articles 132.1 to 133.3
- Portugal: Labour Code approved by Law No. 7/2009 of 12 February 2009, Articles 11 and 101
- Slovakia: Act No. 5/2004 Coll. On employment services, Article 29; National Council of the Republic of Slovakia adopted Act No. 311/2001 Coll. Labour Code, later amended

For strategic employee sharing, the legislation defines either the establishment of an employer group (Belgium, France and Italy) and the relationship between the group, the companies and workers, or the employment relationship between the multiple employers and the shared employees if no employer group is established. In Lithuania, the Labour Code mentions that an employment contract can specify two or more employers for the performance of the same job function. It provides each involved employer with the right to implement employer rights and requires them to perform all duties of the employer towards the shared employee. Similarly, in Portugal, the Labour Code allows for a multiple employer contract if among the employers there is a corporate relationship of reciprocal, domain or group holdings, or common organisational structures. One employer who represents the others in fulfilling the employer duties and exercising rights has to be nominated, but all are jointly and severally liable.

For ad hoc employee sharing, the legislation stipulates the possibility of, under certain conditions, sending workers to another company without being a temporary work agency. The employment contract with the initial employer remains valid, but the work assignment and supervision lie with the receiving company.

In Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Latvia, Poland and Romania there is no specific legislation on employee sharing.

Strategic employee sharing in Romania is indirectly covered in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which stipulates that several public authorities or bodies may designate a single, shared data protection officer (Article 37(3)). This provision was considered in Law No. 190/2018 on implementing measures to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 (Article 10(2)).

In Bulgaria, ad hoc employee sharing is possible due to the current flexible legislation, which does not preclude such an employment model (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2019). The multi-employer relationship can be established through individual part-time contracts, or with one contract if the employers establish an enterprise specifically intended to manage the employment relationships of shared employees.

### Other initiatives

In the context of strategic employee sharing, non-profit associations have been established in Austria (AGZ Resource Centre Austria), Belgium (Walloon Resource Centre for Employer Groups, CRGEW), France (for example, Fédération Nationale des Groupements d'Employeurs, FNGE; Syndicat National des Groupements d'Employeurs, SNGE; Centre de Ressources des Groupements d'Employeurs des Pays de la Loire, CRGE) and Germany to act as contact points for any questions related to this employment form, initiate awareness raising and information provision, support the establishment of

employer groups and provide a platform for existing employer groups to exchange information and advice. These associations also liaise with (regional) governments, social partners and other relevant stakeholders and some also receive financial support from (regional) institutions.

To facilitate ad hoc employee sharing, the Czech Chamber of Commerce cooperates with an online platform<sup>1</sup> to offer companies looking for temporary staff and those who intend to second staff matching services free of charge. The Czech Chamber of Commerce also offers a toll-free telephone helpline to advise companies in this context.

This idea was also taken up during the upsurge of the COVID-19 pandemic in the first half of 2020 when some companies were faced with a lack of workload for their staff while others experienced shortages due to increased demand or having staff in quarantine or taking care of family members. The Czech Chamber of Commerce established another web page<sup>2</sup> to assist companies in applying an employee sharing model. In Luxembourg in March and April 2020, the Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Employment, and the Social and Solidarity Economy; the Ministry of Economy; the National Employment Agency (ADEM); the Luxembourg Trade Confederation; the National Industries Federation (FEDIL); and the Chambers of Trades and Agriculture ran a platform<sup>3</sup> connecting companies in need of labour with unemployed, partially unemployed (for whom it would constitute ad hoc employee sharing) or self-employed workers looking for work. Almost 1,500 applications were registered, and more than 500 matches were made (Jacquemot, 2020). Similarly, in Slovakia, the Food Chamber and the Association of Hotels and Restaurants informed each other on the number of available employees and businesses looking for additional staff and assisted companies in establishing the required legal documents.

## Main opportunities and risks

From an employer's perspective, an important advantage of employee sharing is that it enables flexible HR needs to be covered in an effective and cost-efficient way, and provides access to specialised staff who are required, but not on a full-time basis. The exchange of staff from other employers might also contribute to the improvement of HR management practices and thereby to the attractiveness of the company as an employer. The cooperation with other companies on HR matters might also foster cooperation or exchange in other areas, such as joint production or sales.

However, employee sharing needs to be managed well to ensure that workflows and work organisation are not disrupted, and that productivity is maintained. Furthermore, the joint responsibility and liability of the multiple employers towards the shared employees might be challenging if not all of the involved employers are fully committed.

<sup>1</sup> Available at [www.worklinks.com](http://www.worklinks.com)

<sup>2</sup> Available at <https://www.komora.cz/en/save-jobs/>

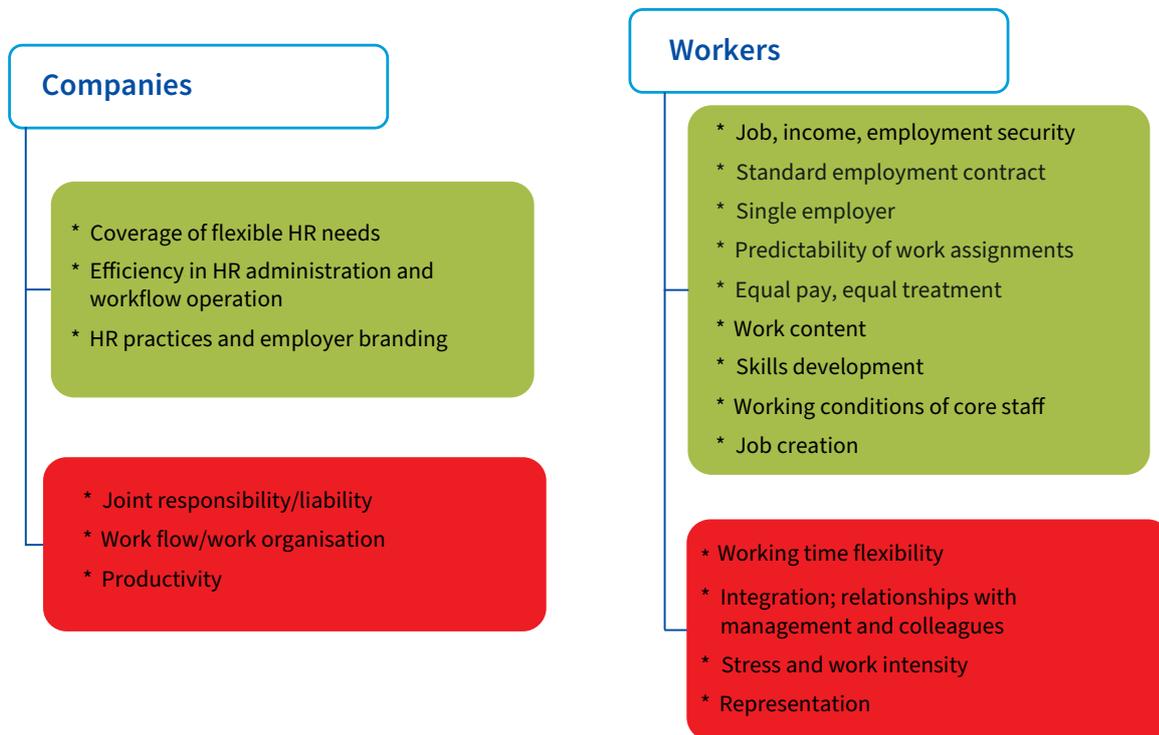
<sup>3</sup> Available at [www.jobswitch.lu](http://www.jobswitch.lu)

From workers' perspectives, the important benefit of employee sharing, for example in contrast to casual work, is that the flexibility required by the employer can be achieved with a high level of employment, job and income security. They benefit from a standard employment contract with all related protections. Even if their job is spread across different organisations, they have only one formal employer (which helps them avoid having to coordinate several part-time assignments) and predictable work assignments (which, for example, might not be the case with a temporary agency or casual work). Shared employees receive equal pay and treatment to other

staff in the company and might be able to improve their employability due to the development of occupational and transversal skills while working in different organisations.

On the negative side, working for different employers might result in unfavourable requests for working time flexibility, higher stress and work intensity and limited integration in the work organisation and the different teams. Furthermore, challenges regarding the collective voice might occur if it is not clarified in which organisation workers are represented (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Main opportunities and risks of employee sharing for companies and workers**



**Note:** Green = opportunities; red = risks.

**Sources:** Eurofound, 2016; Bankó and Ferencz, 2018; CESE, 2018

# 5 Job sharing

Job sharing refers to employment relationships in which one employer hires several workers (but normally just two) to jointly fill a single full-time position (Table 12). It is a form of part-time work, the purpose of which is to ensure that the shared post is permanently staffed.

**Table 12: National terminology for job sharing in Member States and the UK**

| Country | Terminology                                   |
|---------|---|
| AT      | Job sharing, geteilter Job                    |
| BE      | Duobanen, co-enseignement                     |
| BG      | Споделяне на работно място                    |
| CZ      | Sdílené pracovní místo                        |
| DE      | Job sharing                                   |
| EL      | Εκ περιτροπής εργασία (ek peritropis ergasia) |
| FR      | Travail à temps partagé                       |
| HR      | Dijeljenje posla                              |
| HU      | A munkakör megosztása                         |
| IE      | Job sharing                                   |
| LT      | Darbo vietos dalijimasis                      |
| LV      | Darba dalīšana                                |
| MT      | Kondiviżjoni tal-impjiegji                    |
| NL      | Duobanen                                      |
| PL      | Dzielenie stanowiska pracy                    |
| PT      | Partilha do emprego                           |
| SI      | Delitev delovnega mesta                       |
| SK      | Delené pracovné miesto                        |
| UK      | Job sharing                                   |

**Note:** Table includes countries with a prevalence of this new employment form as identified in Table 1.

**Source:** Network of Eurofound Correspondents, 2020

## Scale and scope

The prevalence of job sharing seems to vary considerably across Europe (Table 13). Among the countries for which data are available, it seems to be particularly marginal in Lithuania and Slovakia.

In Czechia and Ireland, fewer than 10% of employers are involved in job sharing, while the share is around 20% in several other countries. Similarly, when looking at employees, the incidence spreads from less than 1% in the UK to almost 30% in Greece.

In Ireland, job sharing was found to be more prevalent in the public sector (13% of employees) than in the private sector (8%) (ESRI, 2010). A similar situation is found in Latvia, with the proportion of job sharing around 40% in public administration, compared with less than 15% in other sectors (CIVITTA, 2018).

In Belgium, job sharing is most common in education and the care sector. Education is also mentioned for Latvia, as is the financial sector and retail trade. In Hungary, it is more common in administration (Hajdu, 2017). In the Netherlands, where job sharing overall is not very widespread, it is most common in the primary education sector.

For Austria, it is observed that ‘top sharing’, that is, job sharing among top managers, is gaining popularity.<sup>4</sup> In contrast to this, in Czechia job sharing is more common among workers without a school leaving certificate (6–7% do it in their current job) than among those with a university degree (4%), and the share of job sharers decreases with age (Kyzlinková et al, 2018). In Hungary, it is observed that job sharing is most common among younger people (students in further or higher education, young mothers returning to the labour market) or older workers. In Latvia, it is most common among 20- to 24-year-olds (39%) and least common among those aged 60+ (14%) (CIVITTA, 2018).

In Czechia, job sharing is marginally more common among females than males (Kyzlinková et al, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> Available at <https://www.hrweb.at/2018/03/jobsharing-topsharing/>

**Table 13: National data on the prevalence of job sharing in Member States and the UK**

| Country | Prevalence of job sharing   | Sources  |
|---------|---|--|
| AT      | 22% of companies use job sharing (2014)   | Robert Half International, 2014                              |
| BE      | 23% of companies use job sharing (2014)   | Robert Half International, 2014                              |
| BG      | 61% of surveyed employers are aware of job sharing; 29.5% have introduced it in their company (2019)  | Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2019                   |
|         | 9% of surveyed workers have worked in job sharing (2019)  | Center for Economic Development, 2019                        |
| CZ      | Fewer than 7% of employers use job sharing (2015)   | Krejčí et al, 2015   |
|         | 39% of employees and the self-employed are aware of job sharing, 14% have personal experience in job sharing and 5% do it in their current job (2018) | Kyzlinková et al, 2018                                       |
| DE      | 15% of companies use job sharing (2014)   | Robert Half International, 2014                              |
|         | 14.2% of companies use job sharing (2015)   | BMFSFJ, 2019   |
|         | 17% of companies use job sharing (2018)   |  |
| EL      | 29% of employees job share (March 2016)   | Kougias, 2016  |
|         | 4% of all recruitments job share (2009)   | Ergani Information System, 2020                              |
|         | 18% of all recruitments job share (2015)  |  |
|         | 15% of all recruitments job share (2016)  |  |
|         | 14% of all recruitments job share (2017)  |  |
|         | 10% of all recruitments job share (January–May 2020)  |  |
| FR      | 19% of companies use job sharing (2014)   | Robert Half International, 2014                              |
| HR      | 16% of the workforce are aware of job sharing (2019)  | Butković and Samardžija, 2019                                |
| IE      | 30% of workers report that job sharing is available at their workplace (2003)   | Layte et al, 2008  |
|         | 8% of companies with 50–99 employees have job sharing (2013)  | O’Callaghan, 2016  |
|         | 3% of employees job share (2003)  | ESRI, 2010   |
|         | 9% of employees job share (2009)  |  |
| LT      | 9 job sharing employment contracts signed (2018)  | SLI, 2019  |
| NL      | 23% of companies use job sharing (2014)   | Robert Half International, 2014                              |
| PL      | 24% of 18- to 65-year-olds have worked in job sharing; 22% would be willing to do so (2018)   | Owczarek, 2018   |
| SI      | 22% of employers use job sharing, in most cases for up to 5% of all employees (2015)  | Upravljanje človeških virov, 2015                            |
| SK      | 0.62% of employers use job sharing (2015)   | Informačný systém o pracovných podmienkach, ISPP), 2015–2019 |
|         | 0.6% of employers use job sharing (2016)  |  |
|         | 0.43% of employers use job sharing (2017)   |  |
|         | 0.64% of employers use job sharing (2018)   |  |
|         | 0.4% of employers use job sharing (2019)  |  |
| UK      | 48% of companies use job sharing (2014)   | Robert Half International, 2014                              |
|         | 12% of companies use job sharing (2019)   | CIPD, 2019   |
|         | About 0.7% of employees job share (2014)  | ONS, 2020  |
|         | About 0.5% of employees job share (2019)  |  |

**Notes:** Data are not available for all countries for which this employment form was identified as ‘existing’. Owing to different definitions and methodologies, caution needs to be applied when comparing national data.

## Policy frameworks

There is no specific legal framework for job sharing across Europe; instead, it is covered by the more general regulations on part-time work. Similarly, collective agreements referring to job sharing are very rare, with examples in Greece, Ireland and the Netherlands.

While no specific governmental or social partner-based support for job sharing (beyond traditional part-time work) could be identified, for Czechia it was mentioned that non-governmental organisations in the field of family support or equal opportunities promote the concept of job sharing as a tool for better reconciliation of work and private responsibilities. In Malta, the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality listed job sharing as a proposed measure, and it features very briefly in the National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing 2014–2020.

## Main opportunities and risks

The part-time regime that is characteristic of job sharing can contribute to providing workers with a level of flexibility that they may require to enter the labour market or achieve a better work–life balance. This seems to be particularly favourable in the case of combining work with

care responsibilities or education and training activities, or at the end of the working life. Compared with other part-time work, better potential for skills development (for example, due to learning in the workplace, from and with the colleague with whom the job is shared) and, in turn, career prospects are mentioned.

On the negative side, if not managed well or if the ‘personal fit’ between the job sharers does not work, conflicts may arise, and workers may experience increased levels of work intensity and stress (Table 14).

**Table 14: Main opportunities and risks of job sharing for work and employment**

| Opportunities              | Risks                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Labour market access       | Conflicts in the workplace |
| Flexibility                | Increased work intensity   |
| Improved work–life balance | Increased stress           |
| Skills development         |                            |
| Career prospects           |                            |

**Sources:** *Robert Half International, 2014; Eurofound, 2015; Hajdu, 2017; Ónodi and Holló, 2017; Hammermann and Stettes, 2018; RPA, 2018; Tóth, 2019; Kotíková and Váňová, 2020*



## 6 Voucher-based work

In this form of employment, the employment relationship and related payment are based on a voucher (generally acquired from a third party such as a governmental authority) rather than an employment contract (Table 15).

**Table 15: National terminology for voucher-based work in Member States**

| Country | Terminology                               |
|---------|---|
| AT      | Dienstleistungsscheck                     |
| BE      | Dienstencheques, titres-services          |
| EL      | Εργαστήριο (Ergosimo voucher scheme)      |
| FI      | Palvelusetelyrittäjä                      |
| FR      | Chèque emploi service universel (CESU)    |
| HR      | Rad putem vaučera (kupona)                |
| IT      | Lavoro occasionale – libretto di famiglia |
| LT      | Darbas pagal paslaugų kvitus              |
| SI      | Oseбно dopolnilno delo                    |

**Note:** Table includes countries with a prevalence of this new employment form as identified in Table 1.

**Source:** Network of Eurofound Correspondents, 2020

### Scale and scope

The share of voucher-based work in total employment is low, but when considering that this form of employment in most cases is limited to specific jobs (such as household work or agriculture), some data indicate a non-negligible importance. Furthermore, in most countries an increasing trend in this form of employment over time can be observed (Table 16). However, it can be assumed that the services paid for through vouchers were particularly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in the first half of 2020 due to restrictions on mobility and gatherings, and the medium-term recovery of voucher-based work will depend on the development of the health crisis and the governmental interventions in terms of physical distancing.

Data on the characteristics of voucher workers are even more rare than on the number of vouchers or the number of workers and employers engaged in this form of employment. In Austria, about 45% of voucher workers are aged 25–45 years, and there is a slightly lower share among those aged 45+ (Sozialministerium, 2019). Of these, 72% are female and 58% have Austrian nationality. In Belgium, 98% of voucher workers are women, 46% are low-skilled and 24% were not born in Belgium (Federgon, 2018). In Italy, about two-thirds of voucher workers are women.

**Table 16: National data on the prevalence of voucher-based work in Member States**

| Country | Prevalence of voucher-based work   | Sources                              |
|---------|--|--------------------------------------|
| AT      | 0.3% of employees (2018)<br>Number of voucher workers has been steadily increasing from about 2,000 in 2006 to about 11,500 in 2018<br>0.36% of private households use vouchers to pay for household services (2018)   | Sozialministerium, 2019              |
| BE      | 3% of the workforce (2016)<br>Number of voucher workers has been steadily increasing from about 135,000 in 2014 to about 140,000 in 2016<br>22% of private households use vouchers to pay for household services (2016)  | Federgon, 2018                       |
| EL      | About 76,000 voucher workers (2015–2016)   | Kapsalis, 2018                       |
| FI      | About 40% of municipalities use vouchers (2019)<br>Amount municipalities spend on voucher-based work has been increasing from €42 million in 2011 to €374 million in 2017  | Suomen Yrittäjät, 2019               |
| FR      | About 65% of employees employed by private households are voucher workers (2018)<br>About 60% of private household employers use vouchers (2018)<br>Number of voucher workers has been steadily decreasing from about 803,000 in 2009 to about 681,000 in 2018 | Acoss, 2019                          |
| HR      | 306,625 vouchers used by 1,530 employers (2019)<br>74,386 vouchers used by 205 employers (Q1/2020)   | Ministry of Labour and Pension, 2020 |

| Country | Prevalence of voucher-based work  | Sources  |
|---------|---|--|
| IT      | 63,900 workers (about 0.3% of all employed people) (2017)<br>226,494 workers (about 1% of all employed people) (2018)<br>224,224 workers (about 1% of all employed people) (2019)   | INPS, undated  |
| LT      | About 22% of the workforce in agriculture, fisheries and forestry are voucher workers (2018)<br>Between 2015 and 2018, the number of voucher workers increased by 20%<br>1,444 employers (2015)<br>1,473 employers (2016)<br>1,521 employers (2017)<br>1,571 employers (2018) | Ministry of Agriculture, 2020  |
| SI      | About 0.9% of the workforce (March 2020)  | Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services (AJPES) |

**Notes:** Data are not available for all countries for which this employment form was identified as 'existing'. Owing to different definitions and methodologies, caution needs to be applied when comparing national data.

## Policy frameworks

Voucher-based work is based on national legislation (Table 17). The intention is to provide an unbureaucratic formal employment relationship for specific circumstances (such as work in private households or agriculture) to contribute to legalising undeclared work (Eurofound, 2015). The legislation defines the voucher systems and mechanisms (for example, for which services it can be used, where to receive and redeem the vouchers and social security contributions) and sets limits on its use (such as the maximum number of days or hours per year and per worker or maximum annual earnings per worker or payments per employer).

To encourage the use of voucher-based work, the Belgian government subsidises the sector and provides tax

deductions for clients. In addition, to support voucher-based work during COVID-19, the regional government of Flanders increased these subsidies to compensate for additional costs for safety equipment for voucher workers. In Wallonia, voucher workers are eligible for temporary unemployment benefits or an increased subsidy. In Brussels, an additional remuneration of €2.50 per hour is being paid for the temporary unemployment of voucher workers.

In Belgium and France, service voucher workers are also covered by collective agreements. In Croatia, where voucher-based work has been established since 2012 for agriculture, opinions on voucher-based work differ across social partners. While employers generally support this form of employment, trade unions oppose it as they claim that it makes standard employment less attractive for employers.

**Table 17: Legislative frameworks for voucher-based work in Member States**

| Country | Legislation  |
|---------|--|
| AT      | 2005 Law on service vouchers (DLSG); BGBl I Nr. 45/2005 i.d.F.d. BGBl I Nr. 114/2005   |
| BE      | Law of 20 July 2001 on the promotion of neighbourhood services and jobs  |
| EL      | Laws 3863/2010, 4144/2013, 4225/2014, 4555/2018, 4635/2019   |
| FI      | Act on social and healthcare vouchers 569/2009   |
| FR      | Labour Code, Article L1271-1   |
| HR      | Labour Market Act (OG 118/18, 32/20), Article 79; previously Employment Promotion Act of 2012 (OG 57/2012 and 120/2012), Articles 9-13   |
| IT      | Decree Law No. 50 of 24 April 2017   |
| LT      | Resolution No. 218 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on the approval of the list of services eligible to be received by service recipients and provided by service providers on the basis of service vouchers |
| SI      | Prevention of Undeclared Work and Employment Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 32/2014)<br>Rules on personal supplementary work (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 49/14)             |

**Source:** Network of Eurofound Correspondents, 2020

## Main opportunities and risks

Voucher-based work provides easy and unbureaucratic access to the labour market in specific sectors and occupations generally characterised by high levels of undeclared work. Thus, it has the potential to contribute to legalising employment and providing affected workers with some level of social protection and employment standards (such as minimum wages). In Belgium, for example, it is observed that, in an era of rising unemployment in low-skilled jobs due to deindustrialisation and the decline of low-skilled jobs, voucher-based work contributes to keeping low-skilled women in particular in work. Furthermore, 8% of voucher users indicate that previously they had the work in question undertaken by undeclared workers. However, most systems provide for only partial social insurance coverage.

This form of employment is characterised by a high level of flexibility and autonomy for the worker, who in many cases also benefits from working locally in their area of residence. Both are seen to contribute to an improved work-life balance.

This same flexibility, however, also results in job and employment, and in turn income, insecurity (Table 18). Employer duties as regards, for example, health and safety issues or training provisions are limited to non-existent. This can be problematic as many tasks that can be paid with vouchers are related to physical activities or exposure to risk situations (for example, chemicals, machinery). Some findings also point towards the risk of social and professional isolation of voucher workers as they tend to do their work on their own, with limited contacts with the service recipient or with colleagues. However, this is related to the characteristics of the tasks rather than to the particularities of the form of employment.

**Table 18: Main opportunities and risks of voucher-based work for work and employment**

| Opportunities   | Risks   |
|---|---|
| Flexibility and autonomy                                | Job, employment and income insecurity             |
| Local workplace   | Potential health and safety issues                |
| Improved work-life balance                              | Limited access to training and career development |
| Minimum wage levels partly guaranteed                   | (Social and professional isolation)               |
| Labour market access                                    |   |
| Legalisation of undeclared work; some social protection |   |

**Sources:** Eurofound, 2015; Kapsalis, 2015; Dabkuvienė, 2017; Federgon, 2018; Rajgelj, 2018



# 7 Collaborative employment

This form of employment encompasses specific forms of cooperation among self-employed workers that go beyond traditional supply chain or business partner relationships. Eurofound (2015) differentiates three types of collaborative employment (Table 19).

- Umbrella organisations offer specific administrative services to self-employed people, such as help with invoicing clients or dealing with tax issues.
- Coworking involves the sharing of workspaces and back-office and support tasks for self-employed workers, freelancers or micro businesses.
- (Worker) cooperatives are jointly owned and democratically controlled organisations characterised by intensive cooperation among the members in the fields of production, marketing and strategic management.

**Table 19: National terminology for collaborative employment in Member States, Norway and the UK**

| Country | Umbrella organisations | Coworking  | Cooperatives  |
|---------|------------------------|--|---|
| AT      |                        | Coworking  | Beschäftigungsgenossenschaften  |
| BE      |                        | Coworking  | Coöperaties, coopératives   |
| BG      |                        | Споделено работно пространство, коуъркинг                  |   |
| CZ      |                        | Zaměstnání založené na spolupráci, coworking               |   |
| DE      |                        | Coworking  | Genossenschaften  |
| DK      | No common terminology  | Kontorfællesskab   | Den demokratiske virksomhed   |
| EE      |                        | Koostöötamine  | Ühistud, kooperatiiv  |
| EL      |                        |  | Συνεργατικές Επιχειρήσεις, Φορείς κοινωνικής και αλληλέγγυας οικονομίας |
| ES      |                        | Coworking  | Cooperativas de trabajo   |
| FI      | laskutuspalveluyritys  | Yhteisöllinen työtila                                      | Työosuuskunta   |
| FR      | Portage salarial       | Coworking  | Coopérative d'activité et d'emploi (CAE)                                |
| HR      | Krovne organizacije    | Coworking  | Zadruga   |
| HU      |                        | Coworking, közösségi munkavégzés                           | Szövetkezet   |
| IE      | Umbrella organisations | Coworking  | Cooperatives  |
| IT      |                        | Coworking  | Cooperative   |
| LT      |                        | Bendradarbiystė  | Kooperatinės bendrovės (kooperatyvai)                                   |
| LU      |                        | Coworking  |   |
| LV      |                        | Sadarbības (kopēja) nodarbināšana, Kopīgs darbs: sadarbība |   |
| MT      |                        | Impjieg kollaborattiv                                      | Koperattivi   |
| NL      |                        | Coworking, flexwerken                                      | Coöperaties   |
| PL      | Zatrudnienie wspólne   |  |   |
| PT      |                        |  | Cooperativas  |
| RO      |                        |  | Cooperative   |
| SE      | No common terminology  | No common terminology                                      | Kooperativ  |
| SI      |                        | Sodelo   | Zadruga, cooperative  |
| NO      | Frilanserbyrå          | Coworking, kontorfellesskap                                |   |
| UK      | Umbrella organisations | Coworking  | Cooperatives  |

**Note:** Table includes countries with a prevalence of this new employment form as identified in Table 1.

**Source:** Network of Eurofound Correspondents, 2020

## Scale and scope

In all countries where umbrella organisations exist, it is noted that collaborative working is a marginal, but growing, form of employment. Specific estimates exist only for France (0.2% of the workforce in 2018) (OPCALIA-OPPS, 2019) and the UK (1.3% of the workforce in 2017) (BBC, 2017).

As regards coworking, it is mainly on the number of coworking spaces that data are available (Table 20). These are indications stemming from inventories rather than

administrative data. The number of coworking spaces ranges from about 10–50 in Luxembourg, Hungary and Norway to about 1,700 in France and more than 6,000 in the UK. There are indications that the number of coworking spaces has been growing in recent years, and that this is a rather urban phenomenon. The short- to medium-term future outlook is not as optimistic, however, as experts in several countries (such as Austria, Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Spain and the UK) expect demand for coworking to decrease due to physical distancing concerns as a result of COVID-19.

**Table 20: National data on the prevalence of coworking in Member States, Norway and the UK**

| Country | Prevalence of coworking   | Sources   |
|---------|---|---|
| AT      | About 250 coworking spaces (2020)   | Junge Wirtschaft, 2019 (youth organisation of the Federal Economic Chamber) |
| BE      | About 450 coworking spaces (2019)   | De Standaard, 2020  |
| BG      | 4% of the surveyed workers have worked in coworking spaces (2019)                 | Center for Economic Development, 2019                                       |
|         | 44% of surveyed employers are aware of coworking; 15.4% have introduced it (2019) | Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2019                                  |
| ES      | About 13,000 workplaces in coworking spaces (2013)                                | Coworking Spain, 2018   |
|         | About 37,700 workplaces in coworking spaces (2018)                                |   |
| FR      | About 360 coworking spaces (2015)   | Pegahaire, 2019   |
|         | About 600 coworking spaces (2017)   |   |
|         | About 1,700 coworking spaces (2019)   |   |
| HU      | More than 30 coworking spaces (2018)  | Jászberényi, 2018   |
| IE      | 48.5% of the workforce work remotely, 16.2% in coworking spaces (2018)            | Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, 2019                     |
| IT      | About 700 coworking spaces (2019)   | Italian coworking, 2019   |
| LU      | At least 13 coworking spaces have been created in the last several years          | Expert assessment, 2020   |
| NL      | About 640 coworking spaces (2018)   | ZZP Barometer, 2019   |
| NO      | About 50 coworking spaces (2016)  | Andersen and Hoff, 2016; Coworker.com, 2020                                 |
| UK      | About 5,320 coworking spaces (2018)   | Instant, 2019   |
|         | About 6,075 coworking spaces (2019)   |   |

**Notes:** Data are not available for all countries for which this employment form was identified as 'existing'. Owing to different definitions and methodologies, caution needs to be applied when comparing national data.

Data on cooperatives are more widespread (Table 21); however, only few exclusively cover worker cooperatives (or it is not always clear whether the available data refer to worker cooperatives or all cooperatives). Accordingly, comparisons across countries are difficult. In terms of future outlook, and based on experiences in the Great Recession, where worker cooperatives were flagged as more resilient than other types of organisation, in a few

countries (such as Austria, Belgium and Hungary) experts expect cooperatives to become more commonplace in the anticipated economic and labour market crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

As regards the employment impact of worker cooperatives, for Austria, Belgium, Italy, Lithuania, Spain and the UK it was noted that (worker) cooperatives are, in general, small.

Table 21: National data on the prevalence of (worker) cooperatives in Member States and the UK

| Country | Prevalence of (worker) cooperatives  | Sources   |
|---------|--|---|
| AT      | About 50 worker cooperatives (2020)  | Expert assessment, 2020                               |
| BE      | About 25,400 cooperatives (2015)   | Dufays and Mertens, 2017                              |
| DE      | About 7,000 cooperatives (about 0.2% of all businesses) (2018)<br>About 930,000 workers (about 2% of the workforce) (2018)   | Wissenschaftliche Dienste, 2018                       |
| DK      | About 18,500 'democratic companies' (6% of all businesses) (2019)<br>About 150,000 workers (5% of the workforce) (2019)  | Tænketanken Demokratisk Erhverv, 2019                 |
| EE      | 710 commercial associations (2010)<br>About 290 commercial associations (0.2% of all economic units) (2019)  | Statistics Estonia                                    |
| EL      | About 580 cooperatives (August 2018)<br>About 1,600 cooperatives (about 1% of all employers) (January 2020)  | Ministry of Labour                                    |
| ES      | 12,127 cooperatives (December 2019)<br>About 244,500 workers in cooperatives (1.45% of all employees) (Q4/2019)  | Ministerio de Trabajo, Migraciones y Seguridad Social |
|         | 290,221 employees (2015)   | Eurofound, 2019c                                      |
| FI      | About 5% of professionals in the culture and craft sector work in cooperatives   | Sutela and Pärnänen, 2013                             |
| FR      | About 105 worker cooperatives with 9,750 workers (2018)  | France Stratégie, 2018; Kerbouc'h and Prouet, 2018    |
| HU      | 2,452 cooperatives (2015)<br>2,418 cooperatives (2016)<br>2,359 cooperatives (2017)  | KSH, undated  |
| IE      | 20 worker cooperatives with 135 workers  | Gavin et al, 2014                                     |
| IT      | 29,414 worker cooperatives with 486,000 workers (about 2.8% of employed) (2015)  | ISTAT, 2019   |
|         | 1,150,200 employees (2015)   | Eurofound, 2019c                                      |
| LT      | About 500 cooperatives (2016)  | LRS, 2016   |
| MT      | 72 cooperatives with 5,200 members (2017)  | NAO, 2019   |
| NL      | 2,120 employee and entrepreneurial cooperatives (Q2/2015)<br>2,320 employee and entrepreneurial cooperatives (Q2/2016)<br>2,490 employee and entrepreneurial cooperatives (Q2/2017)<br>2,600 employee and entrepreneurial cooperatives (Q2/2018)<br>2,760 employee and entrepreneurial cooperatives (Q2/2019)<br>2,845 employee and entrepreneurial cooperatives (Q2/2020) | Chambers of Commerce                                  |
| PL      | 300,000 employees (2015)   | Eurofound, 2019c                                      |
| PT      | 2343 cooperatives (2016)<br>0.9% of all employees (2016)   | INE, 2019   |
| RO      | 743 agricultural cooperatives (2016)<br>More than 900 agricultural cooperatives (2017)   | StiriAgricole, 2016<br>Rotaru, 2017                   |
| SE      | 34,395 employees (2015)  | Eurofound, 2019c                                      |
| SI      | 377 cooperatives with about 3,200 employees (about 0.4% of all employed) (2014)  | CECOP, 2016   |

| Country | Prevalence of (worker) cooperatives | Sources          |
|---------|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| UK      | 500–600 worker cooperatives (2015)  | Pérotin, 2016    |
|         | 431 worker cooperatives (2012)      |                  |
|         | 2,140 workers (2012)                | Atherton, 2012   |
|         | 33,829 employees (2015)             | Eurofound, 2019c |

**Notes:** Data are not available for all countries for which this employment form was identified as ‘existing’. Owing to different definitions and methodologies, caution needs to be applied when comparing national data.

## Policy frameworks

### Legislation

No specific legislation regulating work and employment exists for umbrella organisations and coworking. These forms of employment are, however, subject to more general legislation, such as in the fields of labour or civil law or taxation. In contrast, in most countries in which cooperatives exist, they are based on specific legislation that at least partly covers employment aspects (Table 22).

In Austria and Germany, this legislation was established more than 130 years ago. In Croatia, Denmark, Ireland, Sweden and the UK no specific legislation on cooperatives exists.

Only one example of public support for collaborative employment could be identified in the current mapping. In 2016, the Slovenian government provided grants of €50,000 for the start-up of youth cooperatives, to encourage young people to combine their knowledge, skills and services and jointly penetrate the job market.

**Table 22: Legislative frameworks for cooperatives in Member States**

| Country | Legislation   |
|---------|---|
| AT      | Austrian Cooperatives Act, originally from 1873   |
| BE      | Law of 1991, new lawbook of companies and associations; amended in 2019   |
| DE      | Cooperative Act from 1889   |
| EE      | Commercial Associations Act of 2001   |
| EL      | Law 4430 on social and solidarity economy of 2016   |
| ES      | Law 27/1999 of Cooperatives<br>Law 5/2011 of Social Economy   |
| FI      | Cooperatives Act (2013/421)   |
| FR      | Law No. 2014–856 of 31 July 2014 relating to the social and solidarity economy  |
| HU      | Act I/2012 on the Labour Code, section 215  |
| IT      | Law No. 142 of 3 April 2001<br>Civil Code, Articles 2511–2545   |
| LT      | Law on cooperatives of the Republic of Lithuania, No. I-164   |
| MT      | Cooperative Societies Act (Act XXX of 2001), chapter 442  |
| NL      | Dutch Civil Code – Book 10<br>Dutch Civil Code – Book 2, Legal persons  |
| PL      | Act of 16 September 1982  |
| PT      | Law 119/2015 approved the Cooperative Code (replacing Law 51/96), amended by Law 66/2017  |
| RO      | Law No. 1/2005 on the organisation and functioning of cooperatives, republished in the Official Gazette No. 368 of 20 May 2014<br>Law No. 566/2004 on agricultural cooperatives, published in the Official Gazette No. 1236 of 22 December 2004 |
| SI      | Cooperatives Act, 2007<br>Social Entrepreneurship Act, 2011   |

**Source:** Network of Eurofound Correspondents, 2020

## Social partner and related initiatives

Collective agreements exist for umbrella organisations in France (Convention collective de branche salariés en portage salarial of March 2017) and for cooperatives in Denmark and in the Netherlands.

In the field of umbrella organisations, the main social partners in France have since 2006 been involved in the Observatoire paritaire du portage salarial (OPPS). The joint observatory aims to gain a better understanding of the activities carried out under this form of employment and participates in several working groups discussing its mechanisms.

In Croatia, the Independent Professionals Association started the 'Coworking Croatia' programme in 2012 to promote coworking in the context of positioning independent work as an entrepreneurial choice and supporting professional self-sustainability. It provides information and support for opening and managing coworking spaces.

In the UK, the Flexible Space Association (FlexSA) has been established as a membership organisation for operators of serviced and managed offices, coworking spaces, business centres, workshop units and virtual office providers. It promotes the industry to governments, local authorities and the business community and provides members with relevant information. Similarly, Co-operatives UK is a network for cooperatives, owned and run by its members. It promotes cooperatives and provides advice and assistance to its members.

## Main opportunities and risks

Collaborative employment offers workers the flexibility and autonomy of being self-employed (which can contribute to improved work–life balance) while providing them with some of the same advantages as employees. This mainly refers to the networking effect inherent in all three types of collaborative employment, which

helps to reduce the social and professional isolation that can particularly affect the self-employed without employees. This networking can also contribute to increased productivity and skills development owing to the possibility of exchanging ideas and information with peers. Overall, this can foster an entrepreneurial spirit, reduce entrepreneurial risk and thereby encourage self-employment.

All three forms of collaborative employment are linked with fees for the worker, which reduce their net income, and cost efficiency might not always be guaranteed. Furthermore, depending on the regulatory framework and information provision, workers might not always be clear about their employment status and accordingly might assume a more comprehensive social protection than is the case in reality (Table 23).

**Table 23: Main opportunities and risks of collaborative employment for work and employment**

| Opportunities   | Risks  |
|---|--|
| Flexibility and autonomy  | Cost efficiency  |
| Improved work–life balance  | Unclear employment status and social protection coverage |
| Reduction of social and professional isolation                                      |  |
| Increased productivity  |  |
| Skills development  |  |
| Fostering self-employment and entrepreneurial spirit, reducing entrepreneurial risk |  |

**Sources:** Jordán, 2002; Troberg, 2014; Eurofound, 2015; Merkel, 2015; Pérotin, 2016; Mauseth, 2017; Rodríguez et al, 2017; Suomen Yrittäjät, 2017; Bueno et al, 2018; HMRC, 2018; Jászberényi, 2018; Nathan, 2018; Ukko.fi, 2018; Andersen, 2019; Eurofound, 2019c; Gruen and Mimoun, 2019; Wills, 2019



## 8 Other forms of employment: Interim management and portfolio work

While both interim management and portfolio work have been identified as ‘existing’ in a large number of European countries (16–17), the information available on these forms of employment is even more limited than for the other forms. Accordingly, they are presented here jointly (Table 24) for the sake of comprehensiveness in this overview report, even though they are quite different from each other.

Interim management is a form of employment in which a company ‘leases out’ workers to other companies temporarily and for a specific purpose. Such leasing of workers is the main objective of the employer company, but, unlike a temporary employment agency, its staff is

limited to highly specialised experts who are sent to the receiving companies to solve a specific management or technical challenge or assist in economically difficult times. In contrast to traditional fixed-term work arrangements, interim management has some elements of consultancy, but the expert has employee status rather than that of external advisor. In practice, however, in some countries interim management is done on the basis of self-employment.

Portfolio work refers to the small-scale contracting by freelancers, the self-employed or micro enterprises that work for a large number of clients.

**Table 24: National terminology for interim management and portfolio work in Member States, Norway and the UK**

| Country | Interim management   | Portfolio work   |
|---------|--|--|
| AT      | Management auf Zeit, Interim Management                                      |  |
| BE      |  | Portfolio werk, travail de portfolio   |
| BG      | Временно управление, Срочно управление                                       | Работа по портфолио  |
| CY      |  | Εργασία σε πορτοφόλιο  |
| CZ      | Dočasné řízení, Řízení na dobu určitou                                       | Portfoliová práce  |
| DK      | Midlertidig chefansættelse   | No common terminology, included in the groups of ‘freelancers’ and ‘selvstændige’                          |
| EE      | Ajutine juhtimine, mobiilne juhtimine  | Portfooliotöö  |
| EL      | Προσωρινή διαπίρσις  |  |
| FI      | Vuokrajohtaminen   |  |
| FR      | Management de transition   |  |
| HR      | Strateško dijeljenje zaposlenika   | Portfeljni rad   |
| HU      | Interim menedzsment  |  |
| IE      | Interim management   |  |
| IT      | Interim management   |  |
| LT      |  | Darbas pagal paslaugų sutartį  |
| LV      | Pagaidu vadītāju izmantošana (Pagaidu pārvaldība (off.), Pērejas pārvaldība) | Portfolio darbs  |
| MT      |  | Xogħol tal-portafoll   |
| NL      | Detachering  | No common terminology, included in the group of ‘Freelancers en Zelfstandige Ondernemers zonder Personeel’ |
| PL      | Zarządzanie tymczasowe   | Praca portfelowa   |
| PT      |  | Praca portfelowa   |
| SE      |  | No common terminology, included in the groups of ‘frilansare’ and ‘giggare/giggers’                        |

| Country | Interim management | Portfolio work        |
|---------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| NO      | Interimledelse     | No common terminology |
| UK      | Interim management | Portfolio work        |

**Note:** Table includes countries with a prevalence of this new employment form as identified in Table 1.

**Source:** Network of Eurofound Correspondents, 2020

Data on the prevalence of interim management are available for only a few countries and point towards it being a marginal, but growing, form of employment:

- Austria: about 1,500–2,000 interim managers (estimate)
- Bulgaria: 4% of the workforce have worked as interim managers (Center for Economic Development, 2019); a total of 52% of employers are aware of this employment form and 21.3% have introduced it in their company (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2019)
- Czechia: 44.8% of the workforce are aware of this employment form, 10.8% have personal experience with it and 3.3% do it in their current job (Kyzlinková et al, 2018)
- Estonia: at least 25 companies used interim managers between 2014 and 2019 (Rommel, 2019)
- Italy: among 364 enterprises surveyed, 16% used interim managers in 2015 (Manageritalia, 2015)
- Netherlands: 1.6% of total employment (PwC, 2018)
- Norway: about 3,100 workers affiliated to the two largest organisations mediating interim management
- Poland: 12% of the workforce aged 18–65 have worked as interim managers and 19% would be willing to undertake/continue to work in such a form (Owczarek, 2018)

For portfolio work, specific statistics are even more scarce as this employment form tends to be included in data on freelancers or the self-employed (without employees):

- Czechia: 31.8% of the workforce are aware of this employment form, 8.8% have personal experience with it and 3.3% do it in their current job (Kyzlinková et al, 2018)
- Poland: 11% of the workforce aged 18–65 have worked as interim managers and 15% would be willing to undertake/continue to work in such a form (Owczarek, 2018)

Anecdotal evidence suggests that portfolio workers – as ‘atypical solo-self-employed’ – were negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in the first half of 2020.

No specific legislation or collective agreements relating to interim management and portfolio were identified, with the exception of interim management in the Netherlands (*Beleidsregel Detachering*). That means that the more general legislation on employment or self-employment applies.

Similarly, with the exception of a few activities relating to awareness raising for these forms of employment (such as for interim management in Austria, the Netherlands or the UK), no specific support measures by public bodies, social partners or grassroots organisations could be identified.

The main work and employment opportunities identified for interim management and portfolio work are in the areas of flexibility, autonomy, interesting task content (which, in turn, can result in skills development and better employability) and income generation (Eurofound, 2015; Ónodi and Holló, 2017; Nergaard et al, 2018; Rommel, 2019; Institute of Interim Management, 2020; HR portal, undated). Challenges relate to job, employment and income security and the related social protection, professional isolation, working time and limited access to HR instruments such as training.

# Conclusions and policy pointers

## **Increasing diversity of employment forms in Europe, but lack of policy frameworks or solid information base**

While standard employment (permanent, full-time employment based on labour law) remains dominant, Europe is characterised by an increasing diversity of employment forms (Eurofound, 2020f). Most are small in scale but are considered in public and policy debate for the opportunities and challenges they provide for the economy, the labour market and society.

About seven years after Eurofound carried out its first mapping exercise on new and increasingly important labour market trends beyond standard and non-standard work (Eurofound, 2015), the current research shows that most of the then-identified employment forms exist in most of the EU Member States, Norway and the UK.

However, in spite of the fact that discussions on new forms of employment, in the context of the future of work, have been widespread in recent years at EU and national levels, there is a lack of clarity of concepts relating to these forms of employment across Europe. There are hardly any formal definitions, which would be an important pre-condition for both establishing regulatory frameworks and generating policy intelligence in terms of statistical data on the scale and scope and harmonised research on economic, employment and societal impact.

Accordingly, more work is needed on defining the individual new forms of employment, with the aim of deriving an operational conceptualisation that allows for regulation and measurement. Ideally, this would be done in cooperation across the Member States, to arrive at harmonised approaches that facilitate cross-national exchange and comparison.

## **Part of a transition era: digitalisation, carbon-neutral economy and ‘new normal’ due to COVID-19**

Better understanding of the characteristics and developments of new forms of employment, as a basis for informed policymaking, is even more relevant today than it was a few years ago. The available information indicates that most of the identified new forms of employment have grown over the last few years and are likely to continue their dynamism in the future.

ICT-based mobile work and platform work have been identified as existing and increasing in importance in almost all countries and are clearly linked to the often discussed ‘twin transition’ to the digital age and a carbon-neutral economy.

More recently, the impact of COVID-19 on the ‘new normal’ features in policy debate. Digital technologies played a substantial role in keeping business, the workforce and society afloat during the peak of the COVID-19 health crisis in the first half of 2020. However, not only digitally enabled employment forms but also those that facilitate the balancing of supply and demand for the workforce (such as employee sharing) gained importance according to anecdotal evidence, and experience from the Great

Recession points towards better resilience of (worker) cooperatives as a form of employment in economically challenging times – as can be expected for the near future as an outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic. Interim management might experience increased demand if companies seek solutions to manage the crisis.

At the same time, some of the new forms of employment might be negatively affected by megatrends. Casual workers have been flagged as a vulnerable group and among the first to be negatively affected by employment contraction in crisis situations. Some types of platform work, job sharing, voucher-based work and coworking are likely to be less common in the future if physical distancing requirements are maintained.

As regards ICT-based mobile work, it remains to be seen how the combination of COVID-19 (limiting mobility is likely to negatively affect this ‘mobile’ employment form while the ‘new normal’ of work organisation is likely to increase the necessity to alternate between working from home and at the employer’s premises), digitalisation (boosting ICT-based mobile work) and climate change considerations (which could influence the application of ICT-based mobile work in either direction), as well as societal developments and preferences will have an impact on its prevalence.

## **Balancing flexibility, employment standards and workers’ protection**

While objective and subjective advantages and disadvantages for employers/clients and workers depend on individual situations and should not be generalised, the available information allows for a meta-level assessment of the main opportunities and challenges of new forms of employment. This mainly refers to workers’ perspectives, as the impact on employers/clients has been researched very little.

In spite of the heterogeneity among the identified new forms of employment, they have in common the need or desire for flexibility, for either the employer/client or the worker, or both. The degree to which this results in a win-win situation for both parties differs considerably however, across the different forms of employment. ICT-based mobile work, employee sharing and job sharing have the highest potential to result in a mutually beneficial outcome for employers and employees, as the flexibility inherent in these models is backed by a good level of protection of workers’ employment and working conditions, including social protection and representation.

In contrast, in platform work, casual work and voucher-based work, on average, employment and working conditions are less favourable than in standard employment, and workers’ protections are more limited. Legislation or collective agreements to guarantee standards are either missing or limited to setting a minimum of protection, and providing workers with a collective voice is challenged by the fragmented

nature of these forms of employment, as well as by the ambiguous employment status of the workers.

To ensure well-functioning labour markets, it is recommended that efforts to balance the requirements of flexibility and protection be continued, with a particular focus on those more disadvantageous employment forms (from workers' perspectives), particularly if workers are involuntarily pushed into them. Any regulation should not be burdensome, too strict and rigid or changed too often, as this would discourage the application of the employment form and encourage the bypassing of protective regulations.

Notably, where these employment forms are dynamically developing and changing, such as in platform work, legislation on its own will not be the silver bullet to address the emerging issues. Rather, a combination of other solutions that are able to have an effect more quickly, such as are provided by social partners or grassroots organisations, could be considered.

In this context, it is also striking that, across all the countries and employment forms mapped in this report, hardly any support measures to encourage advantageous deployment or to limit the disadvantageous use of these forms of employment could be identified. Mechanisms for how such measures could be designed to foster the abovementioned win-win situations should be explored, and good practices should be identified and exchanged across Europe as another pillar contributing to balancing flexibility and protection.

### **Nuanced approach towards individual issues emerging by employment form**

While new forms of employment and the need for policy intervention are increasingly discussed at both EU and national levels, this is often done in an aggregated form, assuming that all stakeholders raise the same concerns and require the same interventions. The available information, however, clearly pinpoints the diversity among the various employment forms, and the resulting different opportunities and challenges. Accordingly, a one-size-fits-all approach for policy intervention is deemed ineffective, and more nuanced and tailor-made policy interventions are recommended.

Platform work, casual work, voucher-based work and collaborative employment are, at least in some countries, related to an ambiguous employment status, which is generally seen to negatively affect workers' employment rights and entitlements. This is particularly problematic if workers are not aware of this situation and its effects and/or are involuntarily pushed into such an employment relationship. Clarification of employment status, the provision of minimum employment standards irrespective of employment status, and awareness raising/information provision for workers could improve their situation.

These same four employment forms also show some potential to contribute to labour market segmentation in terms of moving certain groups of the workforce in jobs with low job quality and limited mobility towards better work. More information on the career trajectories of the workforce by employment type is required as an

information base on which to design and implement, if applicable, policy interventions that could foster a stepping-stone to new forms of employment for those who prefer traditional standard employment.

Representation and the provision of a collective voice were identified as challenges for these four employment forms, owing to a combination of an ambiguous employment status and the fragmentation of work. Ways to improve these workers' access to representation and to support their representatives in identifying their specific needs and advocating for them should be explored. Particularly for platform work, voucher-based work and collaborative employment, new forms and institutional settings for worker representation (including, for example, grassroots organisations) could be considered to be integrated in or combined with existing representation structures.

From a different perspective, employment and working conditions for these employment forms could be improved by fostering the use of other new forms of employment, or combinations of these. Instead of casual work or portfolio work, employers could be encouraged to introduce employee sharing. Platform work could be organised through platforms run as worker cooperatives rather than through those based on shareholder-value models.

The two digitally enabled employment forms, ICT-based mobile work and platform work, raise concerns regarding monitoring and control, algorithmic management and data ownership, protection and use. Whether and how the possibilities provided by technologies are used in practice is still unclear and needs to be further explored, and solutions acceptable to both employers and workers need to be developed, tested and assessed. More exchange between policymakers and practitioners is necessary to ensure acceptable mechanisms and standards.

Working time is an issue, particularly in ICT-based mobile work, platform work, casual work and voucher-based work, either because of too many or too few working hours or because of unpredictable schedules and notification periods. Similarly, health and safety concerns have been raised in relation to these four employment forms. While working time and health and safety standards and responsibilities are well regulated for standard employment, existing regulations could be scrutinised for their fitness for purpose for new forms of employment, notably in cases where regulations are rather old and not likely to consider the more recent labour market developments. The impact of the implementation of the recent Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions Directive should be closely monitored and exchange of lessons learned across countries encouraged.

As regards skills development, providing workers with the basic digital skills to be able to access the employment form is a pre-condition for labour market integration through ICT-based mobile work and platform work. In contrast, particularly for casual and voucher-based workers, access to training and skills development while in this employment form should be addressed to improve their life-long learning and employability.

In the areas of work organisation, ICT-based mobile work, casual work, employee sharing and job sharing

there are some risks of unfavourable workflows or lack of cooperation and coordination procedures within teams. Awareness raising that targets employers (notably line managers) and employees could contribute to improving such deficiencies.

To conclude on a positive note, the opportunities presented by new forms of employment must not be neglected. All of them have the potential to contribute to the labour market integration of (and thus income generation for) specific groups, notably those disadvantaged in the labour market due to their need for flexibility in terms of working time or place of

work. Awareness raising and measures supporting the introduction of such work patterns in a win-win form could be beneficial.

Some types of platform work and collaborative employment have the potential to foster an entrepreneurial spirit, transversal skills and the innovation capacity of workers, which can enhance workers' employability and improve the perceived meaningfulness of their work. Therefore, awareness raising and active support in implementing these new forms of employment in a favourable way are to be recommended.



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# Annex: Network of Eurofound Correspondents

Table A1: Correspondents who contributed to the report

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| Croatia     | Predrag Bejaković<br>Irena Klemenčić                       | Institute of Public Finance, Zagreb<br>Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb |
| Cyprus      | Pavlos Kalosinatos   | Cyprus Labour Institute of the Pancyprian Federation of Labour (INEK-PEO)   |
| Czechia     | Renata Kyzlinkova  | Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs                            |
| Denmark     | Anders Randrup   | Oxford Research   |
| Estonia     | Ingel Kadarik<br>Märt Masso                                | PRAXIS Centre for Policy Studies  |
| Finland     | Amanda Kinnunen  | Oxford Research AB  |
| France      | Frederic Turlan  | IR SHARE  |
| Germany     | Sandra Vogel   | German Economic Institute (IW)  |
| Greece      | Apostolos Kapsalis<br>Penny Georgiadou                     | Labour Institute of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (INE GSEE)    |
| Hungary     | Nóra Krokovay  | Kopint-Tárki Institute for Economic Research                                |
| Ireland     | Gerard McMahon   | IRN Publishing  |
| Italy       | Roberto Pedersini  | Department of Social and Political Sciences, University of Milan            |
| Latvia      | Raita Karnite  | EPC Ltd   |
| Lithuania   | Rasa Miežienė<br>Inga Blažienė                             | Lithuanian Social Research Centre   |
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| Netherlands | Paul Vroonhof<br>Amber Van der Graaf                       | Panteia BV  |
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| Country               | Author                             | Organisation  |
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Although standard employment (generally full-time and permanent) remains the dominant employment type across the EU, European labour markets are increasingly characterised by a variety of different forms. These new forms of employment involve new formal employment relationships or work patterns (linked to aspects such as place of work, working time or use of ICT) and sometimes both. This report puts the spotlight on nine innovative employment forms across the 27 EU Member States, Norway and the UK. It examines the policy frameworks of each country, as well as mapping the scale and scope of the incidence of these new forms and highlighting the main opportunities and risks associated with each form. The report concludes with some policy recommendations taking into account the future of work that will be shaped by the twin transition to the digital age and a carbon-neutral economy, as well as a new way of working due to COVID-19.

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