How is platform work changing the labour market?

What is platform work?
Platform work uses an online platform to enable organisations or individuals to access other organisations or individuals to solve specific problems or to provide specific services in exchange for payment.

Therefore, there are three parties involved, connected thanks to an advanced algorithm.

Larger tasks are divided into independent smaller tasks, which are carried out on demand by platform workers, resulting in a widespread division of labour.

European context

17 November 2017
EU institutions proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights.

8 March 2016
European Commission presented the first outline of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

European Commission
In June 2020, the Commission adopted the European Agenda for the Collaborative Economy, clarifying the concept of platform work.
In January 2020, the Commission highlighted the need for improved working conditions of platform workers for the sustainable growth of the platform economy.

European Parliament & Council
In 2018, the European Parliament and Council adopted the new Directive 2018/843 on transparent and predictable working conditions, which also covers platform work.

European Council
In November 2016, the Council adopted the Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed, including reference to platform workers.

EU Regulations
In July 2020, new EU regulations on platform-to-business relations entered into force.

EPSR
In November 2017, the EU institutions proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights, aiming to address policy challenges associated with new forms of employment, including platform work.

Digital Services Act package
Shaping Europe’s digital future (europa.eu)
The European Commission proposed two legislative initiatives: the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Digital Markets Act (DMA). The DSA and DMA have two main goals.

DSA
To create a safer digital space in which the fundamental rights of all users of digital services are protected.

DMA
To establish a level playing field to foster innovation, growth and competitiveness, both in the European Single Market and globally.

An emerging form of employment
While small in scale, platform work has been dynamically developing in the past 15 years and is expected to continue doing so in the future. Eurofound research on emerging or new forms of employment across the EU identified platform work as one of nine employment forms that are gaining increasing importance since 2000.

The future of the platform economy
Eurofound has identified 10 types of platform work that as of 2017 have reached some critical mass in Europe in terms of platforms and affiliated workers. In order to better understand and regulate the challenges in working and employment conditions related to platform work, Eurofound compiled an online platform repository and carried out a mapping of studies measuring the platform economy.

These measurements aim to give a broad picture of the fast-growing economy revolving around online platforms, touching on a variety of policy areas beyond work and employment, including:

- Business competition
- Data protection
- Consumer protection

With a forward-looking approach, Eurofound also developed scenarios of how platform work in Europe could look by 2030.

- Pillar of Social Rights