

Preparing for the implementation of the European Directive on Platform Work

Overview and key considerations

Liliya Atanasova – Ruseva,
Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB)
latanasova@citub.net
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Who Are Platform Workers?

Platform workers are individuals who provide services through digital platforms that act as intermediaries between workers and consumers. Examples:

- **Ride-Sharing:** Drivers for platforms like Uber and Bolt.
- **Food Delivery:** Couriers working with Deliveroo or Glovo.
- **Freelance Work:** Professionals offering services on platforms like Upwork or Fiverr.
- **Crowdwork:** Workers completing tasks on platforms like Amazon Mechanical Turk.



Main Goals of the European Directive on Platform Work

01

Clarify the distinction between self-employed workers and employees.

- *Ensures correct classification, leading to appropriate rights and benefits.*

02

Extend social security benefits like health insurance and pension plans to platform workers.

- *Provides a safety net for workers who often lack traditional employment benefits.*

03

Improve transparency in task assignment, pay, and performance evaluation.

- *Protects workers from exploitation and ensures equitable treatment.*

04

Strengthen the rights of platform workers to organize and negotiate collectively.

- *Empowers workers to advocate for better conditions and fair pay.*

Key Obstacles to the Directive



- **Worker Classification Disputes:** Debate over classifying workers as employees vs. self-employed.
- **Diverse Labor Laws:** Different labor market structures across EU member states complicate the process.
- **Impact on Business Models:** Platform companies are concerned about the financial impact.
- **Algorithm Transparency:** Platforms are reluctant to disclose proprietary algorithms considering them for trade secrets that shouldn't be publicly disclosed.
- **Enforcement and Compliance:** Implementing and enforcing the directive across the EU will be challenging.



Timeline

- On April 24, 2024, the European Parliament approved the Directive on Platform Work, marking a significant step in regulating the rights of workers engaged through online platforms.
- After adoption, a 2-year implementation period is expected.

Why Trade Unions Must Prepare?



- 01 **Anticipate Legal Changes:** Prepare for new worker classifications and labor protections.
- 02 **Digital Organizing:** Build digital infrastructures to engage platform workers effectively.
- 03 **Collective Bargaining:** Strengthen strategies to include platform-specific issues.
- 04 **Preemptive Engagement:** Influence public discourse and counter platform companies' tactics.
- 05 **Organizational Readiness:** Adjust structures to support an influx of platform workers.

Impact of the Directive on Different EU Member States

The directive aims to harmonize labor protections for platform workers across the EU, but implementation and impact vary by country. Here are some examples of case studies.

- France has been proactive in regulating platform work, requiring platforms to contribute to social security. The directive further reinforces these protections, ensuring fairer conditions for French platform workers.
- Germany has a strong tradition of labor rights, but platform work has challenged existing frameworks. The directive helps integrate platform workers into Germany's established labor rights system, offering clearer employment status and protections.
- Spain has introduced its own regulations, such as the "Rider Law," which presumes employment for delivery workers. The directive supports these national efforts, aligning with Spain's goals of protecting gig workers (*workers hired to complete a particular task or for a certain period of time).



Challenges in Eastern Europe



- In countries like Bulgaria and Romania, platform work is less regulated, with significant numbers of workers classified as self-employed.
- The directive presents both an opportunity and a challenge for these countries to enhance worker protections without stifling the growing gig economy.

Summary

- The European Directive on Platform Work seeks to balance flexibility for platform workers with adequate protection and rights, promoting fair treatment and ensuring that platform workers have access to basic labor rights and protections.
- However, the impact of the Directive will vary depending on national contexts and existing labor laws.