

Blueprint to deliver quality jobs

Making all jobs quality jobs

Seven essential legislative actions needed for the Quality Jobs Act and Roadmap to deliver for working people in every sector and every region:

- **Regulating AI in the Workplace**
 - **Tackling Abuses in Subcontracting & Labour Intermediation**
 - **Promoting Collective Bargaining Through Public Procurement**
 - **A Just Transition**
 - **Preventing Psychosocial Risks**
 - **Telework and the Right to Disconnect**
 - **Making All Jobs Secure**
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Every job must be a quality job.



Decent pay, secure contracts, safe conditions, and a voice at work are not privileges, they are rights. Europe's economic and social success rest on this foundation.

The ETUC is driving this agenda forward. We are uniting national confederations and European Trade Union Federations behind a common call for a new Social Contract for Europe's workers, one that turns shared principles and commitments into enforceable rights and real progress.

At its heart stand the Quality Jobs Roadmap and the Quality Jobs Act.

The European trade union movement outlines our plan to deliver secure employment, fair pay and conditions, collective bargaining, equal treatment, and dignity at work across every sector and every country. These are not abstract proposals, they are practical tools to ensure that Europe's economic transformation is also a social one.

**Esther Lynch
ETUC General Secretary**





For a job to be a **quality job**, it must have at least:

- *collective bargaining*
- *full respect for workers and trade union rights*
- *fair wages*
- *job security and career progression*
- *social protection*
- *training without costs and during working time*
- *good working conditions*
- *health and safety at the workplace*
- *work-life balance*
- *equality and non-discrimination*



AI in the Workplace

Quality Jobs Act Objective: A dedicated EU Directive on AI and Algorithmic Systems in the Workplace to ensure AI serves workers, not just profit. It must guarantee transparency, accountability, and human oversight in all AI-driven decisions affecting employment, working conditions, and rights.

Key Facts

- *Job exposure:* OECD estimates 27% of jobs highly automatable, including many white-collar roles; ILO warns women are 2.5 times more exposed than men.
- *Risks to job quality:* AI-driven monitoring increases stress, fatigue, and mental health risks; automation threatens autonomy and fairness.
- *Bias and discrimination:* AI systems can reinforce gender and racial bias in hiring, promotion, and performance evaluation.
- *Privacy concerns:* AI surveillance collects sensitive data (biometrics, health metrics), often without genuine consent.
- *Dependency risk:* AI market dominated by US-based Big Tech, concentrating wealth and power, undermining EU strategic autonomy.

A new Directive should:

-  **Human in command:** Workers must have the right to challenge and overturn AI decisions.
-  **Strengthen collective rights:** Mandatory involvement of trade unions in AI deployment decisions; strengthen collective bargaining and enforce information, consultation, participation and training rights.
-  **Ensure transparency & explainability:** Employers must disclose AI use, logic & impacts; workers' representatives must have access to relevant data.
-  **Ban intrusive practices:** Prohibit processing of non-work-related personal or psychological data.
-  **Prevent monopolies:** Apply antitrust rules, fair taxation, and support open-source AI to ensure European sovereignty.
-  **Protect health and safety:** AI systems must not undermine safety standards; risk assessments required before deployment as well as accountability for harm caused.

Tackling Abuses in Subcontracting & Labour Intermediation

Quality Jobs Act Objective: A dedicated EU Directive to regulate subcontracting & labour intermediation, ensuring transparency, accountability, and equal treatment across all tiers of subcontracting chains.

Key Facts

- *Abusive subcontracting and fraudulent labour intermediation are major drivers of labour exploitation, wage theft, and unsafe working conditions.*
- *Complex subcontracting chains enable companies to evade responsibility for workers' rights, collective agreements, and occupational safety.*
- *These practices are widespread in fraud-sensitive sectors such as construction, transport, agriculture, food processing, cleaning, and logistics.*

A new Directive should:



Introduce full chain liability: Main contractor / client and its subcontractor jointly & severally liable for wages, social security, OSH compliance & collective agreements.



Limit subcontracting chains: Maximum of one or two tiers; prohibit subcontracting of core business activities.



Regulate labour intermediaries: Mandatory registration, licensing & compliance with labour law; ban abusive agencies & gangmaster practices.



Ensure equal treatment: Subcontractors must be subject to the same rules as the main contractor / client. Same pay and conditions for all workers at the same workplace, regardless of contractual status or nationality.



Guarantee trade union access: Rights to information, consultation and workplace access throughout subcontracting chains.



Improve enforcement & transparency: Stronger labour inspections, enhanced role for the European Labour Authority & registers of subcontractors & intermediaries accessible to inspectorates and social partners.

Promoting Collective Bargaining Through Public Procurement

Quality Jobs Act Objective: Revise the EU Public Procurement Directives to ensure that public money supports companies that respect workers' and trade union rights, that negotiate with trade unions and whose workers are covered by collective agreements.

Key Facts

- Public procurement represents 14% of EU GDP (€2 trillion), yet current rules prioritize lowest price over social standards.
- Collective bargaining coverage is falling: from 72% of workers in 2010 to 66% in 2018.
- Workers excluded from collective agreements lose €25 billion annually in wages, while public budgets lose €28 billion in tax and social contributions.
- Suppressing collective bargaining rights drives wage inequality, social dumping, and precarious work.
- Companies breaching their obligations or engaging in union-busting practices often still win public contracts.

The EU's revised Public Procurement Directives must:

-  **Promote collective bargaining:** Ensure that public money supports companies that respect workers' and trade union rights, that negotiate with trade unions and whose workers are covered by collective agreements
-  **Eliminate the possibility to award public contracts on the basis of the lowest price** and ensure the Most Economic Advantageous Tender MEAT is always applied
-  **Promoting quality jobs & collective bargaining must be included in the criteria for awarding public contracts.**
-  **Promote direct jobs** and regulate more strictly subcontracting (by ensuring equal treatment, joint & several liability & a limit to the length of the chain to one or two sub-levels maximum)
-  **Ensure full respect** for the autonomy of public authorities, including local authorities.

Just Transition

Quality Jobs Act Objective: A dedicated European Just Transition Directive (JTD) to save jobs by anticipating and managing change during green and digital transitions, on the basis of trade union involvement and collective bargaining. It ensures workers are protected through early consultation, negotiated transition plans, and enforceable rights to training and job-to-job support.

Key Facts

- Since 2008, 2.5 million industrial jobs have been lost in Europe, including 1 million since 2019. In automotive alone, 90,000 jobs disappeared since 2024.
- Skills disruption: 44% of workers' core skills will be affected by AI within five years; the EU energy sector needs 145,000 additional workers by 2030.
- Financial risk: By 2027, three of four EU funds (JTF, EGF, ESF+, SCF) will vanish as dedicated instruments.
- Economic case: A fair transformation could yield €261 billion annually by reducing inequalities and regional disparities.
- Political risk: Unmanaged layoffs fuel distrust and far-right backlash.

A new Directive should:



Guarantee anticipation and management of change through trade union involvement, collective bargaining and mandatory transition plans at company and sector level.



Establish a right to free training during working hours for all workers.



Require national strategies to map and mitigate sectoral and regional impacts.



Make public funding conditional on social criteria (job quality, collective bargaining).



Provide robust monitoring of labour market impacts and skills needs.

Preventing Psychosocial Risks

Quality Jobs Act Objective: A dedicated EU Directive to prevent psychosocial risks at work, ensuring employers assess and mitigate work-related factors that harm mental health.

Key Facts

- Workplace stress kills over 10,000 people annually in Europe (ETUC-ETUI)
- 29% of EU workers report suffering from stress, depression or anxiety at work (EU-OSHA)
- The economic cost of lost productivity due to depression and anxiety is estimated at €1 trillion globally, with 12 billion working days lost each year (WHO).

A new Directive should:

-  **Require employers to assess psychosocial risks** as part of occupational safety and health obligations.
-  **Recognise psychosocial risk-related pathologies** as occupational diseases.
-  **Prohibit harmful practices** like digital surveillance, performance rankings, and excessive workload targets.
-  **Reverse the burden of proof** in psychosocial risk cases and protect workers from retaliation.
-  **Mandate objectives and indicators** to reduce work-related stress, negotiated with unions & worker representatives.
-  **Protect workers who report psychosocial risks** from discrimination or retaliation; guarantee confidentiality.
-  **Ban harmful practices** such as digital surveillance, individual productivity ranking, and performance league tables.

Telework & the Right to Disconnect

Quality Jobs Act Objective: Adopt an EU Directive to enforce the right to disconnect and set minimum standards for fair and quality telework, ensuring work-life balance, equal treatment, and strong collective rights.

Key Facts

- *Telework is here to stay: Post-pandemic, millions rushed into makeshift telework arrangements without adequate protections. Most recent figures show 8.9% of working people telework (Eurostat, 2023).*
- *Always-on culture: Teleworkers are 6 times more likely to work in their free time and twice as likely to work 48+ hours (EU Working Conditions Survey).*

A new Directive should:



Clarify and enforce the right to disconnect: Enforce workers' right not to be contacted outside agreed hours; prohibit retaliation and reverse burden of proof.



Make employers responsible for costs: Cover all equipment, software, energy & training expenses linked to telework.



Guarantee voluntary & reversible telework: Workers must retain the right to a permanent workplace at the employer's premises.



Ensure equal treatment for teleworkers: Same pay, training, health & safety standards, career development, & trade union rights as on-site workers, including by guaranteeing digital trade union access.



Promote gender equality and inclusion: Prevent telework from reinforcing unpaid care burdens or isolating vulnerable groups; ensure safeguards for workers with disabilities.



Regulate monitoring and surveillance: Limit monitoring to lawful, proportionate purposes; prohibit intrusive tools; ensure collective agreement & GDPR compliance.

Making All Jobs Secure

Quality Jobs Act Objective: Ending precarious work by guaranteeing legal rights to permanent contracts and full-time employment, banning zero-hours contracts through guaranteeing a minimum working time through binding legislation, and preventing unpaid traineeships.

Key Facts

- 32.1% of workers aged 15–29 in 2023 were on fixed-term contracts.
- Part-time work is highly gendered: 29.6% of women vs. 9.7% of men in the EU in 2023. Over one in four part-time workers (26.4%) did not choose it voluntarily.
- Up to 78% of young people complete at least one traineeship, but many are forced into two or three before securing a real job. Almost half are unpaid, and nearly one-third have no access to social protection.
- Non-standard jobs mean higher poverty risk, poorer health, and weaker workplace democracy, leaving millions trapped in insecurity.

ETUC policy demands & proposals:

-  **Guarantee legal rights to permanent and full-time employment** as the default standard in EU labour law.
-  **Ban zero-hours contracts** by introducing a binding minimum working time, ensuring workers know their schedules and income in advance.
-  **Prevent unpaid traineeships:** all internships must provide fair remuneration, social protection, and meaningful learning.
-  **Empower labour inspectorates** with stronger resources and cross-border cooperation to enforce fair contracts and prevent abuse.
-  **Reinforce collective bargaining coverage** and trade union rights for all workers, including those in non-standard forms of employment.

**It's time to make every job
a quality job.**

