

Tackling *job insecurity* through a more inclusive economy

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A new form of job insecurity with many faces

Job insecurity affects a wide range of people, comprising mainly young people, women, older people, low-skilled workers, people from migrant backgrounds, people with disabilities, and public sector workers. It is particularly acute in disadvantaged areas: residents of working-class neighbourhoods or rural areas, and residents of overseas territories. Most sectors of activity are affected (home care, retail, logistics, healthcare, education, agriculture, etc.). This job insecurity is intensifying against a backdrop of economic transformation and changes in the world of work: the shift towards the service sector and the loss of industrial jobs, the growth of the residential economy, the fragmentation and increased flexibility of employment, the digitalisation of activities and the use of artificial intelligence, the rise in subcontracting, the dominant 'low-cost' model, etc.

The growing rise of precarious platform work, which constitutes undeclared work due to the erroneous classification of these workers as 'self-employed'¹, undermines collective protections and threatens the financial viability of social protection bodies due to unpaid social security contributions.

Finding and securing a job, and above all keeping it, is becoming increasingly difficult due to the housing crisis and transport difficulties, particularly for jobs involving shift work or fragmented working hours (for example, in the home care sector). Commuting time has doubled in ten years, and one in two workers living in rural areas now travels more than 13 kilometres to get to work.



¹ Report of the Special Rapporteur on human rights and extreme poverty, Olivier de Schutter, July 2023, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Work should never be synonymous with precariousness

In light of these pressing issues, the EESC calls for a strong commitment to quality employment and economic inclusion. It emphasises that work must enable everyone to flourish, live with dignity, achieve self-reliance and be recognised.

To address needs as closely as possible, the EESC organised two days of public consultation in Bondy, Seine-Saint-Denis, and Bar-le-Duc, Meuse. The views of the working poor, students, trainees and apprentices, jobseekers, recipients of the RSA, employers and public sector representatives were sought to inform this opinion. In light of this, the EESC proposes making economic inclusion a guiding principle, by reorienting public policy and engaging businesses in a sustainable transformation of the labour market. It sets out 20 operational and targeted recommendations for economic and public sector stakeholders to combat precarious working conditions and employment.

IN FIGURES

Whilst unemployment is falling (7.5% in 2024, compared with 10.9% in 2015), poverty, discrimination and job insecurity are on the rise in most sectors, whether private or public. Forced part-time work, short-term contracts, irregular or insufficient income, etc.: for a growing proportion of the population, work no longer guarantees a decent standard of living.

2.3 million

workers live on less than
€1,288 a month

19.2%

of these workers are self-
employed

6€ an hour

The net pay received by
self-employed platform
delivery workers for an
average of 70 hours' work
per week

The EESC's recommendations

Two key areas for tackling job insecurity

1

IMPROVING WORKING AND EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS AND ENHANCING ACCESS TO RIGHTS

How?

By taking action on pay, the maintenance of benefits, access to citizenship, training and working hours:

→ in the private sector, by encouraging companies that use part-time or short-term contracts to make greater use of Employer Groups (EGs) and Employer Groups for Integration and Qualification (EGIQs) by joining them

→ in the public sector by increasing the pay of staff across the three civil service branches through a points-based pay rise and a review of pay scales, in order to close the gap with the private sector. For the same workload, and despite a higher level of qualifications and an older average age, the average net salary in the civil service is 3.7% lower than in the private sector

→ by allowing people to temporarily combine income from work with the full rate of the RSA (Revenu de Solidarité Active) through schemes to safeguard the return to work, to avoid loss of income when returning to work

→ by improving access to lifelong learning, particularly for those working in isolation

By ensuring that all working situations are taken into account, through prevention and monitoring, in both the private and public sectors:

→ launching a review aimed at creating a body analogous to the independent labour inspectorate for the three branches of the civil service

→ developing forums for consultation, close to the workplace, on health, working conditions and work organisation, taking into account the growing sense of meaninglessness, rising absenteeism and the effects of algorithmic management

The example of platform workers — speeding up the transposition into French law of the EU directive on improving their working conditions and, in this context, introducing measures to improve algorithmic management and imposing dissuasive fines on companies that breach social regulations.

N.B.: This directive shifts the burden of proof in favour of platform workers by establishing a presumption of employment. It regulates algorithmic management by requiring transparency in the management of work via algorithms and by prohibiting the processing of certain personal data (emotional or psychological state, private conversations, biometric data).

→ allow foreign workers carrying out an activity via a digital intermediation platform to apply for regularisation through work and treat invoices from self-employed workers as proof of work, in the same way as a payslip

→ guarantee social rights and collective benefits for platform workers

2

COMMIT TO A MORE INCLUSIVE ECONOMY TO COMBAT

How?

By providing public and private decision-makers with tools that serve as levers for improving the quality of employment:

- rolling out a 'Planning for an Inclusive Economy' initiative with a strong regional focus, led by the Directorate-General for Enterprise, to coordinate the development of national strategies on economic inclusion and better support businesses, providing them with operational tools to facilitate socially responsible procurement practices and enhance their social impact by connecting them with the right stakeholders
- include in the terms and conditions for the award of service contracts a requirement to use continuous, daytime working hours (as these sectors heavily rely on part-time and fragmented working hours)
- reserve 30% of public and private procurement contracts for micro-enterprises (TPE) and small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) to

support local employment by reforming public procurement law at European level

- By strengthening and improving incentives for inclusive policies at the local level
- incorporate inclusion criteria into CSR frameworks and establish a simplified approach that will enable companies to highlight any form of commitment to inclusion.
 - encouraging public authorities to accelerate and safeguard the development of SCOPs, SCICs, shareholder foundations, mission-driven companies, social joint ventures, etc. by developing impact funds, joint ventures and public or philanthropic funding

THE RAPPORTEURS

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