
WORK STREAM 1: ACCESS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION ROUNDTABLE 1 | MINUTES

DATE & TIME: May 20, 2021 | 10.00 - 11.30 AM CET

PRESENT: *(alphabetically listed)*

Agnès Moreau, Indeez	Jovana Karanović, Reshaping Work
Alex Lebus, MAXIS GBN	Kalle Palling, Cachet
Benjamin Hay, Collective Benefits	Lizeth Tijssen, Zurich Insurance
Branka Anđelković, Public Policy Research Center	Marine Marty, Adecco
Charles De La Horie, Indeez	Maudie Derks, Acture Group
Christian Poppe, Delivery Hero	Menno Bart, Adecco
David Espinosa, UNI Europa	Olivia Blanchard, Digital Future Society
Dimitris Theodorakis, UNI Europa	Roos Wouters, De Werkvereniging
Eirini Papadopoulou, Seldia	Russell Corbould-Warren, Collective Benefits
Emma Raleigh, TaskRabbit	Sandra Hanisch, ZenJob
Florian De Jager, FNV Zelfstandigen	Stefan Kröpfl, Zurich Insurance
Frederik Fahning, ZenJob	Tanja Jakobi, Public Policy Research Center
Helga Viegad, MAXIS GBN	Thanos Moysiadis, Uber
Ignacio Doreste, ETUC	Thomas Blondeel, Smart Coop
Jelena Šapić, Reshaping Work	Wiggert de Haan, Roamler
	Wouter Zwysen, ETUI

ABSENT:

Jan Drahokoupil, ETUI
Natalia Walczak, European Transport Workers Federation
Niels Arntz, Temper

AGENDA:

► **Project Updates:**

- Project website updated to include new work streams and partner logos: <https://dialogue.reshapingwork.net/>
- First edition of tailor-made [monthly policy briefing](#) sent on May 17th
- SAVE THE DATE: Future of Work Conference: September 10, 2021
- Work Stream 3, Roundtable 3 rescheduled: September 22, 2021
- Register to the Member Library (on the project website) to access work-stream related resources & share relevant documents
- Contacts of all the participants that gave consent will be shared in the Member Library

➤ **DISCUSSION TOPIC 1: WORKING TIME**

Working time is one of the major points of discussion when it comes to diverse forms of work. Defining its components, in regard to specific industries and sectors, is valuable input to further developments of the access to social protection. In ongoing debates, particularly contestable aspect has been waiting and/or idle time. While flexibility to decide one's own working time is generally seen as a positive aspect of diverse forms of work, concerns arise when payments and bonuses are linked to specific time of the day, infringing on that flexibility.

- Perspectives from which working time was considered are the following: **autonomy/freedom of choice (supported by contractual obligations); coverage of fixed living costs; mitigation of risks of low earnings.**
- According to several project partners (e.g., Adecco, ETUC, ETUI, Uber, UNI Europa), working time is closely intertwined with the **employment relationship**.
- Waiting and idle time must be differentiated from the preparation time needed to complete work. That said, the stakeholders approached waiting time from two different angles - **social-economic rights and efficiency**. Former considered waiting time as indispensable part of a task. They pointed out that workers have born the consequences of waiting time (primarily, by not reflecting into their earnings), although it should not be exclusively their responsibility. If it is not included as working time, it exposes workers to greater risk and stress impacting their health and safety. The latter argues that waiting time is to be minimized by better overseeing supply and demand which ultimately leads to increased efficiency of all the actors (particularly of workers and platforms).
- Whereas diverse (non-standard) forms of work are not new, **multihoming** is a new phenomenon (e.g., a worker is simultaneously connected to more than one platform) challenging the notion of working time (thus, one-to-many relationship is to be considered, including the context of freedom of choice). One of the answers to multihoming is related to the concept of portability of benefits.
- Workers only decide whether to join or not a platform; all the conditions are imposed unilaterally by the platform, points ETUC, which leads to hierarchical and power relations impacting the freedom of choice.
- All the responsibilities are shifted onto workers and such a paradigm shift tackles upon political economy and very question in what societies citizens want to live, as underlined by ETUI and Public Policy Research Center.
- Examples from the practice:
 - Interim Mission (France) - after certain number of hours per year (equivalent to the three or four months of full working arrangements), a worker is entitled a **baseline social protection**.
 - Delivery Hero - a **shift model**, whose advantage is anticipation of demand, can ensure predictability of working arrangements, maximize earnings as the prices of tasks are guaranteed, and minimize waiting time. Another model is related to a guaranteed minimum number of tasks paid in cases where would happen that a task is missing in the shift. The task is variable component, whereas, depending on national legislation, the platform offers also a fixed hourly component.
 - Roamler - the platform offers a clear overview of tasks regardless of sector and it estimates time required for a task. In this case, working time is average time needed to complete the task combined with cost related to the transportation, material usage, effort, etc. Based on monitoring, it sets prices and eliminates waiting time.

➤ DISCUSSION TOPIC 2: UNPREDICTABILITY AND INSECURITY OF EARNINGS

One of the key concerns when it comes to wellbeing of workers in diverse forms of employment is unpredictability of earnings. That is why of particular interest is to explore existing mechanisms and ongoing efforts to ensure 'fair wages'. Complementary to this discussion is experience of stakeholders in letting workers to set their own rates. Finally, how earnings are calculated – per hour or per task – adds further complexity in determining whether earnings meet minimum or living wage standards.

- A consistency around setting per gig baseline cost effectively is needed. Following minimum wage per hour, some stakeholders such as Collective Benefits suggested establishing a **minimum per gig**.
- Being self-employed does **not mean being left alone**, especially in terms of professional development training, paid sick leave, and retirement (security should be connected to the worker, not the contract format basis, as suggested by De Werkvereniging).
- Predictability of earnings could be increased by informing workers of the task fees before the task is accepted, that way they can make an informed decision, which is important to ensure workers' autonomy (**entrepreneurial decision making**).
- Unions express that hourly wages of the respective sectoral agreement should apply.
- In case of agency work, it may happen that shifts are not provided, so whose responsibility it is (agency's or client's) depends on type of work and sometimes on the group of workers (please see below examples of Adecco and Task Rabbit).
- Examples from the practice:
 - Delivery Hero underlined that unpredictability of earnings cannot be applied to the entire sector because there are already mechanisms in place aiming to **avoid the price race to the bottom**. These examples, out of which a shift model is one, recognize common interest of platforms and workers (maximizing efficiency, higher number of tasks completed, punctual delivery to customers).
 - Uber pointed that various experiments that let drivers set their own rates, regardless of the country (California, Portugal or France), have led to the race to the bottom. That is important for platforms to acknowledge that mitigating inadequate earning standards is one of the goals when they employ **price setting mechanisms**.
 - Acture Group from the Netherlands points that there are already solutions in place which policy makers should take into consideration. For example, there are instances when workers are invited for a task that has to be up to three hours and that is scheduled a couple of days ahead.
 - When there are no secured shifts, Adecco is accepting certain risks by taking up a group of workers full-time, open ended contract, in order to keep talents that are in high demand on the market.
 - Task Rabbit - workers have the ability to set their availability up to two weeks in advance and set their own rates. They can access a map of neighborhoods in which they want to work. The platform established a one-hour minimum for the task duration, but workers themselves can make that minimum longer (e.g., they can factor in travel time). If a client cancels the task, worker receives the pre-set minimum, which is equivalent to one hour of earnings; but if the worker cancels the task, the client will not be charged. The platform is currently looking for ways to ensure predictability of earnings - one such initiative refers to setting monthly earning goals and then tracking their earnings towards the goals.

➤ **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

- Modular platform architecture – allowing workers to opt-in for various models. Under one model they would have less flexibility but more predictability (e.g. shift model), and under the other they would have full flexibility but less predictability. This would allow those that engage in this type of work full-time to have working time and earnings security. This can go further to allow those that meet certain criteria to acquire an 'employee' status.
- Introduction of minimum earnings per gig according to standards in a particular industry/sector.
- More transparency in regards to information provided to workers in order to choose that those that are self-employed can make entrepreneurial decisions at the best of their ability. For instance, platforms that allow workers to set their own rates could provide information about supply and demand or other information on the aggregate level that can allow workers to better price their services.

NEXT STEPS & ROUNDTABLE:

- The second roundtable on access to social protection is on June 16 and will start with an expert lecture (20 mins lecture and 10 mins Q&A session). The agenda and related information about the lecture will be shared by June 11 the latest.
- The next monthly policy briefing will be sent in the week 14-18 June.

ADJOURNMENT:

- Minutes submitted by: Jelena Šapić
- Minutes approved on: June 16, 2021