



# Reinforcement of social dialogue in times of transition and non-standard work

There are multiple and continuously evolving transformations in the world of work in Europe. Among these are digitalisation, the green transition and growth in some forms of non-standard work. According to Eurofound, employment is becoming more diverse, and policy must accordingly become more tailored.<sup>1</sup>

The three projects [Integrate Dialogue project](#), [FUTOURWORK](#) and [EGRUIEN](#) have overlapping goals, complementary sectors, and are focused on social dialogue. Other common denominators are non-standard/precarious workers (part-time, platform workers, temporary employment, on-call work, disguised employment, and dependent self-employment) impacts of digitalisation and green transition and the projects' aim to produce policy tools for social partners to enhance cooperation. One of the pressing challenges facing trade unions today are how to represent the growing number of non-standard workers, including the women and migrants who are disproportionately represented in precarious work. Among other things, this is a question about the workers' needs and interest and the unions' capacity to include these workers.

## Social dialogue as a cornerstone

Social dialogue is a cornerstone of the EU social market economy but is not sufficiently inclusive. This leads to an increasing dualization of the labour market between the better off (insiders) and the outsiders, for example non-standard workers. Moreover, the social dialogue operates in different national contexts, which is important to take into consideration. Comparing institutions, systems and tools across national borders is essential when studying the development of social dialogue in different industries.

In this brief, you can read about sister projects funded under the Horizon Europe topic on social dialogue in the new world of work, and their preliminary interaction. The intention is to create a coherent knowledge base on inclusive social dialogue, rather than isolated research outputs. One important goal is that the projects can mutually reinforce each other by exchanging findings. As they have overlapped thematic areas and many common stakeholders, the teams will collaborate to coordinate dissemination activities. So far, there has been contact between researchers and an online meeting with project managers and participants from the projects. Furthermore, there will be arranged a common open webinar [The New World of Work and the EU Platform Work Directive](#) on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2026.

## Tourism and hospitality as key drivers

Tourism and hospitality are a key driver of the European economy, making up over 11.7% of employment. Many workers are in non-standard forms of work. Furthermore, algorithmic management impacts negatively on these workers. Their precarity is increased due to legal, knowledge and financial obstacles they face in representation and social dialogue. This is the outset of the FUTOURWORK-project. Among the objectives is to implement a wellbeing index that considers the effects of digitalisation and benchmark employers based on a

<sup>1</sup> [New forms of employment in Europe – How new is new? | Eurofound](#)

scoring system and investigate differences in social dialogue among partner countries.

**Social dialogue during green and digital transitions**

Different forms and institutions of social dialogue are needed to facilitate the current comprehensive economic transition in a socially just manner. The project aspires to give scientifically based guidance on how social dialogue institutions can be designed to guide societies through fundamental transformations, including the rise of new sectors. The EGRUIEN project dive into the following industries: automotive, energy, platform transport and care services. One question is how to protect workers within (or from) non-standard forms of employment and ensure socially and economically just outcomes.

**How to include non-standard workers in social dialogue?**

The needs, interests, and motivations of non-standard workers in engaging with social dialogue is one of the topics in INTEGRATE-DIALOGUE. This also raises the question on the capacity and willingness of social partners to integrate these workers into existing dialogue structures. Some of the work is centred on the legal frameworks for and barriers against inclusion in social dialogue for non-standard workers. The project combines bottom-up (workers’ needs and interests) with top-down (social partners’ strategies). Moreover, researchers will explore examples of alternative and innovative forms of voice, representation and social dialogue among non-standard workers, among them various grass-root initiatives, such as different social movements.

**Stakeholders’ involvement and toolboxes**

All three projects rely on active stakeholder involvement. Among these we find, unions and employers’ organisations at national and European level. FUTOURWORK aims to develop practical resources to help tourism and hospitality workers understand their rights, legal protections, union options, and relevant case law. In INTEGRATE-DIALOGUE it will be established an open policy toolbox for worker mobilisation with concrete instruments, considered the challenges surrounding gender, migration status, ethnicity, cross-border employment and workers with disabilities.

**Participating countries**

INTEGRATE-DIALOGUE	FUTOURWORK	EGRUIEN
Norway	UK	Finland
Belgium	Portugal	Italy
Denmark	Romania	Poland
Italy	Greece	Norway
Ireland	Sweden	Slovakia
Netherlands	Bulgaria	Spain
Slovakia		UK
UK		

How social dialogue mechanisms can be reformed to navigate labour market transformations is one of the key questions in the three projects under this Horizon Europe call.

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