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Overview of new forms of employment 2018 update

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Overview of new forms of employment 2018 update

Eurofound

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Country codes EU28

AT	Austria	**FI**	Finland	**NL**	Netherlands
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BG	Bulgaria	**HR**	Croatia	**PT**	Portugal
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CZ	Czech Republic	**IE**	Ireland	**SE**	Sweden
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Introduction

Defining 'new forms of employment'

Societal and economic developments, such as the need for increased flexibility by both employers and workers, the greater use of advanced information and communications technology (ICT) and the greater importance of particular business activities and occupations are resulting in the emergence of new forms of employment.

However, the understanding of what 'new forms of employment' means differs between Member States. What is 'new' in one country may be well-established in another or may not exist in a third. In its research on new forms of employment, Eurofound (2015) aimed to map emerging labour market trends by adopting an approach based on a national perspective, taking into account those forms of employment that are considered 'new' in the national context, irrespective of their status in other countries.

Nevertheless, in order to ensure some level of comparability of the findings, a working definition for 'new forms of employment' has been established, with employment in one or more of the following categories being considered:

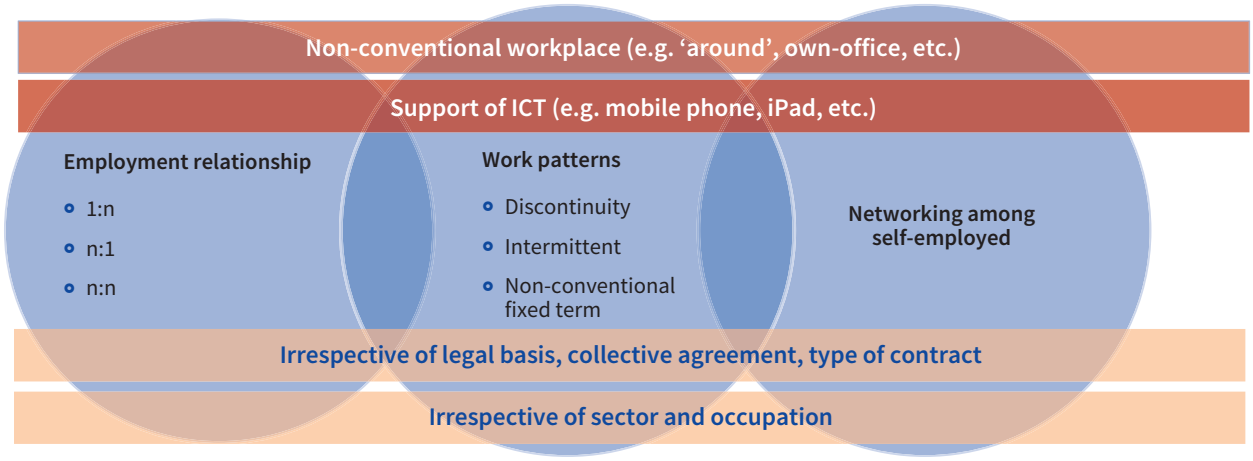
- relationships between employers and employees that are different from the established 1:1 employment relationships (temporary agency work was not considered 'new' for the purpose of this project)
- provision of work on a discontinuous/intermittent basis or for very limited periods of time rather than on a continuous or regular basis ('standard' part-time or concepts such as seasonal work were not considered 'new', unless other features that made the employment relevant for this project applied)
- networking and cooperation arrangements between the self-employed – especially freelancers – going beyond 'standard' relationships along the supply chain, sharing premises or traditional conducting of project work

In addition, the relevant forms of employment may (but need not necessarily) have:

- a place of work other than the premises of the employer (in this context, traditional teleworking was not considered – only 'more mobile' work relationships)
- strong and widespread support of ICT, where this technology changes the nature of work relations or patterns

The project considered forms of employment based on all kinds of contract. Similarly, the project included both forms of employment that are applied in all sectors/occupations and those that are limited to particular sectors/occupations, as presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Understanding of 'new forms of employment' in the project



Source: *Eurofound*

For the purposes of this project, Eurofound focused on forms of employment that have either emerged since around 2000, or that existed previously but have since become more prevalent.

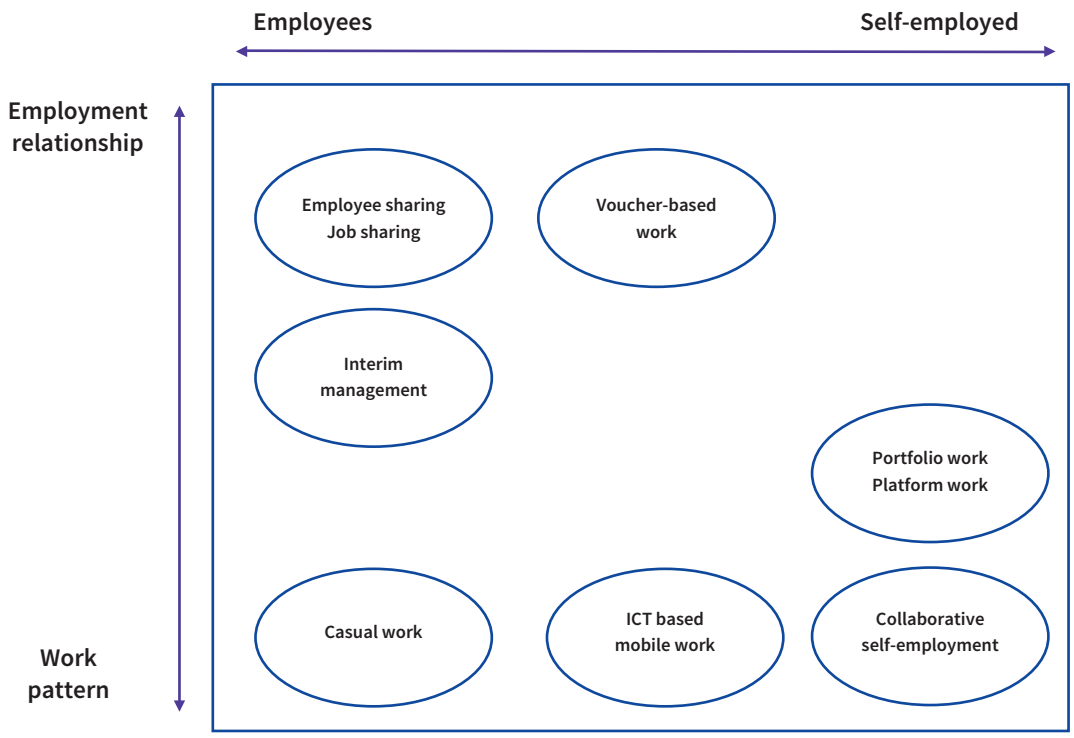
This report constitutes an overview and update of the findings of the Eurofound report *New forms of employment* (Eurofound, 2015). These findings have been partly updated with further research that Eurofound has since conducted on this topic (Eurofound, 2016; Eurofound and the International Labour Office, 2017) or is conducting at the time of writing (in July 2018, this refers to studies on casual work and platform work planned for publication in 2018–2019).

New forms of employment in Europe – an overview

In line with the above working definition, the project identified nine broad new forms of employment (Figure 2). These may be new models of employment relationship between employer/employee, or client/worker; alternatively, they may be new patterns of work (how the work is conducted). Sometimes, these two are interlinked. At the same time, the forms of employment may be differentiated by whether they involve employees or self-employed workers/freelancers (alternatively, they may apply to both groups of workers).

It must be mentioned that overlaps between these nine types are possible: an individual employment situation can fall into more than one category.

Figure 2: New forms of employment identified



Source: *Eurofound*

Strategic employee sharing

General characteristics

Strategic employee sharing is a form of cooperative human resource (HR) management. The management of resources goes beyond a single organisation (Europäisches Ressourcenzentrum der Arbeitgeberzusammenschlüsse, 2008; Wölfing et al, 2007; Osthoff et al, 2011; Baumfeld, 2012; Baumfeld and Fischer, 2012). Several employers form a 'group' that hires one or more workers to be sent on individual work assignments to participating companies. The structure is similar to temporary agency work, with the difference being that the workers are regularly rotated exclusively among the participating employers, and the group does not aim to make a profit out of the cross-company HR management. Furthermore, the participating employers take on joint and several liability and responsibility towards the workers rather than just being clients of the employers' group. The employment risk is shared among the member companies (following the principle of solidarity and mutuality) while the workers deal with only one single employer.

The following preconditions have been identified as essential for the sustainable implementation of strategic employee sharing (Eurofound, 2016).

Public framework conditions: Awareness among public actors of this employment model is required, as is active support for its establishment and a legal framework that allows for the rapid and straightforward establishment of strategic employee sharing.

Resource centres: Umbrella organisations are necessary to familiarise policymakers, employers and employees with the employment model, and to assist in the establishing and running of employer groups.

Group management: Skilled and trusted management of the employer group is required.

Demand for labour: For such schemes to work effectively, there must be sufficient demand for labour in the participating companies: it must recur regularly, be anticipated and reach a critical mass; and it must be possible to combine demands for labour by the participating companies, in terms of timing and content (implying commonality in skills/occupations), into joint full-time employment.

Mutual trust: Trust is essential – both among employers and between the employers, workers and the group management (Delalande and Buannic, 2006).

Flexibility and adaptability of the workforce: The workforce should be able to work autonomously on the different assignments.

The group becomes the legal employer of the shared workers, and the participating companies are responsible for the work organisation (such as health and safety measures). The group is responsible for a range of functions:

- assessing cross-company human resource needs
- HR management (such as matching supply and demand of human resources in terms of time, extent and qualifications)
- hiring and concluding the employment contract
- fulfilling all administrative and social obligations of the employment contract
- invoicing the participating companies
- induction and training of workers

Furthermore, the group management (in practice, in close cooperation with the participating companies) defines the terms and conditions of the employee sharing arrangement, including codes of conduct, and rights and duties of companies and workers. This includes issues related to cconfidentiality, discretion, mutual consultation, and just and equal treatment of the shared workers; it also regulates situations such as the entry of new companies into the group or the transition of a shared worker into the core workforce of one of the participating firms.

In practice, a mix of sectors in a strategic employee sharing model makes sense in order to balance fluctuations of human resource needs in the participating firms.

While strategic employee sharing is not restricted to a particular size of company, in practice it can have specific advantages for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs): it enables them to recruit a professional on a stable and long-term basis, which they would not be able to do on their own.

In general, strategic employee sharing can be applied for any occupation, as long as there is sufficient labour demand in the region.

Implications for working conditions

Strategic employee sharing contributes to job stability by creating permanent full-time jobs, rather than short-term and part-time employment. Even when the worker is operating in different companies, it is easier for them to negotiate on working conditions as they are employed by a single employer (the 'group'). Having a single employer increases transparency about responsibility and facilitates aligning work assignments in different firms (Antoine and Rorive, 2006; Vötsch and Titz, 2011; Eurofound, 2016).

The legal basis, collective agreements and codes of conduct ensure equal treatment of shared workers and the core staff of the company they are working in as regards working conditions and social protection.

Employee sharing can also contribute to the development of workers' skills. Workers benefit by gaining experience due to the variety of jobs they perform and the (on-the-job) training they may receive across the companies (Antoine and Rorive, 2006; Hertwig and Kirsch, 2013; Vötsch and Titz, 2011; Eurofound, 2016). It must be noted, however, that the provision of formal training depends on the size of the employee sharing model; it is only feasible if a certain critical mass of workers is achieved.

Due to the rotating character of work placements, there is some danger that shared workers are less well-embedded in the organisational structures and communication flows in the participating companies; this could result in poorer working relations with management and coworkers, and less representation.

The specialist staff in a strategic employee sharing arrangement may also suffer from professional isolation, as within the participating companies they have limited or no possibilities for peer exchange. Furthermore, career development in terms of hierarchical progress is limited.

In a strategic employee sharing arrangement, workers are required to show a similar, high level of flexibility and adaptability in each of their different work environments. This may be exciting for some, but it may be stressful for others, who experience work intensification due to the combination of different part-time jobs.

Implications for the labour market

Strategic employee sharing provides companies with human resources that they would otherwise be unable to access, or only at a higher price (Wölfing et al, 2007; Antoine and Rorive, 2006). This is particularly beneficial for SMEs, since administrative and labour costs are reduced. The participating companies also benefit from the cross-company work experience of the shared worker, which may result in efficiency and productivity gains, and there is some indication that employee sharing fosters regional cooperation in other business areas, thereby benefitting local economic development.

The practice of employee sharing contributes to labour market stability in the region by providing permanent full-time jobs that otherwise would be more precarious or would result in work intensification for the core staff of the firms (Europäisches Ressourcenzentrum der Arbeitgeberzusammenschlüsse, 2008; Delalande and Buannic, 2006). Furthermore, employee sharing can contribute to better working conditions in the region due to employers' multilateral influence on each other and the implicit obligation of all employers to provide similar working conditions in order to remain attractive within the group; this can make a region more attractive for skilled workers. Working in different companies could also result in workers' gaining a broader range of different competencies in diversified tasks and work organisations – hence, a regional upskilling. This, in turn, might attract new companies, creating additional jobs. As a consequence, strategic employee sharing has the potential to contribute to regional revitalisation.

At the same time, some workers prefer a traditional employment relationship. This might lead to competition among employees – and disappointment and demotivation when the desired permanent post is not achieved (Näppilä and Järvensivu, 2009); it may also result in competition among the regional companies to attract (skilled) labour.

Employee sharing can contribute to labour market integration, since joint responsibility may reduce companies' reluctance to recruit workers from disadvantaged groups, when demand is unstable or in economically challenging times.

Job sharing

General characteristics

Job sharing refers to employment relationships in which one employer hires (normally) two workers to jointly fill a single full-time position. It is a form of part-time work that ensures that shared jobs are permanently staffed.

While the legislation or collective agreements available in some countries provide provisions regarding rights and duties of employers and employees in job sharing situations, they do not contain any guidelines regarding the design and implementation of this form of employment. Hence, it is up to the employer and employees to arrange it among themselves. This includes, for example, the choice of contract (permanent versus fixed-term), the number of working hours and the work organisation (within general legal or collectively agreed frameworks).

Job sharing is not suitable for all types of jobs or positions. For this form of employment to work, it is vital that tasks can be divided up, either in terms of time or the level of skills required. Nevertheless, across countries the application of job sharing across sectors and occupations varies, indicating that it could be used in a wide spectrum of labour market situations. For example, in the Czech Republic and the UK, job sharing is often used for generalist positions (Nekolová, 2010; Wheatley, 2013). In contrast, Polish data show that a high share of job sharers are specialists (Sadowska-Snarska, 2006). Anecdotal evidence points towards this form of employment as being attractive for women with dependent children (Eurofound, 2015; Wheatley, 2013). Information from the Czech Republic, Ireland, Poland and Slovenia indicates the use of job sharing in the public sector, while in Slovakia the Act on Civil Service appears to exclude it for civil servants.

Ensuring an extensive and continuous communication flow is important for a successful and efficient job sharing arrangement (Dubourg et al, 2006). Irrespective of the design of the individual job sharing arrangement, this type of work always includes some level of self-organisation among the job sharers in order to hand over tasks. Some overlap in the hours job sharers are present is recommended to facilitate a smooth workflow.

Implications for working conditions

Job sharing provides workers with a good level of flexibility, allowing them to work part-time and flexibly take turns with each other. It is seen as a way to improve the status and career prospects of part-time workers, create better work–life balance, and offer flexibility to employers (Branine, 2003; Guglielmo, 2008). As regards social protection, job sharers are generally entitled to the same benefits as any part-time workers.

In Hungary, when a job sharing employment situation comes to an end, legislation allows for notice periods and severance payments that are the same as for other employment contracts. Similarly, in Slovakia, if a job sharing arrangement ends, regulations entitle the worker to be assigned to work equivalent to the full working time and job description as they were assigned in the job sharing arrangement.

As regards training, evidence from the case studies conducted in the framework of Eurofound (2015) suggests that job sharers have the same access to training as any other core worker. In addition, job sharing provides opportunities for learning and exchange due to the shared completion of the tasks inherent in the job.

However, there are concerns regarding the loss of benefits associated with full-time employment, conflicts between job sharers, and lack of control over the nature and outcomes of work (Branine, 1998, 2003, 2004).

Moreover, if poorly implemented, job sharing can result in increased work intensity, the need to work overtime and work-related stress (for example, if there is a lack of adequate 'fit' of job sharers), which can sometimes result in job sharers being given less responsibility (McDonald et al, 2009; Wheatley, 2013). Stress related to job sharing can also create mental health issues – for example, if job sharers do not succeed in completing the work assigned to them, and their job sharing partner is required to complete it for them. This might result in a situation in which they feel responsible for imposing additional work on their colleagues, or they overburden themselves with trying to catch up.

Job sharing can also result in an increased overhead on workers in terms of handing over the tasks and organising the sharing of activities; this includes the requirement to substitute for each other, which might interfere with other (private) obligations.

Implications for the labour market

The implications of job sharing for the labour market relate to integration and job retention rather than to job creation. Job sharing has the potential to increase the employment of disadvantaged groups in the labour market (notably mothers returning from maternity leave, people with care responsibilities, older workers, disabled or sick people unable to work full-time, or people engaged in education activities); at the same time, job sharing can result in lower costs for employers than those resulting from standard part-time jobs (for example, only one set of technical equipment or one workplace has to be provided).

Wheatly (2013) proposes job sharing as one way of tackling the present labour market challenges of youth unemployment and ageing working populations. Job sharing, used as a mentoring scheme, could slow the exit of older workers from the labour market and constitute a form of apprenticeship for young workers. Daniels (2011) suggests that job sharing benefits the business continuity, boosts employee engagement and enhances productivity (through two people exchanging ideas and information regarding the job).

Interim management

General characteristics

Interim management is a form of employment in which a company hires a highly specialised expert for a temporary duration and with a specific purpose, for example to solve a specific management or technical challenge, or to assist in economically difficult times. The specific employment model can follow different concepts: the interim manager can become employee of the receiving company, work for it as a contractor on the basis of business law, or there might be a third party involved, which (similar to a temporary work agency) employs the interim manager and assigns them to the receiving company. The choice of model influences both employers' and workers' roles, rights and duties as well as the workers' level of social protection.

Interim management is considered to be a flexible option without any long-term commitment; an enterprise can use it to respond to a need for a heterogeneous workforce that can provide solutions based on its expertise and for a limited/fixed period (Bruns and Kabst, 2005; Inkson et al, 2001; Isidor et al, 2014; Russam GMS, 2012). This provision of external leadership staff, with specific appointed managerial tasks, is different from the provision of consultancy management services, since an interim manager has some authority to instruct (based on the appointed tasks) and is subject to (limited) instructions (Bruns and Kabst, 2005). Hence, compared with external consultants, interim managers are to some degree integrated into the workforce of the receiving company, although not usually to the same extent as a 'real manager' would be.

Interim management fills a very specific segment of the labour market and hence is not a widespread phenomenon.

Interim managers tend to be in their 40s or 50s (Russam GMS, 2012), since their specific tasks require a high level of skills, expertise and experience, particularly in general or crisis management. Experts judge that interim management is useful for large businesses, and that it can bring economic advantage to SMEs, especially in the case of structural problems.

Implications for working conditions

Interim managers usually supervise permanent staff and need to adapt rapidly and effectively to a new organisational culture. Given the potential psychosocial risks at work (including stress and the lack of long-term job security), in some cases the short-term character of the employment seems to be an important alleviating variable (Jas, 2013). There may also be some inherent risk of professional isolation as interim managers have a unique position in the receiving company. In general, to compensate for the job insecurity, an interim management contract carries a salary premium compared with that of employed managers (Inkson et al, 2001).

Due to their specific role in the receiving company, interim managers can make decisions in a less restricted way than permanent staff, and often enjoy flexibility as regards the time and place of working (Inkson et al, 2001). However, this flexibility sometimes adds a negative aspect to their working life – for example, if they have to work away from home and travel a lot, especially if combined with a continuous pressure to perform (Pollit, 2008).

The career development of interim managers tends to be entirely their responsibility (Inkson et al, 2001). Even if no specific training is provided, upskilling (technical, self-management and communication skills), reinforcement of previous knowledge, familiarisation with a new industry and being innovative in terms of formulating new managerial approaches are reported as potential benefits of interim managerial jobs (Inkson et al, 2001), hence fostering employability.

Implications for the labour market

The high level of qualifications and expertise that interim managers bring are judged as enhancing knowledge among core staff of the company, even where the assignment is temporary. The presence of an interim manager encourages more dynamism and innovation, and might also influence company culture and work patterns. Bruns and Kabst (2005) argue that interim management is a possible response to companies' limited investment in human resources (training activities and human resources planning). Hence, interim management can be assumed to positively contribute to the competitiveness, sustainability or even growth of the company which, in turn, has positive effects on the labour market.

Expert assessment of interim management from the UK sees this form of employment as being more cost effective than hiring consultants, since training costs, employee benefits and career development initiatives are not supported (as they are in standard employment). At the same time, some of the experts interviewed for this project do not see the possibility of interim management crowding out other forms of employment due to its specificities (short-term contracts, and requirement for highly skilled personnel).

Casual work

General characteristics

Casual work refers to a type of work where employment is neither stable nor continuous. The European Parliament (2000) defines casual work as 'work which is irregular or intermittent with no expectation of continuous employment'.

The activation of casual workers depends on fluctuations in the employers' workload; the employer is not obliged to regularly provide workers with work, but has the flexibility of calling them in on demand.

Two main types of casual work have been identified in various European Member States (Eurofound, 2015). While several Member States specifically regulate casual employment, different types may coexist in a single country.

Intermittent work

In intermittent work, employers approach workers on a regular or irregular basis to conduct a specific task, often related to an individual project or seasonally occurring jobs. The employment is then characterised by a fixed-term period. This can either refer to fulfilling the job or to a certain number of working days (see in Eurofound, 2015 for information on regulatory variations across Belgium, France, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia).

On-call work

On-call work describes an arrangement where a continuous employment relationship is maintained between an employer and an employee, but the employer does not continuously provide work for the employee. Rather, the employer has the option of calling the employee in on demand. There are employment contracts that indicate the minimum and maximum number of working hours as well as employment contracts such as zero-hours contracts whereby no minimum number of working hours is set. This means that the employer is not obliged to ever call in the worker. (See Eurofound, 2015 for information on national regulations regarding on-call work in Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden and the UK.)

Regulation of casual work

When considering regulation on casual work across several EU Member States, differences are particularly visible in the scope of the regulation.

Few countries have established casual work as a new specific employment relation/contract; rather, they have mainly sought to grant legal status to previously informal employment relationships (Italy); others focus on specific features, trying to reduce misuses of existing employment relationships.

Regulatory frameworks mainly aim at specifying the characteristics of casual work, delimiting some key aspects such as the population of workers targeted, sectors covered, duration of the employment relationship, criteria for social protection coverage, and minimum remuneration. For instance, France created a specific fixed-term contract, the *Contrat à Durée Déterminée d'Usage* (CDDU), as an exception to the standard one, to be used in sectors particularly characterised by peaks in activity and short duration of tasks, such as entertainment. The German 'mini' and 'midi' jobs contracts also target a specific population, defining a wage threshold that allows employees not to pay revenue taxes and social contributions, while still benefiting from some aspects of social protection.

Even before the 2008 economic crisis – and certainly since – flexible employment relationships have been presented as favouring employment and reducing unemployment; and indeed, casual work has been used by policymakers as a way to increase job growth.

Casual work is used by managers as a flexible form of employment to quickly assign workers to a task that arises at short notice. To ensure a rapid response, employers often use a pool of casual workers, either administered by themselves or through intermediaries. Nevertheless, recruitment to create such pools is generally done in the same way as any other recruitment process – based on job advertisements in newspapers, with the public employment service, through social media or word of the mouth, and in most cases using predefined selection criteria.

The period of time between a worker being requested and the start of actual work varies with company practices and human resource needs. There are examples of employers ordering casual workers from about four weeks beforehand to only one hour in advance. The results of a UK survey showed that around 30% of organisations using zero-hours contracts have a policy on the notice period for asking staff to come into work. However, 40% do not have a policy and the remainder do not know if they have one. Almost half of the zero-hours workers said they receive no notice or may even find out at the start of their shift that the work is cancelled (CIPD, 2013).

Casual employment is mainly used in specific sectors, characterised by seasonal activities and variable demand such as hospitality and homecare (IFAU, 2001; ISTAT, 2010; Pennycook et al, 2013). It is also generally associated with low-paying sectors like retail and catering (Irish Times, 2013; Pennycook et al, 2013;

De Graaf-Zijl, 2012) and, in many EU countries, is mainly concentrated in lower-skilled occupations (ISTAT, 2010; Eurofound, 2010; Brinkley, 2013). Regulations regarding casual work regulations have largely been drafted to address the needs of specific sectors, reinforcing the concentration of this form of employment in those sectors.

For workers, the benefits of flexibility are less straightforward. Casual workers tend to be young, less educated and predominantly women (IFAU, 2001; Mandrone and Radicchia, 2010; De Graaf-Zijl, 2012; Flexbarometer.nl, 2014; Pennycook et al, 2013). For instance, in Germany, two-thirds of those working in mini-jobs are women; indeed, for female workers, casual work may be the only opportunity for reintegration into the labour market following a career break.

One positive motivation for casual employment is the employee's wish or need to reconcile working life and private life. This category would include workers with childcare or other types of caring responsibilities. Students also widely use casual work in order to support themselves financially while studying, as well as to gain experience of a particular job or sector. Nevertheless, there are some concerns regarding the reasons for choosing casual work, as in most countries the lack of permanent or more standard form of contracts remains the main reason advanced by individuals for working on such a contractual basis. Therefore the 'choice' is not voluntary – rather, it is more the result of an absence of alternatives.

Furthermore, when being requested to work, most casual workers theoretically have the possibility to decline the job offer. However, in several case studies conducted in the framework of Eurofound (2015), it is mentioned that repeated refusals can result in a lower chance of the worker being asked to come to work in future. In the same UK survey, 17% of zero-hours workers say that they are sometimes penalised for not accepting offers of work and 3% say they are always penalised if they turn down offered work (CIPD, 2013).

Implications for working conditions

In general, casual work results in a high level of flexibility for employers and in low levels of security for the workers. Overall, research evidence points to increased precariousness of casual work contracts, and less favourable working conditions and lower wages than in regular and permanent employment. These negative circumstances also point to the issue of representation.

Casual workers experience restriction in employment rights and working conditions. First of all, casual workers are treated as employees under labour law in some Member States (for example, France and the Netherlands), while in other Member States they are not (for example, Poland and Croatia). They may also be granted fewer or more limited employment rights depending on the type of contract and the type of work involved (for example, in the Czech Republic).

In the UK, zero-hours contracts are characterised by less clearly defined employment rights, less income security and a worse work–life balance, since calls to come in to work can come at short notice, resulting in irregular working hours. There is evidence that workers on zero-hours contracts are more likely to find themselves in low-paid jobs (Pennycook et al, 2013; Konjunkturinstitutet, 2005). At the same time, however, there is some anecdotal case study evidence pointing towards good income levels for casual workers due to a combination of beneficial tax treatment and employers' commitment to fair wages.

It has been observed that Swedish on-call contract workers receive less training and have less influence on their work duties (IFAU, 2001). One of the casual workers interviewed for Eurofound (2015) also commented that (in her opinion) learning on the job takes longer due to unstable and fragmented work patterns.

Casual workers are not always covered by the public social insurance system or by public health insurance services and do not qualify as recipients of unemployment benefits. However, there are examples of legislation providing some protection and access to basic entitlements for casual workers.

Work (and hence related income and often also social protection) is provided to casual workers only on occasion and probably also for limited duration. This results in little job security, unpredictable and irregular working hours, low wages, limited benefits and less job satisfaction (ILO, 2004; Layte et al, 2008; FNV, 2011).

Highly flexible employment relationships are correlated with negative impacts on health and well-being. Aronsson et al (2005) found that on-call work was associated with symptoms of ill health such as stomach, back and neck complaints, headaches, tiredness and listlessness. However, several of the regulations analysed oblige the employer to consider the same health and safety issues for casual workers as for permanent employees.

While casual work can also create flexibility for the worker and result in enhanced opportunities for combining work with, for example, care responsibilities

or education, insecurity regarding the next work assignment is reported to cause mental stress. Furthermore, the fact that work is unpredictable can in many cases cause difficulties in combining work and private life. Casual workers are eager to make as much income as possible; in addition, they seek to avoid getting a reputation for refusing job offers, which carries the risk that employers will not call them in future. Hence, they tend to accept all work assignments offered to them. They may do so even if it results in their needing to cancel personal plans. Models in which an indefinite number of casual jobs (or casual work with standard employment) can be combined can result in a situation in which no upper limit of working time exists in practice. As might be expected, this can result in long working hours and a reduced work–life balance.

Casual work does not easily fit into collective bargaining processes. In some Member States, regulatory and institutional frameworks give a role to collective bargaining in monitoring casual work. While no clear evidence is available, the information from the case studies of Eurofound (2015) points towards a theoretical coverage of casual workers by the same collective rights as any core staff.

However, in practice, it seems to be difficult to organise employees in short fixed-term employment. Nevertheless, there is some evidence that unions are considering the specific situation of casual workers by informing them about their rights, for example.

Implications for the labour market

The impact of casual work still cannot be fully described as its definition is not homogeneous across countries. This creates a number of challenges regarding availability and quality of quantitative data relating to casual work; these data are highly variable, patchy and uneven across Member States. Nevertheless, there are indications that casual work has grown exponentially across the EU.

Flexibility has been considered as 'good' for economies, as in Germany and the UK, and for specific worker groups (especially women with caring responsibilities or students) who may otherwise have difficulty accessing the labour market. Nevertheless, while greater flexibility has been presented as an opportunity for increasing employment for all, criticisms have been advanced (especially from trade union organisations) regarding the 'substitution effect' of flexible vis-à-vis standard employment. Casual work contracts are devised to help particular categories of workers (for example, younger people or displaced workers) enter the labour market and gain some valuable work experience; they also function to reduce undeclared and illegal work (IFAU, 2004; Karlsson, 2009). However, as yet, there is no clear evidence that this objective has been achieved.

Indeed, the exponential increase in casual work over the last two decades has affected all parts of the population. Workers with lower levels of education, the young and elderly are traditionally associated with casual work (choosing casual work, for instance, in combination with education or as a supplement to retirement income). However, an increase has also been seen among people with higher levels of qualifications (for example, in France and Italy, this is the largest group) as well as people aged 35–55. Furthermore, on-call contracts are seen to have the potential to steer the labour market towards an increased acceptance of precarious forms of employment (IFAU, 2001) and to create labour market segmentation.

Among the main challenges ahead, facilitating the implementation of regulations and clarifying regulatory frameworks should be prioritised. The primary issue regarding casual work remains the abuse of legislation governing it. Implementation of existing regulations depends on their clarity and scope for interpretation, as well as on the monitoring, enforcement and sanctioning mechanisms that are put in place in the country. Although many countries have regulations in place that aim at ensuring equivalent working conditions for all workers, enforcement is often difficult and violations of existing regulations are common.

ICT-based mobile work

General characteristics

ICT-based mobile work denotes work arrangements carried out at least partly, but regularly, outside the 'main office', be it the employer's premises or a customised home office, using ICT for online connection to shared company computer systems (Andriessen and Vartiainen, 2006; European Commission, 2010; Eurofound, 2012). Work takes place wherever and whenever it suits the work activities, task, business schedule and lifestyle of the worker; it is performed not necessarily at a specific place but also 'on the road' (Andriessen and Vartiainen, 2006; European Commission, 2010). ICT-based mobile work can be conducted by both employees and self-employed workers.

ICT-mobile mobile work conducted by employees could in most cases be considered as a variation of teleworking, in that the worker is conducting their job outside the employer's premises. However, in contrast to teleworking, mobile work does not take place in a fixed location, but more flexibly in a variety of places or even while traveling.

Often, employees conduct ICT-mobile work on the basis of standard work contracts, in most cases related to full-time positions of indefinite duration. Implementation and application of mobile work is done in an informal way, covered by a general element of flexibility in the company agreement or terms of contract.

Certain preconditions must be met before ICT-based mobile work can be implemented. First of all, it must be possible to perform the tasks inherent in the job outside of the employer's premises (or another fixed workplace). Secondly, there needs to be a technical set-up in place enabling workers to access and exchange relevant information irrespective of place and time. This requires some kind of cloud-based solution with virtual access from mobile devices, as well as the related infrastructure (for example, a network of computers, laptops, tablets, mobile phones) and some arrangements regarding communication procedures and information exchange strategies. Thirdly, the work culture needs to be characterised by a sufficient level of trust from the employer towards staff to delegate responsibilities and accept a certain level of loss of control. Finally, workers must have the capabilities to self-organise and self-manage their work as well as the willingness to do so.

Across the EU, in 2015, around 17% of employees conducted telework or ICT-based mobile work (Eurofound and International Labour Office, 2017).

While there are large differences regarding the incidence of this form of employment across countries, they all have in common that occasional mobile work is much more common than regular mobile work.

Most ICT-based mobile workers are male with skilled knowledge and of core working age (Eurofound and International Labour Office, 2017). They are more likely to work in the sectors of financial intermediation, real estate activities, public administration and electricity, gas and water supply.

Implications for working conditions

ICT-based mobile work is related to a higher level of autonomy (and hence flexibility) than traditional forms of employment. As this increased level of autonomy also brings about a reduced level of control for the employer, companies introducing ICT-based mobile work have established approaches to address this. They may use remuneration based on results rather than on working hours, or they may create technically advanced monitoring instruments – for example, systems capturing whether a worker is logged on to the company network, how long they are working for and on what task. Both approaches can be disadvantageous for workers if they influence the wage level (depending more on the workers' personal capability to efficiently organise their work), work intensity and/or stress level. Furthermore, full transparency of each activity might also interfere with the worker's privacy.

Another important advantage of ICT-based mobile work is the opportunity of working in a location best suited to the tasks. This results in new forms of collaboration, including better communication (within the organisation, but also with clients and business partners) and better access to information (Popma, 2013). At the same time, this quick and continuous access to work-related information can result in an overload of information which, in turn, leads to insecurity and stress (Paridon and Hupke, 2009).

Available data from Eurofound's European Working Conditions Survey (Eurofound, 2015) shows that a higher share of ICT-based mobile workers participate in on-the-job training than workers who always operate at the employers' premises.

One of the most problematic aspects of ICT-based mobile work seems to be its tendency to often result in supplementary working time and atypical working time patterns (such as working during the night or on weekends) (Eurofound and International Labour Office, 2017). Data from the EWCS (Eurofound, 2015) show that

a higher share of ICT-based mobile workers report working long hours and not having had a rest period of at least 11 hours at least once during the last month compared to those exclusively working at employers' premises. However, ICT-based mobile workers enjoy higher working time autonomy and generally report a good level of job satisfaction.

Another disadvantage of the isolation of mobile workers is their lack of access to informal information and lack of integration into the entire process (they work solely on their task and are less involved in the overall activities). Electronic communication does not match the richness of face-to-face communication: a lack of social contact may lead to a lack of opportunity to develop social/soft skills (such as teamwork or tolerance), an increasingly negative communication tone (including assertive or hostile language) and increased sense of work being impersonal. It is important to note that the decreases in productivity and increases in effort needed to maintain effective information exchange may lead to uncertainty and ambiguity, which can increase stress levels (European Commission, 2010).

Furthermore, as reported by Meyer et al (2007) and also shown by data from the EWCS (Eurofound, 2015), virtual collaboration may represent a lack of opportunity to contact supervisors or colleagues, resulting in a perceived lack of support and some potential for conflicts.

A number of ergonomic risk factors seem to be inherent in ICT-based mobile work: poor visual interfaces (due to the small display screens and controls of some mobile devices); problems related to reflective glare; insufficient levels of ambient light; excessive noise levels due to high volume settings to compensate for background noise; bad posture related to the use of devices in an unsuitable environment; and continuous exposure to radiation and electromagnetic fields arising from the use of mobile devices (European Commission, 2010; Popma, 2013). Maschke et al (2014) highlight that risk assessment regarding physical or psychological effects of mobile work is rare, and that the agreements on which ICT-based mobile work is based rarely include regulations related to health and safety; if included, these refer only to the general health and safety requirements. Since, however, the workplace is outside the employers' premises, this somewhat 'outsources' the employer's obligations to workers.

Implications for the labour market

ICT-based mobile work has the potential to revolutionise production, consumption and the way of working. The shift towards an increasing dependence on information technology (IT) for organising work reduces the importance of the traditional physical workplace (Vinnova, 2007). Furthermore, increasing use of IT results in upskilling, new working practices and organisational efficiency gains, strengthening overall competitiveness and contributing to business growth (including job creation). The danger is, however, that employers and employees cannot adapt to the acceleration of technological developments and consequently fall behind.

The flexibility that is related to this new form of employment is different from the flexibility associated with more traditional forms: ICT-based mobile work implies more self-organisation and self-management for the workers involved.

It is expected that, if mobile work becomes more widespread, work organisation will become a less hierarchical process. Individually tailored working arrangements and employment relationships are becoming a reality (Alasoini et al, 2012).

Finally, ICT-based mobile work offers some potential for the labour market integration of certain groups, people who are unable to regularly work a certain number of core hours in the employer's premises (whether for health reasons or family responsibilities). In addition, it allows people living in more remote regions to work without having to spend a lot of time commuting (or to use the commuting time for work).

Voucher-based work

General characteristics

In this form of employment an employer acquires a voucher from a third party (generally a governmental authority) to be used as payment for the worker of a service rather than cash. Often, the services provided are specific tasks or fixed-term assignments and as a consequence are related to casual and portfolio work.

Eurofound (2015) identified such systems, mainly related to household services and the agricultural sector. The rationale behind the focus on these two sectors is that they are often core areas of undeclared work, and voucher-based work aims to provide an easy-to-handle instrument to legalise such employment. This refers to a low level of administrative burden needed to establish and end the employment relationship, as well as the flexibility to do so quickly in line with volatile demand for personnel.

Due to this intention, voucher-based work is relatively well regulated. Legislation, for example, specifies the tasks that can be commissioned through this form of employment, the maximum scope (to avoid bypassing of other employment regulations) or wage levels and social protection coverage.

The vast majority of workers under the voucher system are marginal employees or have an out-of-the-labour force status (Korunka et al, 2007). Workers tend to be younger, female and have a low level of qualifications (INSEE, 2008).

Implications for working conditions

In general, voucher workers might experience job insecurity, excessive flexibility and limited employment guarantees. On the other hand, it can be assumed that voucher workers succeed in arranging working time with the employer according to their needs. Furthermore, having a job close to the workplace is deemed advantageous, particularly for voucher workers with childcare responsibilities. Anecdotal evidence also points towards a high level of autonomy of voucher workers, particularly for those working in household services. At the same time, voucher workers might suffer from social isolation as voucher workers hardly ever work in teams.

In some systems, minimum hourly wages are prescribed. While they are deemed decent, the income of the voucher workers can still be considered low overall due to the limited working hours. However, an advantage is that remuneration is available comparatively quickly – for example, without having to wait for the end of the month.

The client's obligation to cover some social insurance contributions entitles the worker to some benefits, thereby improving their social protection compared with undeclared work.

In those countries in which working conditions are not regulated by law or collective agreements, these are subject to agreements between employers and employees. Bearing in mind that voucher-based work is often related to physically demanding activities, the potential long-term danger for the workers' health should not be neglected.

In general, voucher workers have limited access to training and career development possibilities are scarce (Gerard et al, 2012; Kreimer and Hartl, 2004).

Portfolio work

General characteristics

Eurofound (2015) understands portfolio work as small-scale contracting by freelancers, self-employed or micro enterprises, conducting work for a large number of clients. According to Clinton et al (2006) its main characteristics are:

- self-managed independent income-generating work, including the ability to present and market oneself
- building and maintaining client relationships from a variety of industries, including the need to continuously adapt to different work situations and clients' requirements
- development of a range of work that is situated outside any single organisation

Portfolio work is considered an increasing practice among the creative workforce (for example, journalists, translators and the media industry) (Platman, 2004; Deuze, 2008; Fraser and Gold, 2001) and among those working in professional, scientific and technical work (Leighton and Brown, 2013).

Portfolio work is dominated by male, middle-to-older-aged workers, driven by the desire for independence and self-fulfilment (Leighton and Brown, 2013). They tend to work on local and regional markets, and a high share works from home (Dörflinger et al, 2011).

Implications for working conditions

Portfolio work is characterised by high flexibility (and hence good work–life balance) and increased income levels – if job opportunities are available. A portfolio career can contribute positively to working life, especially when combined with flexibility, greater autonomy (self-management and high levels of responsibility), a sense of personal fulfilment, satisfaction, a variation of activities, new challenges and opportunities to combine different skills, and choice in terms of projects and remuneration.

On the negative side, working time might be open-ended and access to training and other HR measures is limited. Work patterns might be irregular and uncertain as regards type of work, workload and frequency, and phases of very high work intensity might follow phases of no work at all. This can result in situations in which portfolio workers feel forced to work during illness, postpone holidays or work continuously for long periods (Platman, 2004). Furthermore, income security may be low.

Assignments might not match with skills and experience (if the portfolio worker takes on any jobs just to secure a sufficient workload and income), and social status might be lower than for more standard forms of employment (Cohen and Mallon, 1999; Fraser and Gold, 2001; Platman, 2004; Wild, 2012). Due to limited social interactions – especially if working from home – portfolio workers might experience social isolation (Clinton et al, 2006; Wild, 2012).

Implications for the labour market

Portfolio work provides a flexible type of employment which can contribute to extending the working lives of the ageing labour force up to and beyond retirement age. In such cases, portfolio work provides an opportunity for additional income after retirement with flexibility for both workers and employers, based on the acknowledgement of the knowledge/expertise of the older worker (Platman, 2004; Wild, 2012).

Portfolio work provides employees with the opportunity to start self-employed activities next to their regular job, to build up professional networks, experience and initial financial stability before an entrepreneur starts their own company (Wild, 2012).

Platform work

General characteristics

Platform work is a form of employment that uses an online platform to enable organisations or individuals to access other organisations or individuals to solve specific problems or to provide specific services in exchange for payment. Eurofound (2018) understands platform work to have a number of defining features:

- the organisation of paid work through online platforms
- the involvement of three parties – online platform, client and worker
- its use to conduct specific tasks or solve specific problems
- its operation as a form of outsourcing/contracting out
- 'jobs' are broken down into 'tasks'
- services are provided on an on-demand basis

As the main traded good is labour, not the material or capital good itself, sales platforms (like eBay) or platforms on which access to accommodation is provided (like Airbnb) as well as financial services fall outside the scope of this understanding. Similarly, non-commercial transactions – like volunteering, networking, social media (such as LinkedIn) or any other form of transaction not involving any payment – are not considered to constitute platform work.

Examples of tasks commissioned through platform work include developing web content and software; database building and cleaning; classifying web pages; transcribing scanned documents and audio clips; classifying and tagging images; reviewing documents; checking websites for specific content; validating search results; and tasks related to advertising, such as the design of logos or the drafting of slogans (Horton and Chilton, 2010; Felstiner, 2011). Next to such services that are delivered online, platform work can also be used for services delivered offline, such as taxi rides or domestic services (for example, gardening or maintenance tasks).

While platforms have to follow general legal frameworks, such as commercial codes, civil codes, consumer protection acts, data protection legislation, and others, across Europe there is very limited specific regulation of the employment relationships in platform work. This results in a situation in which the employment status of platform workers is legally unclear and the subject of much debate.

In recent years, an increasing heterogeneity among types of platform work has become evident. The criteria for differentiating types of platform work relate to structural characteristics and the business model of the platforms, characteristics of the tasks, accessibility of the platform or tasks and the matching process (Eurofound, 2018). Following from that, a 'platform work type' is a combination of a specific manifestation of each of the identified classification elements, resulting in a theoretical scope of millions of types. In practice, there currently seem to be 10 types with a critical mass of platforms and workers in Europe (Eurofound, forthcoming).

Implications for working conditions

The pay associated with platform work seems to be low and insecure (Irani and Silberman, 2013; Ipeirotis, 2010; Silberman et al, 2010; Felstiner, 2011; Klebe and Neugebauer, 2014; Alkhatib et al, 2017). However, larger tasks, services delivered offline and those requiring greater skills tend to be higher priced and compensated at market prices (Eurofound, 2015; Schmid-Drüner, 2016; Schmidt, 2017; De Groen and Maselli, 2016; Degryse, 2016). Furthermore, as platform workers are generally considered to be self-employed/freelancers, they receive neither company benefits (including access to HR measures such as training, mentoring or coaching) nor job security (Felstiner, 2011); lack of social protection is also a factor.

Other negative aspects highlighted are information asymmetry (lack of information about employers and the tasks to be performed) (Codagnone et al, 2016; Eurofound, 2015; Felstiner, 2011; Schmid-Druner, 2016); the lack of a reliable dispute resolution system (for example, to arbitrate in the case of an employer refusing to pay for work done); the possibility of privacy violation (as workers often have to disclose personal information without a clear guarantee of confidentiality); and the lack of support from colleagues and managers (Durward et al, 2016; Schmidt and Kathmann, 2017). In addition, tasks – particularly micro tasks – commissioned through platform work tend to be low-skilled and may be trivial in nature – hence, not very rewarding as regards work content.

However, the increased level of autonomy regarding freedom to choose when and where to work, how long to spend working, and what work to perform (resulting in a better work–life balance and the opportunity to combine multiple jobs) are often indicated as the main positive aspects of platform work, together with the opportunities of realising substantial gains in personal productivity, as workers have the possibility to adapt service provision to their personal working patterns (Felstiner, 2011; Howe, 2008; Berg, 2016; De Groen and Maselli, 2016). Nevertheless, some characteristics of specific platforms limit the flexibility and autonomy of platform workers.

Another positive aspect of platform work is its potential to create skills development opportunities and facilitate learning-by-doing (Barnes et al, 2014; Eurofound, 2015; Graham et al, 2017; Kuek et al, 2015; Schmidt, 2017).

Implications for the labour market

Silberman et al (2010) pointed out that platform work has created work for many people in a time of uncertainty, while other authors state that it creates new opportunities for income and social mobility in regions of the world with stagnant local economies, while mitigating the challenges arising from a shortage of experts in specific geographical areas (Heeks, 2017; Malik et al, 2017; Schmidt, 2017).

In particular, platforms that have established competitions for tasks might provide an opportunity for young professionals with good skills but with little track record: award criteria would focus more on the content than on previous experience and reputation.

However, Kittur et al (2013) highlight that platform work can displace current workers and replace some forms of skilled work with unskilled work, as jobs are broken down into smaller tasks, although some platforms establish strategies to ensure that high-quality work is commissioned through the platform. And there is the risk that comparatively secure dependent employment could be transformed into more precarious forms of employment if platform work becomes more common for specific types of jobs.

Collaborative self-employment

General characteristics

Cooperation among self-employed workers and among SMEs is a traditional way of doing business in order to overcome the limitations imposed on those forms of economic activity by their smaller scale. However, Eurofound (2015) focuses on three forms of cooperation recently emerging that go beyond traditional supply-chain or business-partner relationships:

- umbrella organisations
- co-working
- cooperatives

Umbrella organisations provide self-employed workers with some support related to administrative obligations (such as filing tax forms and drafting invoices) while the workers retain the main characteristics of entrepreneurial activity (risk, independence, autonomy and control). In some cases, membership in an umbrella organisation qualifies the self-employed worker or freelancer for specific benefits, such as better social protection standards than those offered by standard self-employment. Self-employed workers in umbrella organisations tend to be older and more highly skilled.

Co-working refers to the sharing of work space and back office/supportive tasks. It goes beyond availing of a 'company hotel': it entails more intensive cooperation and exchange among the self-employed workers in the co-working centre. Co-working spaces seem to be emerging particularly in non-traditional sectors, such as creative industries, but also in consultancy (Eichhorst, 2012). Workers tend to be younger (aged around 35–40 years), highly skilled and mostly nationals of the host country.

Cooperatives do not have the 'shared location' element of co-working, but are characterised by even more intensive cooperation among workers in terms of production, marketing and strategic management.[1] This helps workers meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.[2]

Implications for working conditions

Co-working is seen to be beneficial for work–life balance as it helps to separate the private and working sphere while facilitating a high level of flexibility for the coworkers (particularly if the coworking centre offers 24/7 access); some coworking spaces provide, for example, childcare facilities. Furthermore, co-working can reduce the feeling of isolation that self-employed workers or freelancers may experience. The enhanced social interaction may also result in improved soft skills and hence employability.

Some cooperatives and umbrella organisations are beneficial for workers as they give better access to social protection while providing the opportunity to develop one's own business activity.

Implications for the labour market

Umbrella organisations contribute to a more dynamic labour market, enabling more people to enter into self-employment due to reduced administrative burdens, and resulting in a lower number of long-term unemployed (Tillväxtverket, 2012). Another study concludes that umbrella employment is often a transient phase from regular paid employment to self-employment (IFAU, 2001).

Similarly, a successful co-working space can attract self-employed workers and start-up companies, and serve as the starting point for synergies among co-workers (and hence new project ideas). This indirectly benefits the labour market through enhanced entrepreneurial activity, mainly in dynamic and innovation-oriented economic sectors. As many of the currently existing co-working centres are clustered in metropolitan areas, they could also contribute to sustainable urban development and structural/sectoral change.

The European Parliament report on the contribution of cooperatives to overcoming the economic crisis points out that cooperatives play an essential role in the European economy, especially in times of crisis, by combining profitability with solidarity, creating high-quality jobs, strengthening social, economic and regional cohesion and generating social capital (European Parliament, 2013). Many cooperatives have proved themselves to be more resilient in times of crisis than many conventional enterprises, both in terms of employment rates and business closures (Roelants et al, 2012; Zevi et al, 2011). Moreover, cooperatives can effectively promote entrepreneurship, as they allow groups of citizens to jointly take on business responsibilities.

1 Although cooperatives are not necessarily considered to include self-employed workers, they are discussed in this section due to the 'networking element' they share with the other collaborative forms of self-employment described here.

2 http://www.cicopa.coop/What-is-a-cooperative.html

Conclusions and policy pointers

Main characteristics of new forms of employment

The mapping exercise conducted in the framework of Eurofound (2015) discovered a wide variety of new employment trends. New forms of employment have been emerging due to an increased demand from employers and/or employees for enhanced flexibility, either due to economically challenging times or societal developments. Consequently, some of the forms of employment discussed are opportunity-driven while others emerge out of necessity, and the respective drivers might differ between employers and workers.

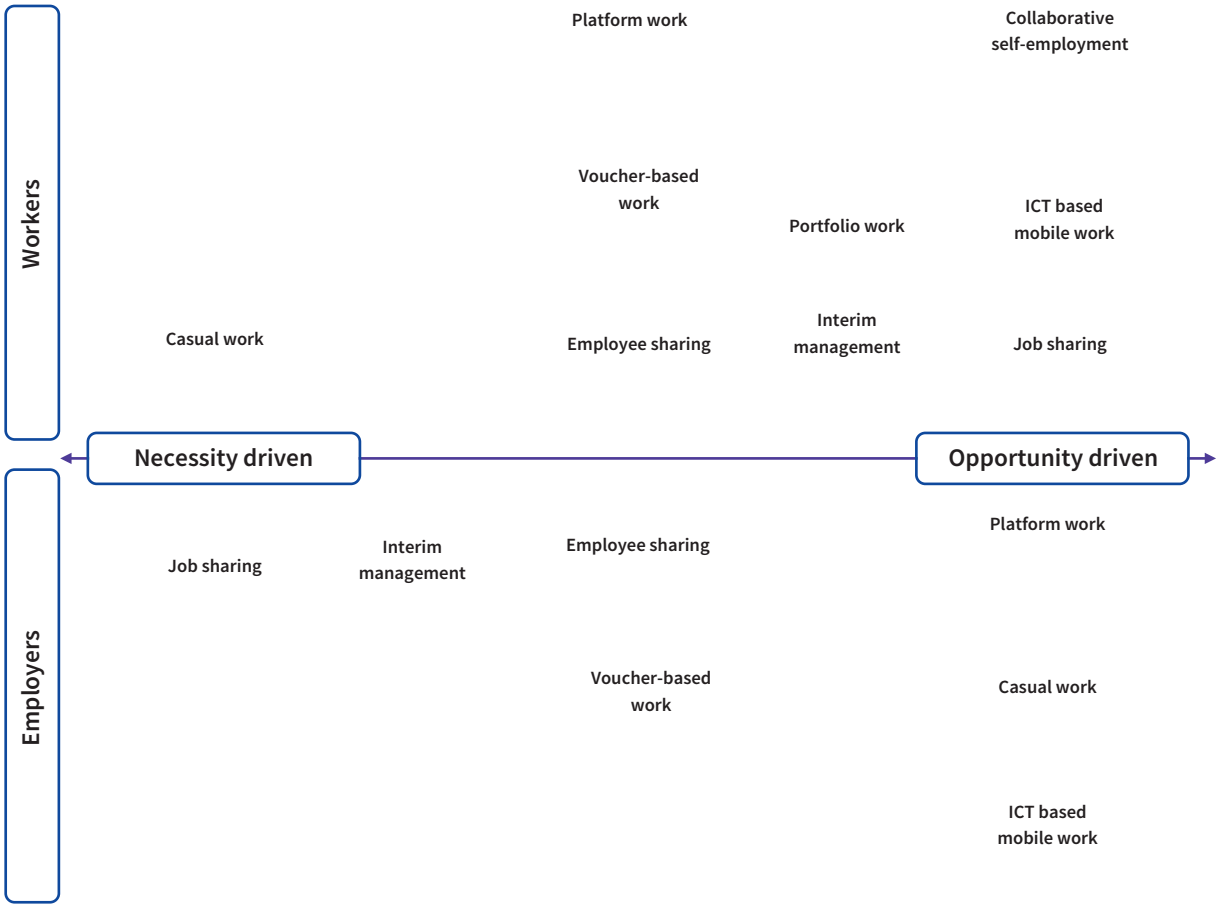
In most Member States, the majority of the analysed forms of employment do not have a specific legal or collectively agreed basis. This might be attributed to their recent emergence as a practice rather than being a strategically planned labour market development.

Exceptions are casual work and voucher-based work, for which a regulatory framework has been established in order to avoid abuse or as a means to legalise undeclared work.

Employee sharing, job sharing, interim management, casual work, voucher-based work and cooperatives have been found to be more prominent in traditional industries, while ICT-based mobile work, portfolio work, platform work, umbrella organisations and co-working are more related to sectors such as IT or creative industries.

Workers in interim management, ICT-based mobile work, portfolio work, umbrella organisations and co-working tend to be highly skilled experts, while casual and voucher-based workers are lower skilled. In employee sharing, job sharing and platform work, both can be found. Casual work, ICT-based mobile work,

Figure 3: Workers' and employers' drivers for engaging in new forms of employment



Source: *Eurofound*

platform work and co-working are characterised by a high share of younger workers, while older workers are more dominant in interim management, portfolio work and umbrella organisations, since a longer work experience is required. Except for casual work, voucher-based work and platform work, it can be assumed that the new form of employment is the main or exclusive income source for the workers.

Impact on working conditions and the labour market

While it needs to be highlighted that the operational implications of each form of employment might strongly vary from case to case, some generalisations can be derived from the research on hand, bearing in mind that elements presented as beneficial in the following paragraphs can be disadvantageous in individual cases and vice versa (depending on the employers' and employees' characteristics and preferences, as well as the bilateral agreements between them).

In particular, employee sharing and job sharing seem to result in beneficial working conditions; interim management can also be considered advantageous, bearing in mind the characteristics of the affected workers. For example, higher stress levels or bearing responsibility oneself for training and career development might be considered 'normal' for this highly specialised managerial staff and acceptable given the other benefits inherent in this form of employment. For dependent employees, ICT-based mobile work offers some important advantages related to flexibility, autonomy and empowerment, while at the same time bringing about some dangers related to work intensification, such as higher stress levels, increased working time, the blurring of boundaries between work and private life and the outsourcing of traditional employer responsibilities (notably in the field of health and safety) to the workers.

For freelancers and the self-employed, portfolio work, platform work and collaborative self-employment mainly offer the potential of enriching the content of the tasks through diversification. The underlying model for all three forms of voluntary engagement in a variety of activities enhances workers' autonomy and hence has positive effects on flexibility and work–life balance (as it is up to the worker to choose). However, it can also be a disadvantage due to high competition and the pressure to take on any task that is available. These forms of employment are, at the same time, characterised by job and income insecurity and low social protection. However, these characterise freelance and self-employed work in general, and are not specific to these emerging forms of employment.

In a similar way, voucher-based work shows some less favourable working conditions (mainly job insecurity, social and professional isolation, as well as limited access to HR measures and career development), but these can be explained by the type of job/tasks for which they are applied rather than the form of employment itself. On the contrary, the specific concept can be considered to bring some advantages to workers, notably the legalisation of their status and, consequently, some social protection, minimum income, and health and safety standards.

Among the analysed new forms of employment, casual work is the one which raises most concerns regarding working conditions. It is characterised by low levels of job and income security, limited social protection, limited access to HR measures and in many cases not very exciting tasks. The high level of flexibility might be appreciated by some workers who benefit from an improved work–life balance, but tends to be too much for the majority of casual workers insofar as more continuity would be appreciated.

With the exception of casual work, the flexibility inherent in most new forms of employment can be considered as positive for the working conditions of affected workers (not only for employers), enabling them to achieve a better work–life balance. In addition, the increased level of autonomy, responsibilities and content of tasks are assessed positively by workers.

With regards to access to training and skills development, and the related career development opportunities, the picture is not so straightforward. While employee sharing, job sharing, platform work and collaborative self-employment seem to have positive effects on these elements, interim management, casual work, voucher-based work and portfolio work have less favourable effects.

Job insecurity and social/professional isolation are widespread among the analysed new forms of employment, which again can be explained by the strong flexibility element. This also brings about higher stress levels and work intensity as workers tend to work harder in the hope of gaining more security if they prove to be a good performer.

What is also striking is the considerable lack of representation of the workers in these forms of employment. Again, this might be attributed to the enhanced flexibility, resulting in a fragmented workforce from the perspective of workers' representatives, making it difficult for workers' representatives to identify and approach workers engaged in these forms of employment.

As regards labour market effects, employee sharing, job sharing and interim management seem to be the most beneficial of the analysed new forms of employment, while casual work can be considered the most disadvantageous.

All of the identified new forms of employment have the potential of positive effects on the labour market integration of specific groups of workers. In the case of job sharing, casual work or voucher-based work, these groups are mainly people who cannot or do not want to do a full-time job – for example, due to care responsibilities, engagement in educational activities or ill health. Interim management, but also job sharing, may be beneficial for older workers to extend their working life up to or beyond retirement age. Casual work and platform work might offer job opportunities to young people, giving them access to the labour market to gain their first job experiences. Employee sharing, ICT-based mobile work and platform work can also be beneficial for workers located in remote or rural areas with limited job opportunities.

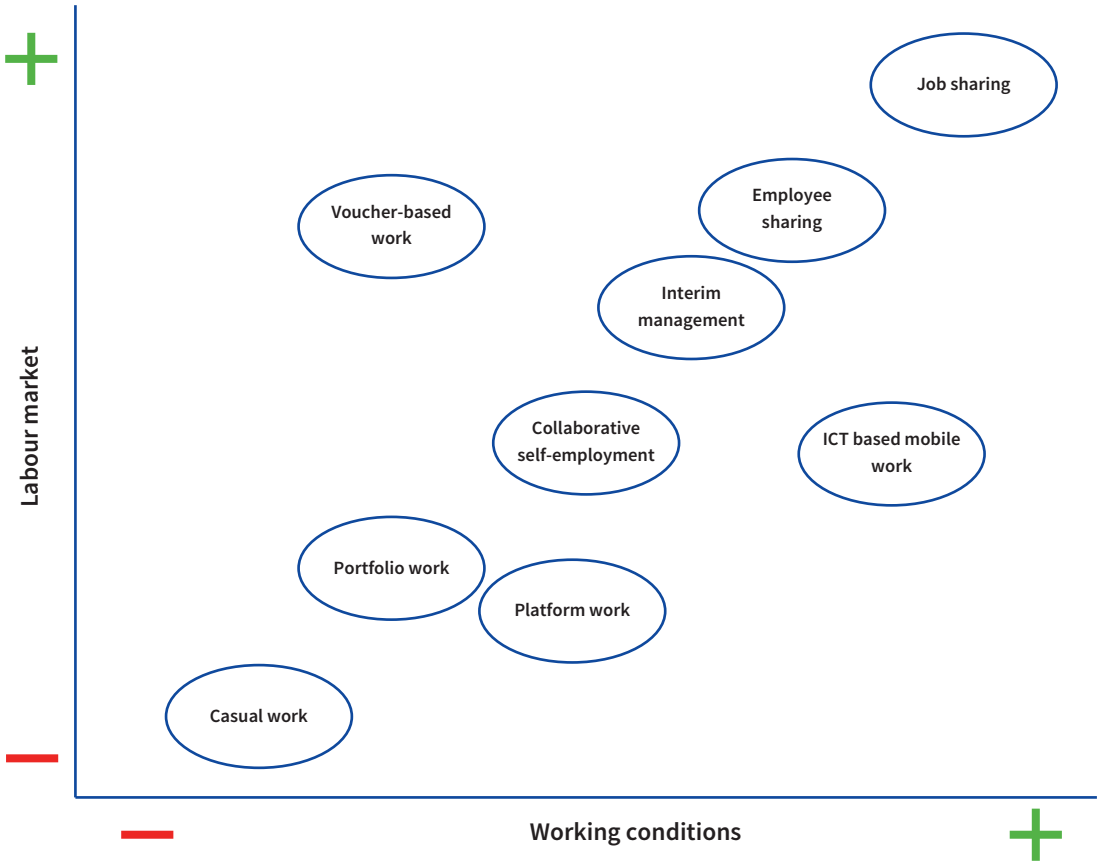
In contrast to this, the job creation effects of the new forms of employment are rather limited. Only employee sharing seems to have real job creation potential, while job sharing and interim management are assessed as contributing to job retention. With voucher-based work, some evidence hints towards job creation possibilities; at the same time, its potential to 'crowd out' standard employment is highlighted. The latter is also observed – even more so – for casual work and platform work.

Most of the emerging forms of employment discussed are seen to contribute to labour market innovation and making the labour market more attractive, in terms of offering job opportunities better suited to the specific needs of workers (as in job sharing or ICT-based mobile work), offering the possibility to try out self-employment in a comparatively sheltered environment with little entrepreneurial risk involved (portfolio work, platform work, collaborative self-employment) or improving the regional labour market through cooperative HR management (employee sharing).

These innovative HR practices can result in organisational learning as well as enhanced knowledge transfer among workers and also across companies. In combination with the often favourable training/skills development opportunities, this can result in a general upskilling of the labour force for most of the analysed new forms of employment.

On the negative side, however, casual work and voucher-based work in particular could contribute to greater labour market segmentation, as they might result in a widespread acceptance of fragmented jobs,

Figure 4: Assessment of implications of new forms of employment for working conditions and labour market, by form of employment



Source: *Eurofound*

related to low income and limited social protection. As specific groups of workers have been identified to be dominant in these forms of employment, social polarisation might be an outcome. As regards ICT-based mobile work, there is some inherent danger that not all groups in the labour market can keep up with these new technological developments and may be left behind, again resulting in some labour market segmentation. In contrast, job sharing might contribute to diminishing labour market segmentation, particularly as regards the (re)integration of people with care responsibilities, and experiencing ill health.

To conclude this section, it can be summarised that among the analysed new forms of employment, job sharing, employee sharing and interim management seem to provide the most beneficial working conditions and labour market implications. ICT-based mobile work brings about some positive working conditions, while the labour market effects might be partly negative. However, voucher-based work has some good labour market potential, while working conditions show room for improvement. Casual work is the form of employment that – from both a labour market perspective and regarding working conditions – raises the most concerns.

Policy pointers

The question arises as to whether there is a need for policy intervention, be it on the part of governments or social partners. For some of the discussed emerging forms of employment (such as portfolio work or umbrella organisations) probably no specific initiatives are needed as the challenges related to them (such as low social protection, job and income insecurity) can be attributed to the general characteristics of the self-employed or freelancers and are not specific to this particular way of performing their activities.[3]

On the other hand, the current research has raised some issues where public intervention could be useful, either to enhance the use of new forms of employment that have been assessed as beneficial for both workers and employers, or to counteract practices that might deteriorate working conditions or labour market developments.

The new forms of employment that could have positive effects on working conditions and the labour market are not very widespread across Europe, which is to be attributed to their recent emergence, and the tendency to avoid exploring workplace or labour market innovations (for example, employee sharing, interim management or job sharing). In those cases, information provision and other awareness-raising measures targeted at both employers and workers are recommended. Some of these forms could be a more beneficial alternative to other forms of flexible work that turn out to be less advantageous for the workers and the labour market.

In some cases, the labour market is not ideally prepared to support or even allow the application of such beneficial new forms of employment. This either refers to cultural aspects such as a negative attitude towards or low wage levels in part-time work in some new Member States which hinders the use of job sharing, or existing legislation imposing a framework on the new form of employment, not allowing its full exploitation (for example, employee sharing or voucher-based work).

Regarding the regulation of new forms of employment more generally (and referring to both legislation and collective agreement), the anecdotal evidence from this project highlights the room for improvement that exists in terms of clarifying and facilitating the frameworks. While it is acknowledged that they need to be designed in a way so as to be a sound safety net for workers, they should at the same time find a balance incorporating the flexibility needed by the employers, particularly in the current economic climate. In addition, they should be formulated in a clear and concise way to make them easy to understand for employers, workers, and their representatives and consultants. Furthermore, it is evident that frequent legislative changes cause confusion and a feeling of insecurity among the target groups.

For some of the analysed forms of employment (notably casual work, but to some extent also ICT-based mobile work, job sharing and platform work), the findings of the current research clearly show the need for some safety nets for workers. In some countries this is already done through legislation or collective agreements. Sometimes this results in a situation in which either the workers are still not well protected, or they are protected in a way that makes the form of employment (in practice) unusable for the employers and perhaps leads to their resorting to undeclared work. A balance is hard to find, highlighting once more the benefit of cross-national exchange of experiences and lessons learned.

3 This does not mean that these issues should not be addressed, but rather that within them or going beyond them no particular focus on these forms of employment seems to be required.

Furthermore, not only should regulating frameworks be established or reconsidered, but also monitoring and control mechanisms might need to be designed or improved. From the anecdotal evidence of this project, it emerged that labour inspectorates do not place sufficient focus on new forms of employment, partly due to a lack of awareness and partly due to lack of resources. However, there are, for example, initiatives by trade unions that have set up special institutions where workers can report misuse of the system that might then be followed up.

Quite naturally, the above pointers are strongly related to labour market and social policy. However, it may be desirable to extend the discussion on new forms of employment to other policy fields. New forms could, for example, be included in policies relating to sectors, SMEs, innovation and regions.

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Across Europe, new forms of employment are emerging that differ significantly from traditional employment. Some of these forms of employment transform the relationship between employer and employee while others change work organisation and work patterns. They often involve locations other than the usual employer's premises, and or extensive use of information and communications technology. This report identifies nine forms of employment that are either new or have become increasingly important in Europe since the year 2000. All of the nine forms discussed are aimed at increasing flexibility for employers and/or employees. Some may benefit employers and employees equally, but in a few cases there are concerns regarding their impact on working conditions and the labour market. The report highlights the need for awareness of potential problems and of safety nets for workers.

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