



# **Platform Economy –** Decent Work in Times of Digital Transformation

**#FairClickGig**

**Conference report**  
**Berlin, 21 September 2020**



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# Platform Economy – Decent Work in Times of Digital Transformation

<b>Organiser</b>	Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Services, Berlin
<b>Moderator</b>	Dr Julia Kropf
<b>Co-Moderator</b>	Martin Hoffmann
<b>Date</b>	21 September 2020
<b>Languages</b>	German and English

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## Get started with ...

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<b>From 10.30 am</b>	Barrier-free Yoga (video) and the conference reader (download) on the conference website
<b>From 10.45 am</b>	Polls with participants

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## From 11.00 am Official start of the conference

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<b>11.00 am – 12.30 pm</b>	<b>SESSION I</b> <b>Platform work as a model for the future?</b> <b>Digital business models in the European and international context</b> <i>Participant interaction with chat and polls</i>
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- ▶ **Welcome address**  
The Governing Mayor of Berlin, Michael Müller
- ▶ **Video:** What motivates me to work on platforms? What are my experiences with platform work? –  
Statements of platform workers
- ▶ **Keynote and live-interview on the topic of**  
“Digital business models in the platform economy – significance and classification of platforms within the overall economy”  
Prof Dr Jan Marco Leimeister, University of Kassel
- ▶ **Introductory welcome and live-interview**  
Senator for Integration, Labour and Social Services, Berlin, Elke Breitenbach

► **Platform work in international and European comparison**

**Stefan Olsson**, Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission

**Jonathan Barr**, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

**Dr Janine Berg**, International Labour Organization (ILO)

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12.30 pm – 1.30 pm

**BREAK**

The following materials are available during the break:

- [Conference reader](#)
- [Welcome address of the Governing Mayor](#)
- [Video with statements of platform workers](#)
- [Barrier-free Yoga](#)

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1.30 pm – 3.15 pm

**SESSION II**

**Shaping decent work on platforms – social security, flexibility, regulatory needs**

*Participant interaction with chat and polls*

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► **Platform work as a matter of controversy:**

Employees, solo self-employed or customers?  
Employers or (merely) intermediaries?

**Michael Six Silberman**, IG Metall  
(Metal Workers' Industrial Union)

**Dr Johanna Wenckebach**, Hugo Sinzheimer  
Institute for Labour and Social Security Law  
of the Hans Böckler Foundation

**Dr Arne-Christian Sigge**, content.de

**Philip Huffmann**, Helpling

► **What it takes:** Representation of interests,  
social security and advisory services

**Orry Mittenmayer**, Gewerkschaft Nahrung-  
Genuss-Gaststätten (German Food, Beverages  
and Catering Union)

**Dr Alessio Bertolini**, Oxford University

**Dr Wenke Wegner**, ArbeitGestalten  
Beratungsgesellschaft mbH

- ▶ **Whom it particularly concerns:** Platform work from a migration and gender perspective

Prof Dr Manuela Bojadžijev, Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research (BIM) at the Humboldt University

Dr Christian Pfeffer-Hoffmann, Minor – Projektkontor für Bildung und Forschung gGmbH

Prof Dr Aysel Yollu-Tok, Berlin School of Economics and Law

- ▶ **Who is responsible for education and qualification?** The portability and recognition of skills acquired on platforms

Dr Konstantinos Pouliakas, Cedefop

Prof Dr Anoush Margaryan, Copenhagen Business School

Dr Ina Lindow, Federal Ministry of Education and Research

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3.15 pm – 3.45 pm

## BREAK

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3.45 pm – 5.15 pm

## SESSION III

**“Platformisation” as a trend – platform work in urban spaces, good practices and alternative models**

*Participant interaction with chat and polls*

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- ▶ **How is the platform economy changing our cities?** – “Platformisation” as a trend in the urban working world

Prof Dr Manuela Bojadžijev, Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research (BIM) at the Humboldt University

Klemens Himpele, City of Vienna

Arjan Ploegmakers, City of Amsterdam

- ▶ **Good practices and alternative models in the platform economy**

Assoc Prof Dr Trebor Scholz, The New School, New York

Fredrik Söderqvist, Unionen Sweden

Gesa Gräf, CleverShuttle

- **Closing panel:** What are the consequences for work and qualification in urban spaces?  
Summary and conclusion

Alexander Fischer, State Secretary for  
Labour and Social Services, Berlin

Dr Staatssekretärin a.D. Annette Niederfranke,  
International Labour Organization (ILO)

Silvia Ganzerla, EUROCITIES

Irene Mandl, Eurofound

# Abstract

► The platform economy plays a crucial role in the ongoing digital transformation. This year's European conference will focus on platforms in the service sector mediating between providers (e.g. click workers, courier drivers, cleaning staff) and customers. The current challenging environment elevates the importance of occupational groups such as click and gig workers as they provide delivery and courier services that are brokered by platforms. The need to organise and shape this field of work has become even more apparent.

The conference will focus on how decent work can be achieved in the ongoing digitalisation process, especially for employees in the platform economy. This includes fair pay, improved workers' rights, good working conditions and social security for people who find themselves in precarious employment. At the same time, platform work is also associated with easier access to work as well as innovation and creativity.

Especially in metropolitan areas such as Berlin, where the service economy is the major employment sector, platform work is strongly represented. The Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Services is committed to shaping the digitalisation of the world of work in accordance with the principles of decent work, for example through the dialogue process "Work 4.0 – made in Berlin". The conference will therefore address both the challenges and the opportunities of platform work.

The topic will be highlighted from a European, national and urban perspective. In addition, approaches and examples of good practice from Berlin and other European cities will be exchanged to promote mutual learning and appropriate action.



## Results of the conference

# 12-Point Policy Paper



### I. Rules for fair platform work

#### 1. Decent Work as the commodity worth protecting

Behind platforms are the people who provide the services. Protecting these people needs to take priority over other interests. This means good working conditions, a fair wage, and social as well as legal insurance, e.g. in the case of illness, accidents or old age. A lack of social insurance, particularly among the solo self-employed, can leave people in a precarious position. Due to the large variety of platforms and business models, it is necessary to (re) define the terms “platforms” and “platform workers” in their social, political, and legal contexts

#### 2. Promoting positive approaches

Fair working conditions must form the basis of how companies operate. Policy-makers need to promote positive approaches and social innovation. Platform cooperatives provide a model in which employees themselves are owners of the platforms and thus have a much greater say in how the platforms operate. Another positive approach lies in voluntary commitments to Decent Work, for example via the Code of Conduct of the German Crowdsourcing Association, which various platforms have already adopted.

#### 3. Apply existing laws

The same basic principles should apply to platform work as to any other kind of work, even if some adaptation is required. Employment law already offers some applicable regulations, for example to prevent fixed-term contracts that lack a justifiable reason. Procurement law is also relevant in this respect. Tenders must clearly stipulate that contracts will only be awarded to companies whose employees work under the appropriate social conditions. However, the existing regulations are less effective when it comes to digital and international work.

#### 4. Create new regulatory measures

A standardised, European approach to the topic is necessary. The Digital Services Act has the potential to become a milestone on this path.<sup>1</sup> The task is to involve all kinds of platform models and recognise that many platforms are not merely “bulletin boards/yellow pages”. An interesting international regulation already exists in the area of seafaring. In the context of shipowners’ liability, global standards for working conditions at sea were introduced and these standards are monitored at ports. Working hours and wage levels are examined. The liability of shipowners does not offer an exact blueprint for the platform economy, which operates in the virtual domain. However, the principle of developing and establishing global minimum standards whose compliance is

<sup>1</sup> Ursula von der Leyen has declared the “Digital Services Act” a central project of her time in office, with the potential to fundamentally change the digital world. In addition, in 2021 the EU Commission wants to present an initiative to improve the working conditions of platform workers.

then monitored by individual states could also serve as a model for the platform economy and its working conditions.



### 5. Use urban policy to link stakeholders

Cities are important stakeholders, as developments surrounding the platform economy can be seen here as if under a microscope. For this reason, the experiences of cities need to be incorporated into the discussion. Urban policy can play a key role in linking various (governmental) levels and additional stakeholders.

### 6. Create open dialogue between cities

An open dialogue between cities is necessary to prevent a “race to the bottom”, i.e. platform operators locating to those places which offer the cheapest conditions. Existing structures, such as the EURO CITIES network, can be used to facilitate this dialogue, which should also involve employer organisations, trade unions, stakeholders from society, as well as platform workers themselves. For example, rules concerning registration, a minimum wage for Uber drivers, and a central website for complaints have already been introduced in some cities.<sup>2</sup>



### 7. Develop cooperation between trade unions and political institutions and platforms

Trade union structures are key to implementing good working conditions in the platform economy. They must cooperate equally with both political institutions and platforms. Platform operators must ensure that the representation of employee interests is possible. Furthermore, alliances should be formed to challenge companies which do not act transparently or fulfil their social responsibilities. The strong role played by social partners, including in the area of digital work, can be seen most clearly in Scandinavian countries such as Denmark and Sweden, where collective agreements are highly prevalent.

### 8. Guarantee advisory services

The active provision of advisory services (in multiple languages) can be seen as an important task of trade unions. The fact that platform workers have certain rights, especially with respect to social insurance, needs to be better communicated. The solo self-employed, in particular, need to be informed about social standards. This is also the task of trade unions and government authorities. Existing advisory services and information campaigns must be utilised, and new ones created. Platform operators must also be required to pass such information on.

<sup>2</sup> The cities in question are New York and Toronto.

### 9. Internal communication for platform workers

Platform workers must be able to make contact with one another. Legislators should facilitate this by obliging platforms to set up a communication channel as well as providing advice.

### 10. Create greater transparency, including algorithms

Platforms possess all the data and facts required for government authorities to establish suitable regulations to protect platform employees. Algorithms represent a kind of black box in this regard. In particular, algorithms which are used to evaluate employees should be made accessible and subject to expert review.

### 12. Training in the platform economy

Companies in the platform economy should also contribute to society by investing in training and thus training the staff that they themselves urgently require.



## IV. Developing skills

### 11. Document skills and develop new forms of certification

Platform work is performed on the basis of skills and offers workers the opportunity to acquire new skills or develop existing ones. Informal, independent learning is a key aspect of platform work. However, when it comes to the portability of skills, new forms of documentation and certification are required. Possibilities include digital references from employers or self-documentation in the form of an e-portfolio.

## SESSION I

**Platform work as a model for the future?**

Digital business models in the European and international context

# Welcome address from the Mayor of Berlin

Michael Müller



Michael Müller

Governing Mayor of Berlin

The Mayor of Berlin begins by welcoming all participants and emphasising the contemporary relevance of the topic: “Structural change caused by digitalisation is proceeding relentlessly in all areas of our society. Cities like Berlin are driving this development. The coronavirus pandemic has only accelerated the process. We are seeing how digital communication and work are rapidly growing in importance against the backdrop of this virus. Hundreds of thousands of people switched to home office overnight and had to learn new ways of doing things. The benefits and opportunities have become clear.”

“It is now impossible to imagine our everyday lives without communication platforms,

social networks, commercial platforms which offer services, and last but not least online retail. Thanks to the many delivery services and service providers, we can now order and receive services with the click of a mouse. As part of this process, digital platforms are becoming ever more important in our society, in the economy, and in the world of work. They pose challenges to cities, in particular. We notice the benefits, but we also see clearly where improvements are required: in digital infrastructure, equipment and technology, as well as in enforcing workers’ rights. The conference is focussed primarily on the world of work and the question of how to shape decent work for people working in the platform economy.”

The Mayor then talks about the opportunities and challenges associated with platform work as a new type of employment: “The work and services tend to be performed by self-employed persons who operate outside traditional company-based employment and thus also outside employment law. On the one hand, this offers greater flexibility and access to work. But the challenge is to ensure that platform workers have a right to decent work. Decent work means that, regardless of legal employment status, workers are guaranteed sufficient security, fair remuneration, social insurance, decent and humane working conditions, promotion opportunities and, of course, further training.”

“The coronavirus pandemic, in particular, has shown how advantageous, but also how precarious the situation for platform workers can be. While there has been a sharp increase in demand for delivery services, other jobs, such as in care and cleaning, have suddenly been eliminated or have become too risky. Delivery services also had to develop new hygiene standards. Berlin’s aid programme for the self-employed and solo self-employed, ‘Soforthilfe Corona’, helped to counteract the immediate negative consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.”

“Let us make use of the enormous opportunities which the platform economy offers



to both companies and workers, and at the same time find suitable solutions to ensure that workers are protected. We should be guided by the principle of decent work while remaining open to the new reality of work. This involves broadening our view – to Europe and beyond.”

The Mayor of Berlin wishes participants an interesting conference and a productive digital dialogue.

## Get Started with

# Polls and video with statements of platform workers

To introduce the conference theme, participants are asked via an online poll:  
What do you think motivates people to work on platforms?

The answers of the participants result in the following word cloud:



In the following video with statements of platform workers, the conference participants' assumptions are confirmed. The motivations of platform workers are in particular: flexibility and fast, low-threshold access to work.

## Keynote and live-Interview

# Digital business models in the platform economy –

## Significance and classification of platforms within the overall economy

Prof Dr Jan Marco Leimeister



Prof Dr Jan Marco Leimeister  
University of Kassel

Prof Dr Jan Marco Leimeister, Professor in the Department of Business Information Technology at the University of Kassel, distinguishes between four types of platforms:

- 1. trading platforms,**  
such as Amazon or Alibaba,
- 2. sharing platforms,**  
such as Airbnb or Uber
- 3. digital working platforms,**  
such as Upwork or Testbirds,  
and
- 4. delivery platforms,**  
such as Lieferando or Delivery Hero.

The working conditions found on these platforms vary depending on their type. The environment in which these platforms operate is very innovative, creating many new opportunities, including good living and working conditions. What needs to be clarified, however, is the framework to achieve this.

There are several aspects that make it difficult to define such a framework: On the one hand, successful platform models are characterised by their sheer size. This leads to an asymmetry of power vis-à-vis smaller and weaker players including competitors and customers. Another factor is the international nature of the platforms. National borders hardly play a role when platforms have their headquarters in another country. In Germany, for example, state regulation does not apply in such cases. Prof Dr Leimeister argues that, given the international nature of the phenomenon, the property worth protecting are the rights of EU citizens all over the world.

*Question from the chat: How many crowdworkers are there?*

Studies assume that in 2019 there were about 1 million crowdworkers in Germany. However, these figures should be interpreted with caution, as people on platforms are often

in multiple jobs. But it can be stated that the volume of this kind of work is growing faster than other forms of work. We can already see that during the Covid-19 pandemic, the growth in digital services and delivery services has increased significantly compared to previous years.

*Moderator: What could be a framework for the protection of platform workers?*

Prof Dr Leimeister emphasises that the same rules apply to platform work as to any other form of work. For this purpose, the whole range of regulations is available, which only has to be applied appropriately. Most platform operators define both the service providers and consumers as customers. However, when people regularly work more than 40 hours per week for a platform operator, this cannot be regulated under the guise of a supposed customer or self-employed person. The regulation becomes more difficult, however, as soon as the platform is located abroad. Then German law no longer applies.

*Moderator: Which research areas do you think are particularly interesting at the moment?*

Prof Dr Leimeister is interested in how complex projects can be better implemented through the use of a platform and how the platform potential for start-ups can be harnessed to become and remain internationally competitive. He also finds the self-certification of platforms very interesting. It shows customers that the platform is committed to good working conditions and that fair conflict resolution is being sought. There are already successful examples of this in Germany.

According to Prof Dr Leimeister, the concept of self-certification could be a good quality feature “made in Germany”.



#### Outputs for the 12-point policy paper

1. Decent Work as the commodity worth protecting
2. Promoting positive approaches
3. Apply existing laws
4. Create new regulatory measures



# Introductory welcome and live-interview

Elke Breitenbach



**Elke Breitenbach**

Senator for Integration,  
Labour and Social Services  
in Berlin

**In Senator Breitenbach's view, platforms play a bigger role in Berlin than in other major German cities.** Berlin has a large services sector, in which platforms are a relevant aspect. She expresses the principle of decent work as a policy aim: "We are committed to decent work." The Senator takes on a broad understanding of the concept. On the one hand, platform work offers flexibility, for example, for people with disabilities, who gain easier access to the regular labour market. However, platform workers need to be protected against risks such as accidents or reduced benefits. The Senator also mentions the problematic fact that for consumers it is very difficult to know the working conditions on platforms and to take this into account when making purchasing decisions.

**Senator Breitenbach considers it necessary to regulate the platform economy and stresses the importance of doing so on an international level.** She sees measures for self-regulation and voluntary commitments on the part of platform operators as a first step. At the same

time, consumers must be made aware of positive examples, so that they are encouraged to use platforms which guarantee fair working conditions and a minimum wage. In the care sector, stricter controls are required as this work is often performed in the private sphere.

*Question from a platform operator: Platforms need functioning digital interfaces with government authorities. How can this dialogue be improved?*

**Senator Breitenbach talks about how digitalisation in the public sector is still not sufficiently developed.** Things are moving in the right direction and the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the process. Nevertheless, Berlin's administrative bodies as well as German federal authorities still have some catching up to do compared to other countries in the world. But this will take time.

On the whole, the Senator believes that the views of society are developing in a positive way. The dominant approach of "the cheaper,

the better” always comes at the cost of those providing the service. In her view, this approach can and must change. A far bigger problem lies in the different laws of various countries. Necessary majorities for relevant legislation need to be found.

*Question from the chat: How can collective bargaining be promoted and the issue of “false” self-employment be tackled?*

**Senator Breitenbach: There are no restrictions on the right to organise, including the right to strike.** The legislation is not yet sufficiently developed to tackle “false” self-employment. For example, the right of associations to take legal action must be expanded.

Moreover, what is at stake are people and their social insurance with respect to e.g. illness, accidents, and old age. This is why co-operative associations have arisen with the shared understanding that everything does not revolve around profit. Labour disputes are also key in helping to achieve these aims.

Concerning the question as to how to find the right balance between the opportunities for economic development offered by platforms investing in Berlin on the one hand, and the guarantee of decent work on the other hand, **Senator Breitenbach** states that Berlin’s advantage lies in the diversity and potential of its skilled workers. **Employees need good training and decent work.** Her policy aim is to ensure that whoever invests in Berlin also offers decent work. For this reason, she is opposed to platforms with poor working conditions and welcomes those which guarantee good working conditions.

To conclude, the Senator wishes all participants an interesting discussion and a productive exchange of views, so that they can learn from each other and help improve working conditions in the platform economy.



## Panel 1

# Platform work in European and international comparison

Stefan Olsson, Jonathan Barr, Dr Janine Berg



**Stefan Olsson**

DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, European Commission

**Jonathan Barr**

OECD

**Dr Janine Berg**

ILO

The panellists agree that the platform economy is a broad phenomenon that is not easy to define. It is undisputed that the platform economy has become increasingly important in recent years. According to a study, it has grown by 30% in the last two years. It is estimated that currently about 1 – 3% of all employees worldwide work on platforms. However, this figure depends on how the platform economy is defined. The number of people working on platforms also varies widely by country. In France, for example, there is a relatively high proportion of people working on platforms when compared across Europe. Also, the measures taken in the light of the Corona pandemic are partly leading to an increase in platform work, e.g. in delivery services.

On the one hand, platform work offers an easy entry into the labour market, but on the other hand the work is often precarious and can also entail health risks. The status of workers on platforms is another difficulty. If they are employed, existing protective measures

apply. If they are self-employed, however, special challenges arise.

There are considerable differences in the regulation of platforms across Europe, depending on whether the platform workers are employed or self-employed. Political actors in many European countries have discovered platform work as an issue, but mostly within national borders. Platform work that is carried out across borders has been less explored up to now. At the international level, the labour standards of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) already apply, but international platform work raises new regulatory issues.

At the European level, a number of consultation processes are currently taking place: The European Commission hopes to make progress with regard to the regulation of platform work under the German Council Presidency. The Commission, under President Ursula von der Leyen, Vice-President Vesthager and Commissioner Schmit, will issue an



Stefan Olsson

initiative in the last quarter of 2021 to improve working conditions for platform workers. This will be preceded by a formal consultation of the social partners during 2021. The consultation will cover issues such as the classification of the workers and self-employed in the platform economy, the transparency of data, use of algorithms. The European Court and Justice as well as national courts are taking a number of decisions on the worker classification which will feed into this debate. Both the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers will discuss this issue during the German Council Presidency.

A coherent European approach to the issue is therefore necessary. According to the panelists, however, there is still a long way to go in terms of implementation, including in the area of data protection regulations.

Initiatives for platform work are also possible at regional and city level, since platform work is primarily an urban development. In some cities, regulations have already been introduced with existing instruments. For example, the city of Seattle has enforced a legal framework for collective bargaining in



Dr Janine Berg

the platform economy, Toronto has established rules on registration, and New York has a minimum wage for Uber-drivers and a central website where complaints can be reported. It was only possible to set this minimum wage because the company was obliged to provide the authorities with data on salaries and other relevant working conditions. According to the panellists, we need a greater exchange of experience between the cities and regions about such initiatives and good practices.

The challenge lies in the fact that platform work is constantly evolving and changing in very short intervals. If, for example, a regulation had been adopted by the EU 18 months ago, it might already be outdated today. At the same time it is important to ensure that the positive effects of the platform economy are not restricted. The role of the social partners is very important here. This can be observed, for example, in Scandinavian countries such as Denmark and Sweden where there is also a high level of collective bargaining coverage.

An interesting regulation at the international level can also be derived from seafarers. Under the shipowners' liability scheme,



Jonathan Barr

worldwide standards have been introduced for working conditions at sea, e.g. regarding working hours and wages, which are checked in the ports where ships dock. Although the shipowners' liability scheme is not an exact blueprint for the platform economy, because this takes place at least in part in the digital space, the principle of developing and setting minimum standards worldwide, which are then monitored for compliance by the individual states according to common standards, could be transferred to the platform economy and the working conditions there.

Overall, there is not "one solution", but many ways to achieve appropriate goals. In particular, however, platform operators must be obliged to be transparent as they have all the data and facts at their disposal that are necessary for the authorities to make appropriate regulations to protect platform workers.



**Outputs for the 12-point policy paper**

1. Decent Work as the commodity worth protecting
2. Promoting positive approaches
3. Apply existing laws
4. Create new regulatory measures
6. Create open dialogue between cities
7. Develop cooperation between trade unions and political institutions and platforms
10. Create greater transparency, including algorithms



## SESSION II

Shaping decent work on platforms –  
social security, flexibility, regulatory needs

## Panel 2

# Platform work as a matter of controversy: Employees, solo self-employed or customers? Employers or (merely) intermediaries?

Dr Johanna Wenckebach, Dr Arne-Christian Sigge,  
Philip Huffmann



Dr Johanna Wenckebach  
Hugo Sinzheimer Institute for  
Labour and Social Security Law  
of the Hans Böckler Foundation

Dr Arne-Christian Sigge  
content.de

Philip Huffmann  
Helping

*Moderator: Are platform operators to be considered intermediaries or employers? Are platform workers employees or customers? What legal differences result from these distinctions?*

Dr Johanna Wenckebach begins by explaining that central rights and regulations such as protection against dismissal, insurance or transparency of remuneration are not guaranteed if workers are defined as “clients”. She questions whether a development towards forms of work that lie outside a regulated context is desirable. After all, labour law was created to provide a legal framework to protect people who are in a relationship of dependency. This

need for protection continues to exist even if the workers are referred to as “clients”, according to Dr Wenckebach. The moderator raises the question of whether a new, third category is needed to reflect the situation: Employed, self-employed and dependent self-employed. Such a distinction already exists in the UK. Dr Wenckebach regards this solution as difficult, because a further category could lead to existing rights not being able to develop their protective function properly. It should not be those who are dependent who are in debt, but those who are advantaged in the imbalance of power. Above all, more transparency is needed for this.



Dr Johanna Wenkebach



Dr Arne-Christian Sigge



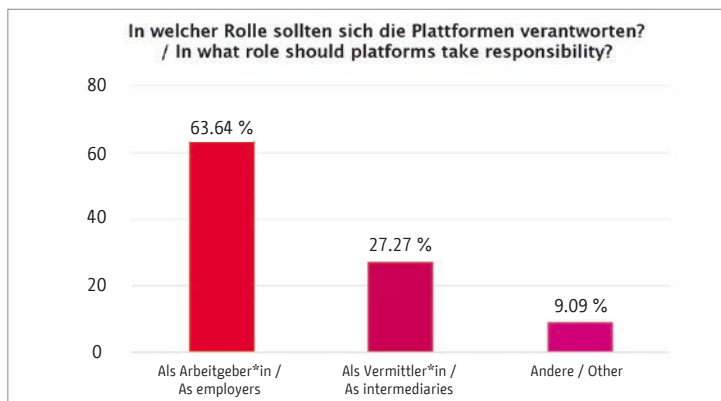
Philip Huffmann

*Moderator: What role do platforms play if they are not defined as employers? What is their responsibility towards platforms workers?*

Philip Huffmann from the service platform Helping considers his platform to be a technology company that makes a service available to other actors who use it to offer their services. Similar to a bulletin board, Helping is only a medium for the individual service providers to market themselves. Therefore, one cannot speak of an intermediary role, as the platform does not pass on orders to the service providers. Instead, they are provided with a technology that enables them to formulate an offer or request. According to Mr Huffmann, this is comparable to an advertisement in the newspaper. He therefore pleads for the definition of his platform as a “means”, as this underlines the passive character of the platform. Dr Wenkebach calls Mr Huffmann’s definition into question and asks him to explain how the ratings of platform workers fit into the concept of a “bulletin board”. Here, too, Mr Huffmann

refers to his platform as a medium through which customers can submit ratings to which service providers can respond. The moderator asks about the platform’s responsibility for the people who work via the platform. Mr Huffmann refers to regular customer surveys that show a high level of satisfaction among its users.

Conversely, Dr Arne-Christian Sigge from the platform content.de sees the role of his platform as a mediator. The platform mediates offers to authors who take on text editing services. The authors themselves decide when and where they want to edit which text. The aim is to offer a sustainable and economic service and to establish a long-term relationship with the authors. According to Dr Sigge, this should be made possible above all through transparency, openness and cooperation at eye level. After all, it is difficult to retain good authors in the long term. This should be ensured through good communication on both sides, appropriate remuneration and social security. Dr Sigge points out that not all platforms can be







lumped together and that there is no single recipe for regulating them. Both the offers and the demands of the workers differ, because some work full time, while for others it is only a part-time job. Depending on the context, it is necessary to see which regulations make sense here. Dr Sigge and content.de are signatories to the “Code of Conduct” of the German Crowdsourcing Association, through which platforms commit themselves to ten cornerstones of decent work. The “Code of Conduct” was created for platforms that offer digital products. There is an ombudsman’s office that crowdworkers can turn to in case of difficulties.

*Moderator: What could solutions for the future look like?*

The moderator asks the panellists whether the “Code of Conduct” of the German Crowdsourcing Association could lead the way. Mr Huffmann replies that the Code of Conduct does not fit Helping’s profile and that other possibilities should be sought. In this context, Dr Wenckebach again refers to the need for a binding legal framework, as the Code of Conduct is only “soft law”. A European solution is necessary in order to protect workers’ rights.

*Question from the chat: Would workers even want platforms as employers?*

Both Mr Huffmann and Dr Sigge refer to surveys with platform workers, which have shown that this is not desired. The users particularly appreciate the flexibility. At content.de, for example, there are authors who would not be able to work if not for the flexibility, e.g. because of caring for family members. Over the course of the panel, the conference participants are asked to take part in an online survey on the role of platforms. The majority of participants believe that platforms should take responsibility for their role as employers.

**Outputs for the  
12-point policy paper**

- 3. Apply existing laws
- 4. Create new regulatory measures
- 10. Create greater transparency, including algorithms



## Panel 3

# What it takes: Representation of interests, social security and advisory services

Orry Mittenmayer, Dr Alessio Bertolini, Dr Wenke Wegner



**Orry Mittenmayer**  
Gewerkschaft Nahrung-Genuss-  
Gaststätten (German Food, Beverages  
and Catering Union)

**Dr Alessio Bertolini**  
Oxford University

**Dr Wenke Wegner**  
ArbeitGestalten  
Beratungsgesellschaft mbH

*Moderator: In your view, what are the greatest challenges in terms of representation of interests, social security and advisory services in the platform economy?*

Orry Mittenmayer, former platform worker and co-founder of the “Lieferanten am Limit”-campaign, points out the problem of fixed-term contracts that have no substantial reason. Up to 100% of the staff of many delivery service platforms work on fixed-term contracts. Workers who participate in the works council can assume that their contract will expire after one year. Another challenge, he says, is to reach and strengthen delivery drivers, as the workforce is very diverse. Some of them are migrants who speak little German and can easily be exploited. It is therefore difficult to organise a collective representation of interests. One solution is to organise multilingual events to reach all platform workers.

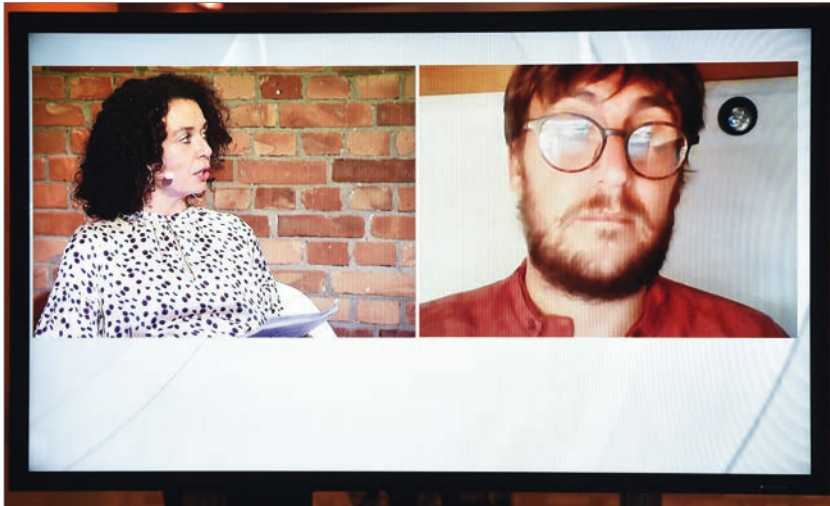
In agreement with Mr Mittenmayer, Dr Wenke Wegner emphasises that gig workers who work alone and on site, such as in the social

care and nursing sectors, can hardly get in touch with each other. Platform operators should offer their workers a communication platform. Advisory institutions should approach people actively and in several languages. As solo self-employed persons, crowd and gig workers have no sense of community and rarely visit advisory institutions.

As part of the Fairwork project, Dr Alessio Bertolini has established five criteria for decent work on platforms: Fair pay, fair working conditions, fair contractual terms, fair management and a representation of interests for the entire workforce. In his view, it is most difficult for crowdworkers to organise themselves collectively because they work from home and many have very little income carrying out microtasks.

*Moderator: Do crowdworkers even want to have a representation of interests?*

Orry Mittenmayer emphatically affirms the question. For crowdworkers who work in the



Moderator Dr Julia Kropf in online-conversation with Dr Alessio Bertolini

low-wage sector, it is immensely important to have a lobby that also advises them. When questions, problems or conflicts arise, many platform workers do not know who to turn to. In addition, there is the language barrier, which also makes it difficult to communicate by email.

Dr Wenke Wegner adds that there is often a lack of awareness of what a representation of interests can achieve. In her experience, in the care and nursing sectors, the “worst case scenario” must first occur before the gig workers think about a representation of interests. If, for example, a client falls out of a wheelchair while providing care, care workers must be insured for large sums in the event of claims for damages. However, they are usually underinsured via platforms. Only in such cases do many people realise that they lack a collective representation of their interests.



Orry Mittenmayer

*Moderator: Dr Alessio Bertolini, what surprised you most in your Fairwork study?*

According to the study, crowdworkers definitely want platforms to take on the role of employers. Platform workers see themselves more and more as employees and less and less as freelancers, because they only work for one employer. Most of them want to be employees or be represented. There is also a certain percentage who do not want to be represented. But these are often those who work only a few hours per week or month via a platform.

*Moderator: What support could platforms themselves provide and are there other forms of advice?*

Dr Wenke Wegner responds that the state should create the appropriate framework conditions. Especially in the care sector, the state has a responsibility because there is a legal mandate to provide care – unlike with riders, cleaning etc. It would be helpful to



Dr Wenke Wegner

intermediate category could – depending on how labour law is structured in a country – play a role in the platform economy. At the same time, however, the criteria would have to be looked at more closely, especially with regard to the rights that would accompany these categories. A third category could lead to an imbalance in the rights and obligations of these forms of work compared to traditional employees.

oblige platforms to provide a channel for their platform workers to exchange information and to place links to advisory centres on their websites.

Orry Mittenmayer calls on politicians and social partners to make greater efforts to reach collective agreements with platform operators. Collective agreements have always been the most effective way of preventing exploitation and precarious employment. As long as the political level permits the use of fixed-term employment contracts without substantial reason, interest groups will not be able to grow.

*Moderator: Dr Alessio Bertolini, could a third category of workers called “dependent self-employed persons” within labour law be useful to strengthen the rights of platform workers?*

Dr Bertolini is rather critical of the proposal of a third category that is situated in-between employees and self-employed persons. This



**Outputs for the 12-point policy paper**

- 4. Create new regulatory measures
- 7. Develop cooperation between trade unions and political institutions and platforms
- 8. Guarantee advisory services
- 9. Internal communication for platform workers
- 10. Create greater transparency, including algorithms

## Panel 4

# Whom it particularly concerns: Platform work from a migration and gender perspective

Prof Dr Manuela Bojadžijev, Dr Christian Pfeffer-Hoffmann,  
Prof Dr Aysel Yollu-Tok



**Prof Dr Manuela Bojadžijev**  
Berlin Institute for Integration  
and Migration Research (BIM)  
at the Humboldt University

**Dr Christian Pfeffer-Hoffmann**  
Minor – Projektkontor für Bildung  
und Forschung gGmbH

**Prof Dr Aysel Yollu-Tok**  
Berlin School of Economics  
and Law

*Moderator: What share do people from a migrant background and women have in the platform economy?*

Prof Dr Manuela Bojadžijev explains that there are no reliable figures on this question. This is due on the one hand to the problem of limited access to platform workers and on the other hand to the complexity of this form of work. There are location-dependent and location-independent activities. The latter are often carried out digitally and across borders and cannot at all be measured in a national context. However, empirical research shows that people from a migrant background and women are particularly affected by the poor working conditions on platforms.

Prof Dr Aysel Yollu-Tok adds in this respect that the new business models reflect a consolidation of old, gender-specific inequalities on

the labour market. Overall, significantly more men than women are employed on platforms. Men typically take on craft and programming work, while women often have writing jobs.



Prof Dr Manuela Bojadžijev



According to Prof Dr Yollu-Tok, gender segregated labour markets bring about many other inequalities, such as the gender pay gap or bargaining power issues. She is also critical of the argument that platform work makes it easier for women to re-enter the labour market after a period of care, because the qualifications that can be acquired on platforms are not documented, which makes further career paths more difficult.

According to Dr Christian Pfeffer-Hoffmann, platforms do in fact make it easier for people from a migrant background to enter the labour market, as the language requirements are rather low. In the long term, however, this group of people also criticises that the working conditions on platforms are poor. Beyond service platforms, general social media platforms offer spaces for exchange, consultation and the search for other activities.

*Moderator: What can be a starting point for improving transparency and advice for the aforementioned groups of people?*

According to Prof Dr Manuela Bojadžijev, the advisory services and ombudsman offices mentioned in previous panels are a positive sign that an awareness of the problems of platform workers is increasing. Nevertheless, for migrants and especially women, there is a big problem in accessing certain rights. They are already restricted in their access rights to work by the immigration laws. The dismantling of the social welfare state and the spread of the platform economy further complicates the conditions under which they can exercise their rights.

Dr Christian Pfeffer-Hoffmann is critical of the proposal that platform operators should set up communication channels for their workers to exchange information. The more marginalised a person is, the less he or she wants to communicate publicly. This has become apparent, for example, with migrant care workers who work in private households on the basis of false self-employment. They only accepted advisory services when they





Dr Christian Pfeffer-Hoffmann

were able to talk to a neutral advisor without any connection to their placement agency.

In the further discussion Prof Dr Yollu-Tok points out the lack of transparency regarding the ratings of platform workers. Such ratings could not be equated with job references and require a more detailed analysis.



Prof Dr Aysel Yollu-Tok

Finally, Prof Dr Bojadžijev discusses the concept of advisory services that reach out to clients themselves, which she considers to be very beneficial. This is because it can provide a direct insight into the working conditions of people who work for platforms that operate globally.



#### Outputs for the 12-point policy paper

8. Guarantee advisory services

11. Document skills and develop new forms of certification

## Panel 5

# Who is responsible for education and qualification?

The portability and recognition of skills acquired on platforms

Dr Konstantinos Pouliakas, Prof Dr Anoush Margaryan, Dr Ina Lindow



Dr Konstantinos Pouliakas  
Cedefop

Prof Dr Anoush Margaryan  
Copenhagen Business School

Dr Ina Lindow  
Federal Ministry of Education  
and Research

*Moderator: What role can platforms play with regard to further education?*

Prof Dr Anoush Margaryan has participated in two studies that investigated the skills, qualifications and competences of location-independent crowdworkers. The studies showed that the importance of formal competences is declining. For crowdworkers, the ratings of their clients are more important. The studies also showed that they engage in informal learning during their work.

*Moderator: Interdisciplinary competences are becoming increasingly important, but are less and less documented. How do you assess the portability of competences?*

Dr Konstantinos Pouliakas agrees with Prof Dr Margaryan and emphasises that one main way for crowdworkers to demonstrate the skills they have acquired is through the feedback and evaluations of their clients, while formal qualifications and skills assessments are found to be of lower importance. The CrowdLearn studies mentioned above have also shown that crowdworkers already have technical and digital skills that enable them to carry out platform work in the first place, which attests to the significant value of initial education and training. Through their work, however, they gain new skills, notably organisational skills and development of personal dispositions required to be successful in the online platform economy. There is an urgent need to develop strategies and policies to ensure that workers in the platform economy



Prof Dr Anoush Margaryan



Dr Ina Lindow

can provide evidence of both their existing and newly acquired skills and that such skills can be portable across different platforms and the online and traditional labour market. This will also be a challenge for the European Commission's 2020 Skills Agenda, which addresses precisely these issues. The difficulty lies above all in the fast pace of the online platform market, which makes it difficult to implement standardised procedures to skills recognition and validation.

*Moderator: To what extent do these developments alter the education market?*

According to Dr Ina Lindow, the first thing to do is to determine which competences need to be certified. After all, it is already possible to document one's competences in an e-portfolio. A digital infrastructure would be helpful here. As far as further education is concerned, platforms can already make use of a large number of digital training opportunities. The task of platforms must be to create transparency and orientation for their workforce. Furthermore, new spaces and communication channels should be created for learners and teachers

to communicate with each other. New examination formats as well as new certifications are also needed. Digital certificates could be made accessible so that they can be viewed by future employers. Dr Lindow suspects that German educational institutions will not be able to abandon certificates so quickly.

*Moderator: Independent learning and self-efficacy play an important part in the platform economy. How and by whom can such competences be activated and supported?*

Prof Dr Margaryan affirms that self-learning skills must be promoted throughout the entire education system, starting as early as kindergarten. Self-learning is a lifelong process. The acquisition of these competences requires different techniques (cognitive as well as digital) depending on the stage of life, and should be applied in different settings, including informal ones. Learning experiences must be designed in such a way that a comprehensive mindset is developed. Finally, the self-acquisition of competences could be supported by political frameworks, but also by





Dr Konstantinos Pouliakas

BMBF will support innovative developments which enable people to find the further training programme that suits them and their circumstances as quickly and easily as possible. In three developmental areas, INVITE supports the facilitation and realisation of networking in digital further education spaces, a stronger user orientation of further education platforms and the use of AI technologies for the design of individualised learning processes. With the National Strategy for Further Education, policymakers have also set out to establish a new culture of further education.

platforms and digital spaces in which people can get in touch with each other.

*Moderator: What consequences result from the development of formal education towards more self-efficacy? Is a political framework needed for this?*

According to Dr Pouliakas, formal educational institutions have to adapt to a new reality in which the training of people working online takes place much more quickly and individually and requires much more up-to-date content. The CrowdLearn research has also shown that platforms are aspiring to act as training marketplaces and to foster networking between platform workers to enable peer-to-peer learning.

Dr Lindow agrees that policy makers need to understand the enormous potential of new technologies such as artificial intelligence to make learning adaptive and individualised. In this context, she points to current efforts such as the innovation competition “INVITE” of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). Within the framework of INVITE, the



#### Outputs for the 12-point policy paper

11. Document skills and develop new forms of certification
12. Training in the platform economy

## SESSION III

## “Platformisation” as a trend –

platform work in urban spaces, good practices and alternative models

## Panel 6

## How is the platform economy changing our cities? –

“Platformisation” as a trend in the urban working world

Prof Dr Manuela Bojadžijev, Klemens Himpele,  
Arjan Ploegmakers

Prof Dr Manuela Bojadžijev

Berlin Institute for Integration  
and Migration Research (BIM)  
at the Humboldt University

Klemens Himpele

City of Vienna

Arjan Ploegmakers

City of Amsterdam

*Moderator: To what extent will increasing processes of platformisation change the world of work in cities?*

Klemens Himpele replies that the platform economy is particularly visible in cities, especially in metropolitan areas. Platformisation reinforces existing urban trends, such as the strained housing market. From the perspective of the City of Vienna, there is a great need to introduce regulations at European level

that make it possible to retain the positive aspects of the platform economy while at the same time regulating the negative ones. After all, there are also positive features of the platform economy, such as resource sharing, which can lead to resource conservation. People who are looking for flexible work find it on platforms. But appropriate frameworks must be established.

Arjan Ploegmakers adds that platforms such

as Booking.com or Airbnb have created many jobs in Amsterdam. However, a distinction must be made between highly qualified jobs and low-wage employment. Platforms have also caused housing prices to rise. The increasing number of foreign workers in large companies has also increased the pressure on transport systems and education.

*Moderator: Are platforms also changing the social structure and labour market in Berlin?*

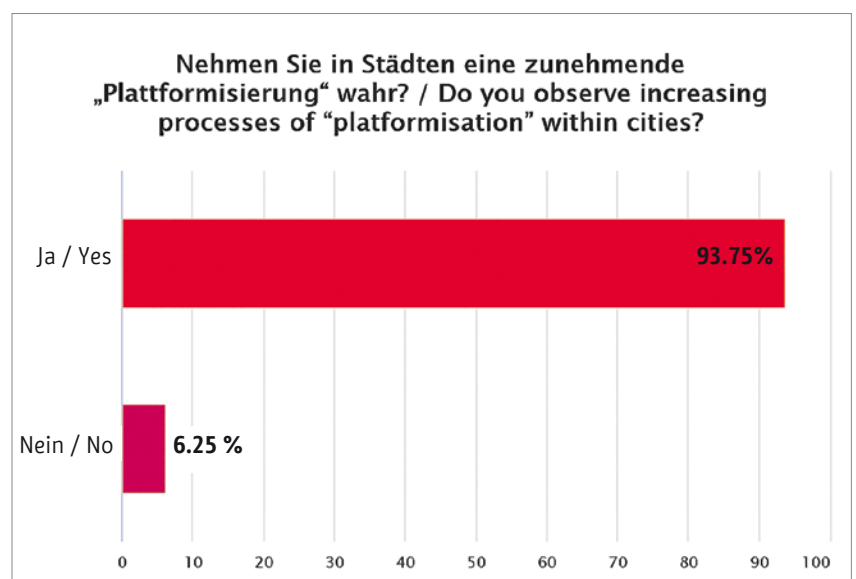
Prof Dr Manuela Bojadžijev agrees with the previous speakers. The city of Berlin is no exception. She adds that platforms are not primarily aimed at maximising their profits, as is often claimed, but rather at disrupting and reorganising long-standing structures. However, the central questions of democratic accountability are not taken into account. What is needed is technology in the public interest.

In this respect, Klemens Himpele emphasises that the rule of law and law enforcement are key issues. The headquarters of platforms in the European Union are usually located in the Netherlands or Ireland. It is difficult for cities like Vienna to enforce legislation against such internationally active companies. The situation raises problems of taxation and fair competition between platforms and locally based companies. After all, the lives of citizens must be organised and financed, for example by offering kindergarten places. Platforms based in another country do not usually contribute to this kind of funding. For the enforcement and monitoring of local legislation, local authorities should also be guaranteed access to data at European level.

The online survey launched during the panel with online participants shows that almost 94% have noticed processes of platformisation in their cities.

*Moderator: Should European cities support each other more to establish common regulations?*

Arjan Ploegmakers agrees and argues that Europe must stand together in this area, because Europe has a stronger negotiating power together than the individual local level. As in many cities, it is not easy to establish regulations for platforms and platform work in Amsterdam. It is not clear whether international law or national law must be applied. Moreover, the platforms often refuse to accept the role of employer. Many maintain the view that they are only intermediaries and do not employ staff. It is difficult to enforce protections against dismissal on this basis. Cities have to demonstrate innovative strength vis-à-vis start-ups and platforms in order to





Arjan Ploegmakers



Prof Dr Manuela Bojadžijev

keep up with the rapid changes in the world of work. One of the biggest challenges of platform work is that many digital crowdworkers work alone from home and have little or no contact with other crowdworkers. Due to the lack of exchange, precarious working conditions remain uncovered.

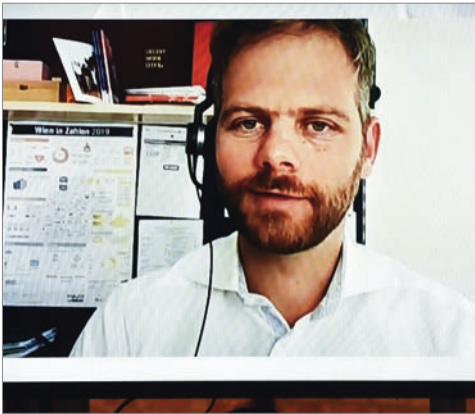
Prof Dr Manuela Bojadžijev points out that historically speaking, there is an oscillation

between existing problems that are exacerbated by the platform economy, such as Airbnb causing shortages in the rental market, and new problems, such as those in the transport sector caused by Uber. More and more cities are concerned with how these platforms can be regulated. In some cities, platform workers are already organising themselves. The question is how cities can support platform workers to achieve decent working conditions. Existing problems have to be considered in conjunction with emerging problems and new solutions have to be found.

*Moderator: What can a future-oriented urban policy look like?*

Klemens Himpele stresses that the platform economy as a whole must not be demonised. For example, working from home during the lockdown would have been very difficult for many people without delivery services. Platform technologies have a real added value. But people must not suffer from poor working conditions and low wages. A fundamental problem is that some of the necessary regulations cannot be made at the city level. At the





Klemens Himpele

same time, cities are joining forces to point out the need for regulation. Amsterdam is already a close ally of Vienna. Mr Himpele also refers to an Opinion of the Committee of the Regions which was adopted unanimously. So far, a number of issues regarding the platform economy have already been discussed jointly, including the fact that platforms continue to see themselves as mere bulletin boards. He is not aware of any bulletin board that demands a commission of 25%. He considers the self-perception of platforms as bulletin boards to be the biggest flaw in the overall discussion. The definition of platforms must change and this should also be recognised in the revision of the European Commission's Digital Services Act.

Arjan Ploegmakers adds that a relationship with the platform operators must first be established. It is worth the investment to get to know them, to look at the problems related to platform work and to try to find common solutions.






**Outputs for the  
12-point policy paper**

3. Apply existing laws
4. Create new regulatory measures
5. Use urban policy to link stakeholders
6. Create open dialogue between cities



## Panel 7

# Good practices and alternative models in the platform economy

Assoc Prof Dr Trebor Scholz, Fredrik Söderqvist, Gesa Gräf



Assoc Prof Dr Trebor Scholz  
The New School, New York

Fredrik Söderqvist  
Unionen Sweden

Gesa Gräf  
CleverShuttle

## Short introduction by Dr Trebor Scholz on the question: In what way do platform cooperatives differ from other platform models?

Dr Trebor Scholz, who joins the discussion digitally from the USA, explains that platforms have existed there already for some time and that many American platform companies are now also active in Europe. In the USA, the problems of the platform economy must be seen against the backdrop of various crises, such as widespread unemployment, student indebtedness, a broken health care system, the failings of participatory democracy, and the severe challenges for the extractive sharing economy.

In principle, innovation and undeniable customer benefits that the platform economy created are to be welcomed, says Dr Scholz. But the venture-capital model that initially propelled growth came with shareholder primacy, which forces profit maximization. On Uber for instance, especially full-time drivers are struggling with an opaque “algorithmic boss” and low wages. Various forms of harassment are a big issue. It’s a double exploitati-

on: workers are underpaid and the data that is extracted from them, is sold. In addition, the full operational risks lie with the workers who are classified as independent contractors. Successful platform co-ops are often federations of smaller local co-ops that form a federation that operates through a platform, thereby being able to compete with larger market players (<http://platform.coop>). Despite their obvious dependence, they are still defined as self-employed persons by the respective platforms. As a result, employees find it difficult to empower themselves, partly because there is often a physical separation from other employees and because there are unclear structures (algorithms as superiors).

According to Dr Scholz, the model of platform cooperatives is offering a solution to a specific set of problems in the digital economy. In this model, the workers and users of digital platforms are the owners. They decide about the rules of these platforms. This makes long-term thinking possible while responding to the needs of a platform that people rely on most. About 500 such projects already exist in 47 countries. In many places they are supported by policymakers. The German Social

Democrats (SPD) and the British Labour party officially made platform co-ops part of their political platform.

*Moderator: How can we make the best possible use of platform technology and at the same time enable decent work for the people working on platforms?*

Gesa Gräf begins by explaining that her platform CleverShuttle provides shuttle services based on an algorithm. Customers order a shuttle to a specific location. If there are other passengers on the way, the journeys are shared. In this way, the platform wants to contribute to a change in mobility and with the use of electric cars to ensure a good climate footprint. At the same time, the platform sees itself as a socially responsible employer, which is reflected in the minimum wage or the fact that all drivers are subject to social insurance contributions. In addition, a works council ensures participation and transparency and enables communication between employees. In the Fairwork study, which was already addressed in the first panel of the conference, CleverShuttle received the best rating for Germany.

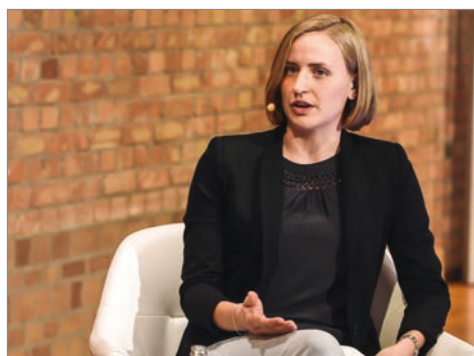
Fredrik Söderqvist also points to the need for workers to have a say. In Sweden, both employees and employers have internalised this, as shown by the high number of employees in trade unions (60-70%) and employers in employers' organisations (70-80%). The local level is, according to Mr Söderqvist, the crucial lever when it comes to taking the first step to make decent work possible.

Platform cooperatives are a positive example of how the winning model of digital platform and the proven, close to 200-year-old model of cooperatives can be combined, says Dr Scholz. He raises the question, what the specific social impact is that co-ops with their 1 billion people global membership can create.

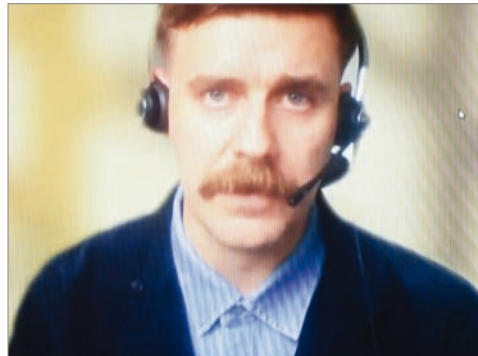
More cooperatives are needed but they require a movement towards communal property. There is still a lack of opportunities, for example, to own databases jointly with other actors and have them managed by someone through the power of attorney. Such mandates could support smaller cooperatives. In this respect, cities could make a significant contribution.



Dr Trebor Scholz



Gesa Gräf



Fredrik Söderqvist

*Moderator: What do you expect from politics so that such good practice models can be better implemented in the future?*

Mr Söderqvist believes that the focus should be on employers. Companies that behave socially should be rewarded accordingly. After all, they are in competition with companies that do not follow certain rules. Fair behaviour could therefore become a competitive disadvantage and must be recognised accordingly by politicians.

Ms Gräf points out that it is always difficult for start-ups to establish themselves at the outset and that certain requirements may not yet be met in the early stages. One solution could be to provide guidance in the form of checklists with requirements that companies must meet in the long term. She hopes that the perspective of start-ups will be understood and that politicians will be willing to engage in dialogue.

Dr Scholz concludes by emphasising the need for different actors to work together. Trade unions, cooperatives and regulatory authorities must join with political institutions and platforms in equal measure.



#### Outputs for the 12-point policy paper

- 2. Promoting positive approaches
- 7. Develop cooperation between trade unions and political institutions and platforms
- 9. Internal communication for platform workers
- 10. Create greater transparency, including algorithms



## Closing panel

# What are the consequences for work and qualification in urban spaces?

## Summary and conclusion

Alexander Fischer, Dr Annette Niederfranke,  
Silvia Ganzerla, Irene Mandl



**Alexander Fischer**  
State Secretary for Labour  
and Social Services, Berlin

**Dr Annette Niederfranke**  
International Labour  
Organization (ILO)

**Silvia Ganzerla**  
EUROCITIES

**Irene Mandl**  
Eurofound

State Secretary Alexander Fischer begins by reaffirming that this new form of work in the platform economy most definitely (and not only possibly) requires regulation. In this context, policy makers in Berlin are only one of several groups of actors in a network of stakeholders with different possibilities of regulation. The European framework conditions for public procurement law at state and federal level can, for example, be used as a useful instrument to ensure decent work at the local level. By setting appropriate requirements for contractors in tenders, it is ensured that the people employed to fulfil the contract work under social conditions – of course, this must also apply to companies in the platform economy.

Dr Annette Niederfranke addresses the question of regulatory gaps. In her opinion, regulations regarding solo self-employed persons

need to be revised and extended. Especially the issue of social security has so far been completely neglected with regard to this group. However, regulations cannot be developed without trade unions and government agencies. Platform workers, but also platform operators, must be informed about social standards. The instrument of awarding contracts mentioned by Mr Fischer is a good example for regulating local platforms. The situation becomes more difficult in the case of international platform operators who operate beyond regional and national borders.

Silvia Ganzerla points out that technology is developing much faster than legislation. In her opinion, legislative projects take far too long. Before the laws come into force, the platform economy has already changed dramatically due to technological and organisational



Dr Annette Niederfranke



Alexander Fischer

developments. Ms Ganzerla also advocates further regulation and stresses the imbalance in which platform workers find themselves. Many workers are poor despite their job and suffer from precarious employment; this is a major problem. Ms Ganzerla also emphasises the role of cities, which often have limited possibilities for regulation, but can still become

active – especially because they see problems directly on the ground. There are many good practice examples of what cities can do (such as those mentioned by Jonathan Barr in the first panel); many cities have already taken action, for example by trying to reach agreements with platform businesses. So there are opportunities at the city level. However, one must also bear in mind that the starting point is different in each country.

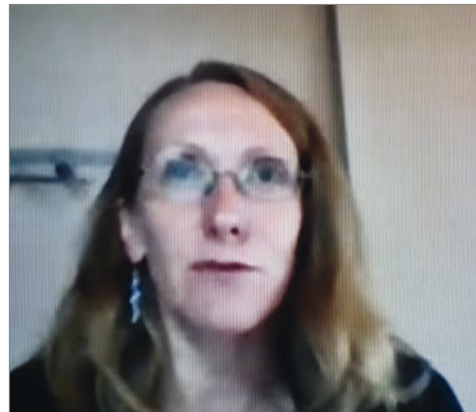


Co-Moderator Martin Hoffmann with sign language interpreter Oya Ataman

Irene Mandl builds on this and points out the need for an exchange between cities and the adherence to minimum standards. This should be aimed at preventing a “race to the bottom” in which platform operators move to the places where they find the most favourable conditions for them in terms of the lowest standards. City networks in which this exchange can take place already exist. “We can use the existing structures,” says Irene Mandl. Such exchanges should also involve employers’ associations, trade unions and civil society actors. An open culture of exchange makes it possible to find out what works and



Irene Mandl



Silvia Ganzerla

what does not. Lessons can also be learned from negative examples.

With regard to possible regulations, Dr Annette Niederfranke criticises that state agencies still operate in a too analogue manner and too slowly. As a positive example, she points to the shipowners' liability scheme, which was already mentioned by a colleague from the ILO in the first panel of the conference. The shipowners' liability scheme is an example of how general, internationally valid regulations can be established and legal vacuums eliminated.

State Secretary Alexander Fischer points out that Berlin has already taken action, for example by raising the minimum wage for Berlin to EUR 12.50 since 1 May 2020. The nationwide minimum wage of 9.35 EUR was considered too low by Berlin politicians. However, such interventions at state or city level are only possible to a limited extent; especially in the area of the platform economy, the different levels must work together when it comes to regulations. In metropolitan areas, social

developments can generally be seen earlier and through a magnifying glass. Accordingly, decent platform work is a mandate for action that the Land of Berlin is facing up to, especially as a connector between other (government) levels and other actors.

Silvia Ganzerla also stresses the need for co-operation between cities and different levels. The voices of cities must be brought together, and position papers developed. Cities should, if possible, speak with one voice in order to assert their influence on other levels. The issue of unfair competition, e.g. from Uber or Airbnb, in particular, must be tackled.

In the further discussion, Irene Mandl advocates more clarity and transparency. This applies in particular to the black box of algorithms, about which employees and customers know too little. There is also a need for ombudsman services for platform workers. More attention should also be paid to platform cooperatives as an alternative model, e.g. in the care sector and more generally in the welfare sector.

At the end of the panel, Dr Annette Niederfranke draws two conclusions: Firstly, platform operators should act as employers and be monitored as such. Secondly, information about people's rights, especially with regard to social security, must be better communicated. On the one hand, platform operators

should be obliged to pass on such information, but on the other hand it should also be offered by the state. The awareness of being able to organise yourself vis-à-vis platforms should be raised. Generally, Dr Niederfranke says, there is already much on that we can build.



#### Outputs for the 12-point policy paper

1. Decent Work as the commodity worth protecting
2. Promoting positive approaches
3. Apply existing laws
4. Create new regulatory measures
5. Use urban policy to link stakeholders
6. Create open dialogue between cities
8. Guarantee advisory services
10. Create greater transparency, including algorithms





Behind the scenes



Politics in focus



Last checks



Speech-to-text interpreter in action



Videoconference boarding team



After the conference





Insight into the production



Camera work



Four camera positions



Sound production



Sign language interpreters



Behind the scenes



Senatsverwaltung  
für Integration, Arbeit  
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**BERLIN**



Oranienstraße 106  
10969 Berlin  
Tel +49 (0) 30 9028-0  
[www.berlin.de/sen/ias/](http://www.berlin.de/sen/ias/)  
[pressestelle@senias.berlin.de](mailto:pressestelle@senias.berlin.de)  
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