

Inter-parliamentary Committee meeting *Human Work in the Digital Age - artificial intelligence, new forms of working, and work-related stress*

Wednesday, 15 April 2026

Session I: Adapting the digital and social acquis to new forms of work - the Platform work directive and beyond

Digitalisation and automation in the workplace, including the use of AI, are increasingly shaping workplaces. According to the 2024 European Working Condition Survey (EWCS), approximately 26% of workers in the EU reported being subject to some form of **algorithmic management**, i.e. partially or fully automated managerial functions¹. Meanwhile, just over half of them stated that there is a clear procedure to raise issues in the event of a disagreement with automated decisions. In 2025, some 20% of EU enterprises used AI technologies – this percentage was more than double among of large EU enterprises (55.03%). **Artificial intelligence (AI)** allows, on one hand, for the **automation** of tasks performed by workers, and on the other hand, for expanding **algorithmic management**. The latter is a defining feature of digital labour platforms, but also widespread in sectors such as customer service, transport, logistics, banking, and healthcare².

Artificial intelligence (AI) allows, on one hand, for the **automation of tasks** performed by workers, and on the other hand, for the automation of managerial functions, often referred to as **algorithmic management**.

The digital transformation presents both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, it offers numerous economic benefits, as well as potential for workers to **increase their flexibility, autonomy and enjoyment** of work, including by automating routine tasks, and ultimately to **improve work-life balance**³. At the same time, it has given rise to a number of challenges linked to their scope and purposes, also in view of the hierarchical nature of the employment relation, such as **intensifying work and extending working hours** with repercussions on occupational health and safety, including mental health of workers, and their work-life balance, increasing **monitoring and surveillance** in the workplace, including

¹ Eurofound (2025), [European Working Conditions Survey 2024: First findings](#), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg

² International Labour Organisation, [Artificial intelligence ; Algorithmic management in the workplace](#)

³ Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, European Parliament, 2021, [Improving working conditions using Artificial Intelligence](#)

on work performance, or accentuating risks of **discrimination** at the workplace⁴. Meanwhile, the relatively limited involvement of social partners exacerbates these challenges⁵. Examples from Member States with a meaningful involvement of social partners in the implementation of digital transition policies demonstrate how participatory approaches can increase acceptance of new technologies⁶.

Issues around digitalisation and automation in the workplace have been long-standing in the agenda of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament (EMPL). More particularly, EMPL Committee has initiated several hearings, oral questions, studies, resolutions, including on **the right to disconnect**⁷, and negotiated a landmark EU Directive in this field, **the Platform Work Directive**⁸, which will have to be transposed by the end of this year. The directive stands on the crossroads between the EU social and digital acquis, building **notably on the GDPR and the recently adopted AI Act, and should be seen as their continuum**. The Directive establishes, among others, rules to frame the processing of personal data of workers or other persons performing platform work by increasing the transparency, fairness, human oversight, safety and accountability of relevant algorithmic management procedures in platform work, as well as imposing limitations on the treatment of certain data, as well as establishing rights destined to the organisations representing them, while promoting social dialogue and collective bargaining. The EMPL Committee has set up a monitoring group which is following up on the transposition and implementation of the Directive.

Last December, the **European Parliament adopted a resolution calling for the EU to take initiatives for regulating algorithmic management in the workplace**⁹. It reflects to a large extent the logic and provisions of the Platform Work Directive, notably its algorithmic management chapter, and calls for extending to all workers the protection granted by the Platform Work Directive to a limited category so far.

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While stressing that the use of algorithmic management systems can provide opportunities for work optimisation, the resolution highlights that these technologies, which may include

⁴ European Parliament Research Service, Cost of non-Europe study on "Digitalisation, artificial intelligence and algorithmic management in the workplace: Shaping the future of work", October 2025 [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_STU\(2025\)774670](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_STU(2025)774670)

⁵ According to Eurofound's EUPolicyWatch Database, of the policies related to the digital transformation that were recorded in the database between 2020 and 2024, only around 20% were based on co-determination or meaningful consultation.

⁶ See for instance, Eurofound (2024), Social governance of the Recovery and Resilience Facility: Involvement of the national social partners, National social partners and policymaking series, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg; EU-OSHA, "AI-based worker management in an automotive parts manufacturer in Italy: implications for occupational safety and health", 2024 <https://healthy-workplaces.osha.europa.eu/en/publications/ai-based-worker-management-automotive-parts-manufacturer-italy-implications-occupational-safety-and-health>

⁷ European Parliament resolution of 21 January 2021 with recommendations to the Commission on the right to disconnect (2019/2181(INL))

⁸ Directive (EU) 2024/2831

⁹ European Parliament resolution of 17 December 2025 with recommendations to the Commission on digitalisation, artificial intelligence and algorithmic management in the workplace – shaping the future of work (2025/2080(INL))

AI, have to be overseen by humans, and emphasises the importance of transparency and the protection of fundamental rights and personal data, including by imposing specific limitations on data processing regarding the processing of data relating to workers' emotional, psychological or neurological states, private communications, data of workers while off-duty, or the use of data relating to freedom of association and collective bargaining. As it is the case with the Platform Work Directive, the Parliament resolution also stresses that meaningful consultation and participation of workers and their representatives in decision-making processes help to mitigate the risks of new technologies and lead to better, more effective and human-centred integration of AI in the workplace. These Parliament calls are expected to be dealt with by the European Commission as part of an all-encompassing proposal, the Quality Jobs Act, due before the end of this year.

Meanwhile, the Commission issued at the end of last year the so-called '**digital omnibus proposals**' ([Digital Omnibus](#), [Digital Omnibus on AI](#)) which amend the provisions both of the GDPR and the AI Act, entailing in practice a risk of lowering relevant standards, including in the workplace. As already indicated, basic rights of the workers as data subjects, the definition of lawful processing, data protection impact assessment, penalties, limitations etc are contained in the GDPR. Meanwhile, the AI Act contains detailed requirements for data governance, transparency, documentation, human oversight, and robustness, so as to ensure that AI systems placed on the EU market are that AI systems are trustworthy, safe, and aligned with EU fundamental rights. Among high-risk AI systems, which are subject to specific requirements, it lists those used for recruitment or for the automation of tasks traditionally performed by workers or algorithmic management. It also provides for obligations of providers and deployers to ensure AI literacy of their staff. Therefore, **amendments to the GDPR and the AI Act**, depending on the outcome of the legislative process, **could impact the current protection of workers, as well as the standards set in the Platform Work Directive.**

This session will therefore aim to look at the use of algorithmic management, recent regulatory developments notably the Platform Work Directive and the ongoing Digital Omnibuses, and how to ensure that the digital transformation of workplaces goes hand-in-hand with quality jobs.

Some framing questions for participants:

- *Are you aware of any national legislation in the area of algorithmic management? Has the Platform Work Directive been transposed already in national law, or are you aware of plans to transpose it? If so, can you share the main elements of such (draft) legislation?*
- *What best practices at national, regional, or company levels have proven effective in ensuring that the use of AI/algorithmic management in workplaces positively impacts job quality, the respect of workers' rights and well-being, including through transparency and fairness in algorithmic management?*
- *How can social dialogue and consultation with trade unions and other stakeholders contribute to those ends? In case there is collective bargaining, how has it impacted the way in which AI/algorithmic management is used, perceived, promoted or regulated in workplaces?*
- *Do you see an added value in the establishment of standards and benchmarks at European level with a view to ensuring that the introduction of AI/algorithmic main challenges to be addressed?*

Session II: Digitalisation of the workplace and psychosocial risks: what tools and to what effect?

Psychosocial risks may be defined as **social and organisational aspects of the design and management of work** (e.g. poor management, poor work design or not properly matching workers' knowledge and abilities with the assigned tasks, lack of job autonomy, harassment or discrimination) that could cause physical or psychological harm. Some of the most important psychosocial workplace risks, or job stressors, are **high work intensity, violence and harassment at work, unsocial working hours, job insecurity, financial worries and lack of autonomy**. These stressors can be exacerbated by the use of **digital technologies and the automation of tasks**. Psychosocial risks may affect workers' mental health and lead, inter alia, to work-related stress, burnout, addiction or suicidal behaviour. At the same time, raising mental health aspects and mentioning challenges in the workplace is still attached to the fear of stigma. Besides having an impact on workers, psychosocial risks also have important societal and economic implications, for example related to rising health and social expenditure, as well as efficiency and productivity losses. According to the EU-OSHA pulse survey 2025, **29% of workers experienced stress, depression or anxiety** caused or made worse by their work. **Stress, anxiety and depression make up the second most common work-related health problem** affecting European workers. The proportion of workers who report facing risk factors that can adversely affect their mental health is nearly 45%.

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Following the pandemic, psychosocial risks at work have been aggravated, with **60% of lost working days in the EU attributed to psychosocial issues**. Recent findings from the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) 2024 have shown that the digitalisation of the world of work, technological advances, the COVID-19 pandemic and, in some cases, the further increase in the prevalence of telework have led to instances of extended availability and longer working hours for workers engaged in different forms of remote work. These new forms of organising work have contributed to the **emergence of an 'always-on' work culture which has an impact on people's mental health**. Furthermore, work intensity in the EU has increased since 2010; meanwhile, a gender gap is appearing: where previously men were somewhat more likely to report higher levels of work intensity, in 2024 it was women¹⁰. This is mainly due to women's higher exposure to emotional demands, given that sectors with high emotional demands, like health and education, are female-dominated.

The prevalence of psychosocial risks differs across Member States and across sectors, reflecting differences in labour market structures, regulatory frameworks and the effectiveness of policies aimed at combating such risks¹¹. Managing work-related

¹⁰ See Eurofoun (2025), cited above, footnote 1

¹¹ See for instance, European Commission, Summary report, Peer Review on Legislative and enforcement approaches to address psychosocial risks at work in the Member States, June 2024 https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ee5b9c93-7279-4065-a3f5-8b5d7e175665_en?filename=Peer%20Review_psychosocial%20risks_Belgium_June%202024_summary%20report.pdf; EU-OSHA, Policy brief, strategies and legislation on psychosocial risks in six European countries,

psychosocial risks is a legal imperative set out in [Framework Directive 89/391/EEC](#), supported by the social partners' framework agreements on work-related stress and harassment and violence at work. The directive requires all Member States to have in place measures to protect workers' health and safety, and to carry out inspections to ensure that these measures are adhered to by employers. Employers have a legal responsibility to ensure that workplace risks are properly assessed and controlled, involving also workers in this process to ensure better and more effective identification and management of the risks. However, the Framework Directive 89/391/EEC does not refer specifically to psychosocial risks. Aspects relating to employees' mental well-being and the protection of workers' health are usually addressed in national labour codes and occupational health and safety acts, national health strategies, and equal opportunities acts¹². But EU Member States still lack a unified concept of mental health and psychosocial risks in the workplace.

During the last mandate, the Parliament **called on the Commission to propose a directive on psychosocial risks and well-being at work aimed at the efficient prevention of psychosocial risks in the workplace**¹³. The Commission has issued a [Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health](#), but not yet followed up with legislative initiatives. As it was already mentioned under Session I, the upcoming **Quality Jobs Act** is expected to address also issues related to psychosocial risks at the workplace.

The EMPL Committee is now working on a so-called legislative own-initiative report (INL) pursuant to Article 225 TFEU on 'Psychosocial risks, stress and mental health at work' which would contain calls and recommendations to the Commission on tackling psychosocial risks at work in the same structured and organised manner as other occupational health and safety risks.

Against this background, this session will feed into the EMPL Committee's ongoing work on the INL.

Some framing questions for participants:

- *Are there rules in place regarding the prevention of psychosocial risks in the workplace? Are such risks defined, and if so, where? (e.g. in legislation, soft rules, collective agreements etc)?*
- *Could you identify best practices at national, regional, or company levels have proven effective towards the prevention of psychosocial risks?*
- *How would you see the role of role of social partners in identifying risks, raising awareness, or setting relevant rules?*
- *Do you think that the current OSH framework, including the relevant EU acquis, is sufficient to address psychosocial risks? If not, what would be the main challenges to be addressed, notably at EU level?*

2025 https://osha.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategies-legislation-psychosocial-risks-european-countries_policy-brief_EN.pdf

¹²Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, European Parliament, Study on "Minimum health and safety requirements for the protection of mental health in the workplace", 2023 [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/740078/IPOL_STU\(2023\)740078_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/740078/IPOL_STU(2023)740078_EN.pdf)

¹³ European Parliament resolution of 10 March 2022 on a new EU strategic framework on health and safety at work post 2020 (including better protection of workers from exposure to harmful substances, stress at work and repetitive motion injuries) (2021/2165(INI))