

BACKGROUND PAPER

Mapping platform work in *Poland*

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EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy is a non-profit, non-partisan, and independent think-tank focusing on European integration and cohesion. EUROPEUM contributes to democracy, security, stability, freedom, and solidarity across Europe as well as to active engagement of the Czech Republic in the European Union. EUROPEUM undertakes original research, organizes public events and educational activities, and formulates new ideas and recommendations to improve European and Czech policy making.

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1. Characteristics of platform work

1.1. Features of platform work

Platform work is divided into two basic types: online work and on-location platform work. Online work is characterized by the complete digital implementation of tasks, which allows for the provision of services regardless of location, including copywriting, programming, translations or graphic design. Its key features are time flexibility and the ability to participate remotely, but it is associated with global competition and often limited legal protection. On-site platform work, on the other hand, requires physical presence in a specific location and includes services such as transport, deliveries, cleaning or care services. In this case, remuneration usually depends on the number of orders performed, and the possibility of covering workers with legal protection depends on local legislative conditions. Both models are characterized by a high degree of flexibility, but their regulation poses a significant challenge both at the national and EU level, in particular, in the context of social protection and the classification of employment forms.

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Platform work in Poland is developing dynamically, encompassing both online work and on-location platform work. According to a report by Fairwork Polska from December 2024, it is estimated that around 480,000 people in Poland have provided work via digital platforms at least once, and this number is constantly growing.¹

A study conducted by the Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers (ZPP) in 2022 showed that 95% of platform workers in Poland are satisfied with their cooperation with platforms, and over 80% plan to continue this form of work as

¹ Fairwork Polska (2024). Report on platform work in Poland 2024, Accessed February 19, 2025, https://fair.work/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2024/12/202410_Report_Poland-2024_ANG-popr-v2.pdf.

their main or additional source of income.² At the same time, 61% of respondents oppose the obligation to employ under an employment contract, fearing a loss of flexibility.

According to data from the Central Statistical Office (GUS), at the end of the third quarter of 2024, there were 114,300 job vacancies in Poland, due to the growing demand for workers in recent years, including in areas often covered by online platforms, such as professional and technical services.³ In Poland, platform work mainly involves the exchange of services via dedicated digital platforms. The growth of this type of employment and income source, as in the rest of the European Union, accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴ Moreover, thanks to technological development and the Polish digitalization conditions (including the digitalization of the payment process, e.g. Blik⁵), it is now possible to provide services as a form of employment, not directly to the client but through online platforms.

The most popular sectors and services are:

- taxi and courier services via application (their interests are represented by the Polish Association of Application Partners),
- cleaning and home care services,
- freelance services in the areas of IT, the creative industry, and education,
- other sectors using flexible forms of employment.

In Poland, popular platforms include Uber, Glovo, and Wolt, specializing in the transportation of people and goods, as well as the delivery of food products. Other platforms include Fixly, a platform for providing minor repair services; WhitePress, a platform for creating texts, proofreading, or editing texts at the

² Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers (ZPP) (2022). "Badanie ZPP: Choć pracownicy wracają do pracy stacjonarnej, to praca zdalna zyskała na popularności", Accessed February 19, 2025 <https://zpp.net.pl/tag/badanie/>.

³ Central Statistical Office (2024), "Popyt na pracę w trzecim kwartale 2024 roku". Accessed February 19, 2025, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/rynek-pracy/popyt-na-prace/popyt-na-prace-w-trzecim-kwartale-2024-roku,2,56.html>.

⁴ EY POLSKA, "Dyrektywa platformowa – nowe regulacje UE dotyczące pracy za pośrednictwem platform cyfrowych", by Alexander Schwickert, Accessed February 19, 2025, https://www.ey.com/pl_pl/insights/workforce/kierunki-platformowa-nowe-regulacje-dotyczace-pracy-za-posrednikiem-platform-cyfrowych.

⁵ BLIK is a payment method that allows you to pay quickly and easily in a store and online, and also deposit and withdraw cash. With BLIK, you can also immediately settle accounts with a friend using only their phone number. You don't need a payment card or wallet to pay with BLIK, see <https://www.blik.com/pierwsze-kroki-z-blikiem>.

customer's request; and Tikrow, a platform for immediate, short-term work, typically lasting a few hours and performed on-site. Applications can be submitted by clients via the latter app for tasks such as unpacking goods.

In Poland, platform work—such as courier services—is only offered by companies under self-employment arrangements or civil law contracts rather than standard employment contracts. The presumption of an employment relationship is not regulated by law in Poland. Based on the available data, it is not possible to estimate what percentage of contract workers can be defined as platform workers because platform workers do not have a regulated legal status.

The pilot study ‘Work on platforms’, conducted by the Central Statistical Office (GUS) in 2022, aimed to estimate the scale of work on digital platforms in Poland by focusing on people aged 15-64. The study showed that only 0.6% of respondents had ever performed work via online platforms. A larger percentage of this group were men (65.4% compared to 34.6% of women). Among the respondents, 44.6% perceived work on the platform as additional or occasional, 24.6% considered it to be the primary form of employment, and 26.9% indicated that the nature of the work changed frequently. While these results provide a general picture of the phenomenon, they should be interpreted with caution due to the pilot nature of the study, as its primary goal was to test the methodology and research tools for future development.⁶

2. Driving factors

The 2022 study commissioned by the ZPP covered 360 people who provided various services (including courier, care, and IT) via online platforms.⁷ Over 40% of respondents had been working this way for at least two years. The primary reasons for using online platforms were easier access to customers (46%), low entry threshold (31%), and high remuneration (31%). The largest group of

⁶ “INFOR, “Pracujący, bezrobotni i bierni zawodowo w II kwartale 2023. GUS podał dane”, authored by Piotr Szymański, published on August 24, 2023, <https://kadry.infor.pl/wiadomosci/6294970.pracujacy-bezrobotni-i-bierni-zawodowo-w-ii-kwartale-2023-gus-podal.html>.

⁷ Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers, “Badanie ZPP”

respondents (37%) earned between PLN 2,500 (EUR 603.79) and 5,000 (EUR 1,207.58) net per month. According to the study's report, "respondents assess the terms of cooperation with platforms as understandable (98%) and fair (96%)". The level of satisfaction with cooperation, as well as a positive assessment of its terms, also translates into the assessment of their own financial situation. 93% of the surveyed platform workers positively assessed their financial situation, and almost every third respondent earned an income exceeding PLN 5,000 (EUR 1,207.58) net from orders received via the platforms. The respondents' professional plans reflected a high level of satisfaction with both their collaboration with platforms and the terms they offer. Over 80% of them plan to do this type of work for longer as either the only (42%) or additional (41%) source of income.⁸

The popularity of platform work, especially in the form of casual or short-term work, is constantly growing, and it is estimated that the popularity of this type of employment will increase in the coming years. ---- The digitization of society and the growing access to the Internet are driving the popularity of digital platforms, especially in the on-demand services sector, such as transport and delivery.⁹ Simultaneously, however, the lack of regulation in Poland means that platforms often transfer risk to workers, depriving them of social benefits.¹⁰ Nonetheless, working on platforms offers flexibility and a low entry threshold, attracting younger people and those looking for additional income. Changing consumer preferences and business development motivate

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⁸ Ibid. All amounts were calculated according to the exchange rate on 26/02/2025.

⁹ "Społeczeństwo informacyjne w Polsce w 2023 roku", Statistics Poland, p. 113, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/nauka-i-technika-spolczenstwo-informacyjne/spoleczenstwo-informacyjne-w-polsce-w-2023-roku,1,17.html>.

¹⁰ "Od kiedy dyrektywa o pracy platformowej? Jakie zmiany wprowadza? [WYWIAD]" by Emilia Panufnik, published on December 13, 2024 on the Infor.pl portal, <https://kadry.infor.pl/wiadomosci/6803626,od-kiedy-kierunka-o-pracy-platformowej-jakie-zmiany-wprowadza-wywi.html>.

companies to implement modern solutions, such as the Jush (quick commerce app, allowing users to order groceries and everyday essentials with ultra-fast delivery, typically within 15 minutes) from Żabka.¹¹

The popularity of platform work, especially in the form of casual or short-term work, is constantly growing, and it is estimated that the popularity of this type of employment will increase in the coming years.¹² This growth will also be driven by the expansion of platforms, which may offer more services in the future. This could attract more workers to this form of employment, reduce costs, enhance flexibility, and provide a wider range of opportunities through online platforms.

3. Country-specific impact: benefits and challenges

According to a study by ZPP, 95% of platform workers in Poland are satisfied with their cooperation with platforms, and over 80% plan to continue this form of work.

Platform work in Poland is developing dynamically, offering employment flexibility and access to the global labor market, especially in the IT and creative services sector.¹³ According to a study by ZPP, 95% of platform workers in Poland are satisfied with their cooperation with platforms, and over 80% plan to continue this form of

work.¹⁴ However, this sector also comes with challenges, such as employment instability and income uncertainty, as most workers rely on short-term assignments.¹⁵

¹¹ "Dyrektywa platformowa – nowe regulacje UE dotyczące pracy za pośrednictwem platform cyfrowych" by Alexander Schwickert and Patrycja Karłowska-Sekulska, published on November 15, 2024 on the EY Polska website, https://www.ey.com/pl_pl/insights/workforce/kierunki-platformowa-nowe-regulacje-dotyczace-pracy-za-posrednikiem-platform-cyfrowych.

¹² Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers, "Badanie ZPP".

¹³ "Dyrektywa platformowa – nowe regulacje UE dotyczące pracy za pośrednictwem platform cyfrowych" Warsaw: EY Polska, 2024. Accessed February 19, 2025, https://www.ey.com/pl_pl/insights/workforce/kierunki-platformowa-nowe-regulacje-dotyczace-pracy-za-posrednikiem-platform-cyfrowych.

¹⁴ Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers, "Badanie ZPP".

¹⁵ Polish Economic Publishing House, "Crowd employment. Challenges to occupational health and safety in Poland", 2024. Accessed February 19, 2025, <https://www.pwe.com.pl/pobierz.php?id=2031156978&mode=artykul>.

The type of contract in platform work determines both the worker's rights and obligations as well as how digital platforms operate, as they aim to minimize their liability toward contractors.¹⁶ In Poland, one of the most common forms of cooperation in the platform sector is a B2B contract, a contract of mandate or a contract for specific work.¹⁷ Self-employed people are required to pay ZUS¹⁸ contributions and taxes (PIT and VAT, if they are obliged to do so). This model is beneficial for platforms because it transfers the financial and administrative risk to workers while giving the latter relative freedom in choosing their working hours. In practice, however, platform algorithms often favor the most active users, which means that people working part-time may receive fewer orders and thus have limited earning potential.

In the case of on-demand platforms such as Uber, Glovo or Bolt Food, a contract for services is often used, which formally assumes greater freedom in performing tasks. The contractor undertakes to perform a specific number of tasks, but there is no guaranteed salary or employment stability. In theory, this contract should give the employee a lot of freedom in deciding how, where, and when to work. But in reality, many platforms use ranking systems and algorithms that reward people who work specific hours or perform more orders. In practice, this means that despite the lack of formal management, platforms can indirectly influence the availability of workers.¹⁹

Although the contract for specific work is less common in the platform sector, some companies use it for services that require a specific result, such as digital content production, translations, or IT projects.²⁰ This form of employment allows for avoiding social security contributions, which makes it attractive to

¹⁶ EY Polska, Platform Directive – new regulations on work via digital platforms, Warsaw: EY Polska, 2024.

¹⁷ Infor Kadry, "B2B (samozatrudnienie) zamiast umowy o pracę. Wady i zalety. Komu się opłaca taka forma współpracy zarobkowej?", 2024, <https://www.infor.pl/prawo/nowosci-prawne/6777238,b2b-samozatrudnienie-zamiast-umowy-o-prace-wady-i-zalety-komu-sie-oplaca-taka-forma-wspolpracy-zarobkowej.html>.

¹⁸ ZUS (Social Insurance Institution) is a Polish government agency responsible for managing the country's social security system. It collects contributions for retirement, disability, sickness, and accident insurance and distributes benefits such as pension, disability allowances, and maternity or sick leave payments. ZUS also oversees health insurance contributions, which are transferred to the National Health Fund (NFZ), <https://www.zus.pl/o-zus/o-nas/finanse/zaklad-ubezpieczen-spoolecznych>.

¹⁹ Infor Kadry, "Umowa zlecenie jako forma zatrudnienia", 2024, <https://www.infor.pl/prawo/umowy/praca-uslugi/5698753.umowa-zlecenia-zlecenie-zatrudnienie.html>.

²⁰ UMOWYwIT, "Modele kontraktowe w projektach IT – co trzeba o nich wiedzieć?", by Aleksandra Wiśniewska-Tomaszewska, Accessed February 19, 2025, <https://umowywit.pl/modele-kontraktowe-w-branzy-it/>.

platforms and some workers who prefer a higher gross salary. However, the lack of ZUS contributions means losing both retirement and health insurance coverage.

4. Current national regulatory landscape and EU criteria

As part of the preparations for the implementation of the Platform Work Directive, adopted on 23 October 2024. Analyses and consultations are underway in Poland regarding its impact on the labor market. Existing legal regulations are

The Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers supports the main idea of the directive but appeals for its careful implementation.

also considered. The Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy is considering various implementation scenarios, considering both the need to protect the rights of platform workers and the preservation of employment flexibility, valued by many of them.²¹

There is an intense debate on platform work in Poland, focusing on regulations, employment conditions and the protection of workers' rights. These discussions have become particularly important in the context of the pending European directive. On 25 September 2024, an open discussion was organized by the Federation of Polish Entrepreneurs entitled "The end of platform work? What will the new directive change?". The meeting discussed the potential consequences of introducing the directive into the Polish labor market, including the possibility of introducing an entrepreneur test and a presumption of an employment relationship. This could significantly affect the relations between platforms and people providing services through them.²²

²¹ Emilia Panufnik, INFOR Kadry, "Od kiedy dyrektywa o pracy platformowej? Jakie zmiany wprowadza? [WYWIAD]" <https://kadry.infor.pl/wiadomosci/6803626,od-kiedy-dyrektywa-o-pracy-platformowej-jakie-zmiany-wprowadza-wywi.html>.

²² Łukasz Guza, "Koniec pracy platformowej? Co zmieni nowa dyrektywa?", Accessed February 19, 2025, <https://dialogogospodarce.pl/praca-platformowa/>.

In addition, a special edition of the European Forum for New Ideas is planned in Warsaw on 15-16 April 2025, devoted to the future of work, including platform work. This event aims to support Poland's priorities during the Presidency of the Council of the European Union and to discuss key challenges related to digital transformation and its impact on the labor market.²³ Various industries and employer organizations expressed their positions on this matter. The Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers supports the main idea of the directive but appeals for its careful implementation so as not to violate the freedom of contract and the constitutional principle of economic freedom. ZPP warns against the excessive extension of regulations to sectors such as transport or logistics, which could negatively affect these industries.²⁴

²³ Polska Agencja Prasowa, "EFNI Wiosna: „Przyszłość pracy, praca przyszłości” - edycja specjalna w Warszawie”, Accessed February 19, 2025, <https://pap-mediaroom.pl/biznes-i-finanse/efni-wiosna-przyszlosc-pracy-praca-przyszlosci-edycja-specjalna-w-warszawie?>

²⁴Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers, "Stanowisko ZPP ws. wdrożenia dyrektywy platformowej do polskiego porządku prawnego", January 27, 2025, <https://zpp.net.pl/stanowisko-zpp-ws-wdrozenia-dyrektywy-platformowej-do-polskiego-porzadku-prawnego/>.

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