

# WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF PLATFORM WORK IN FLANDERS AND BELGIUM ?



Have you ever worked for a platform? Platform work refers to work that is organised through a digital platform. In the platform economy, data and algorithms play a big role, for example by assigning work or assessing performance based on customer reviews. In this brAlnfood, we take a closer look at platform work in Flanders and Belgium and the challenges posed by this type of work.

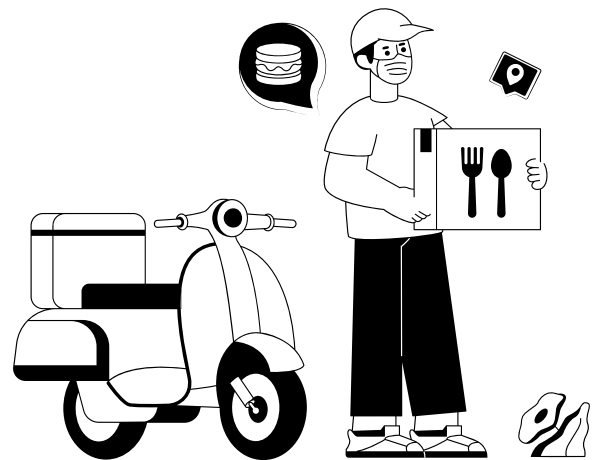
## PLATFORM WORK IN FLANDERS AND BELGIUM

**Platform work is hugely diverse**, from delivering meals to offering tutoring to odd jobs and selling goods. According to [figures from Statbel](#), 84,000 Belgians between 15 and 64 years old worked at least one hour for a digital platform in 2022. Of these, 54.2% have at least a higher education degree and are mainly self-employed.

There are also many platform workers who are working in the **Peer-to-Peer (or sharing) economy**, with particularities about legal certainty, an annual maximum amount, combination with social or unemployment benefits, etc. Not taking this into account as a platform worker can result in administrative issues.

The [motivations for platform work](#) also differ: more flexibility, extra income, out of necessity to make ends meet, for lack of other work, and because no job application or diploma is required.

It is vulnerable groups who are more likely to do platform work with [poorer working conditions](#). This includes work with, for example, very short or long working hours, low pay, no access to social security, pseudo self-employment or a disregard for health and safety. In addition, they are often highly dependent on the income earned through platform work.



## PLATFORMS AND ALGORITHMIC MANAGEMENT

Many platform workers are very dependent on the algorithm and the work that the algorithm does or does not assign them. This is also known as **algorithmic management**. In algorithmic management, some management tasks such as monitoring, assessing and directing workers are performed by automated systems. This can help organise the work efficiently, but also, for example, to measure the quality of that work. If you want to know more about algorithmic management, we recommend reading the [brAlnfood](#) 'What is the impact of employee datafication?'.

Some platforms are **not always transparent about the algorithms** that assign work to an employee. As a result, employees are sometimes in the dark about why they have been assigned work or not. There is also **little to no access to the data collected** on platform workers – especially for couriers.

# LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK: TOWARDS BETTER PROTECTION OF PLATFORM WORKERS?

The [Labour Deal \('Arbeidsdeal'\)](#) (2022) contains measures that give platform workers a **status** that offers them protection. Eight criteria are used to determine whether a platform worker can work as an employee or self-employed person. Their social protection will also be determined based on this status and every platform worker will get occupational accident insurance.

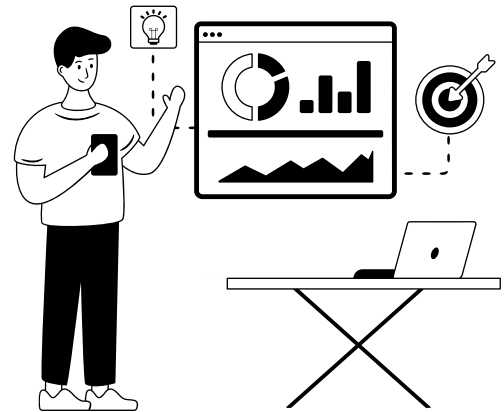
On 8 February 2024, the European Council and the European Parliament reached [an agreement](#) that if there are **factual indications of control and direction**, there is an employment relationship between a digital work platform and a platform worker. If the digital platform wants to argue against this presumption, it must prove that the contractual relationship is not an employment relationship. This would make it easier for platform workers to legally establish their employment status.

The same agreement also stipulates which platform worker data should not be collected by digital labour platforms, such as data to predict (possible) union activity and personal data on the emotional and psychological wellbeing of platform workers.

On 14 October 2024, the Council adopted the new rules for platform work, and EU member states have two years to incorporate its provisions into their national legislation.

The [AI Act](#) (2024) that came into force last year also affects platform work because algorithms direct labour. Those algorithms are potentially high-risk applications (see Annex III, (4) (b) of the AI Act). As a result, these **high-risk AI systems** are subject to all relevant requirements, for example in terms of data quality, transparency and human oversight. Platform workers are entitled to clear and meaningful explanations of the automated decisions affecting them, e.g. on their division of labour or termination of the contractual relationship (see Article 86 of the AI Act). Where there has been an infringement of the AI Act provisions, platform workers can submit complaints to the relevant market surveillance authority (see Article 85 of the AI Act). In Belgium, [these authorities](#) are responsible for protecting fundamental rights over the use of certain high-risk AI systems (Article 77 of the AI Act).

It remains to be seen whether these provisions and initiatives will indeed contribute to a real status for platform workers and their social protection.



## MORE INFO?

For information, advice or assistance on your **rights as a platform worker** under anti-discrimination legislation, please contact:

- [The Institute for the equality of women and men](#) if there is potential discrimination based on gender,
- [Unia](#) for potential discrimination based on the other protected characteristics (racial criteria, age, disability, social origin, sexual orientation, etc.),
- [The Flanders Human Rights Institute](#) if there is potential discrimination based on disability or if there is a link to another regional competence.

The various workers' organisations ([ACV-United Freelancers](#), [ABVV Platform](#), [ACLVB](#)) **support platform workers in Flanders**. The organisation [Fairwork Belgium](#) helps **precarious workers** with their rights as employees.

Do you know other organisations in Flanders working around (the protection of) platform workers? Let us know at [info@data-en-maatschappij.ai](mailto:info@data-en-maatschappij.ai). We are happy to expand our network.

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