



SAFER, FAIRER CONDITIONS FOR PLATFORM WORKERS? CONSIDERING KEY REGULATORY AND POLICY DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES

03 DECEMBER 2025

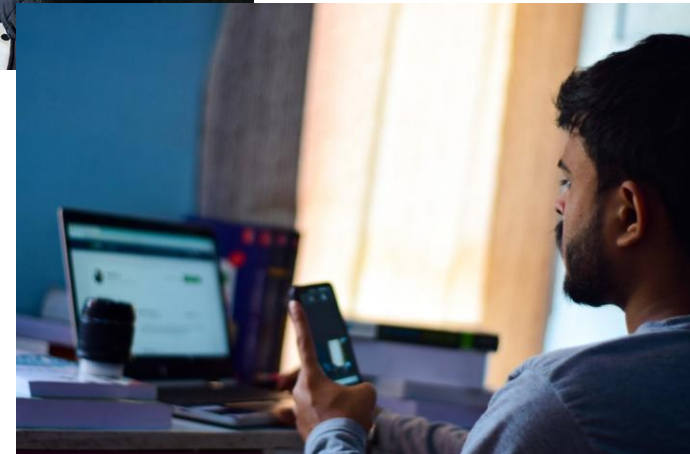
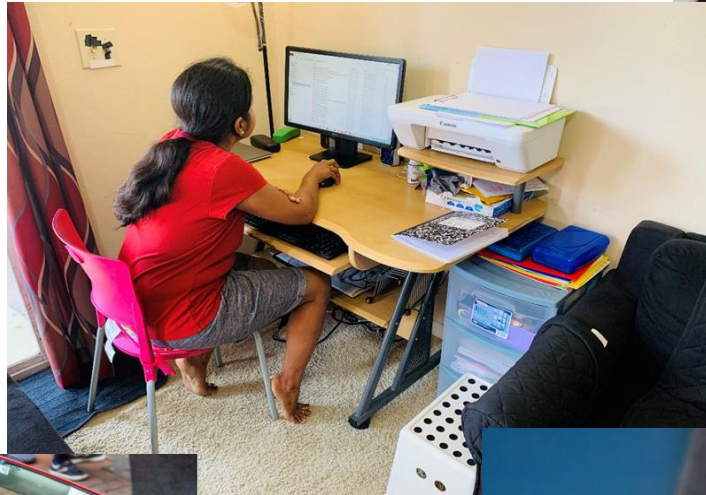
Dr Alessio Bertolini

Researcher, Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford

HEALTHY WORKPLACES SUMMIT: 'Safe and healthy work in the digital age'

Bilbao, 3-4 December 2025

WHAT IS PLATFORM WORK?



OSH CHALLENGES IN RELATION TO PLATFORM WORK

Employment classification	Subcontracting	Account rentals
Misclassification and bogus self-employment. Limited OSH protection for self-employed.	Dilution of responsibility. Lack of proper monitoring mechanisms. Use of different work models.	Work performed by people without the right to work. Exclusion of any protection and right.
Pay and Incentives	Working time	Safety equipment
Piece-rate pay. Gamification.	Lack of application of working time regulations. Accident and vehicle insurance coverage.	Costs of safety equipment borne by workers. Maintenance and replacement of equipment.

OSH CHALLENGES IN RELATION TO PLATFORM WORK

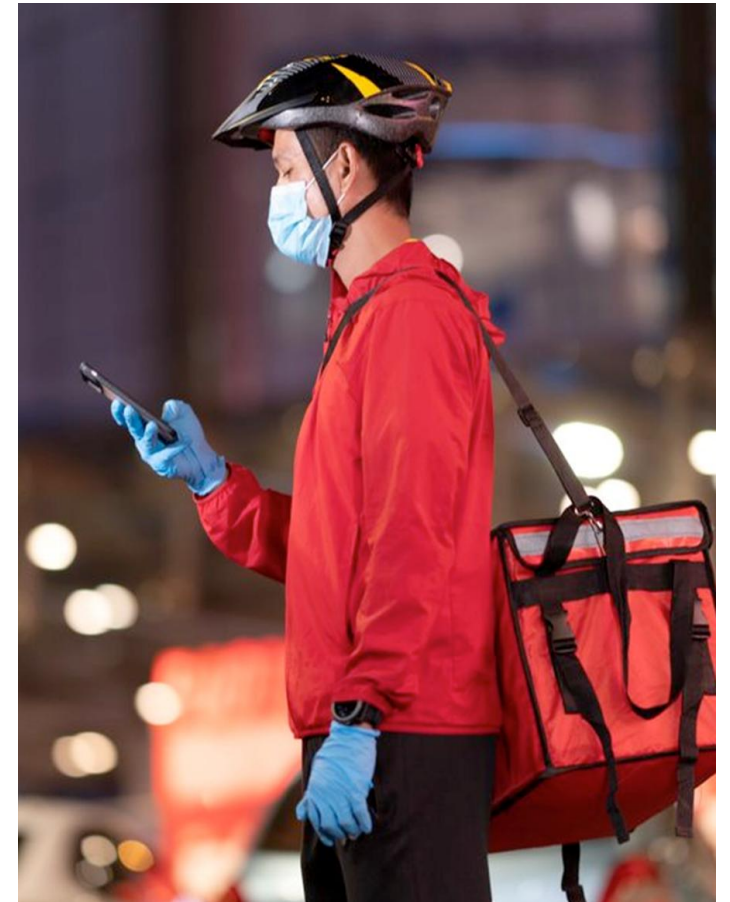
OSH CHALLENGES IN RELATION TO PLATFORM WORK		
Training	Social protection	Contract transparency and accessibility
Lack of access. Limited amount. Voluntary and unpaid.	Lack of access to social protection schemes. Unsuitable schemes.	Not regulated by labour law. Inclusion of limited liability clauses. Bogus clauses. Inaccessibility. Language use. Length.
Algorithmic management	Data protection	Collective representation
Lack of transparency and accountability. 'Black box'. Automated communication Lack of due process.	Little transparency and scrutiny.	Individualised work. Social isolation. Legislation limiting possibility of collective representation.

REGULATORY DEVELOPMENTS

- Employment Classification
 - Presumption of Employment (e.g. Spain, Malta, Belgium, Croatia and Portugal)
 - EU Directive on Improving the Working Conditions on Platform Work
 - Third Employment Category (e.g. the UK)
 - Automatic Employment Classification for Certain Categories (e.g. ride-hailing in Germany, Spain)

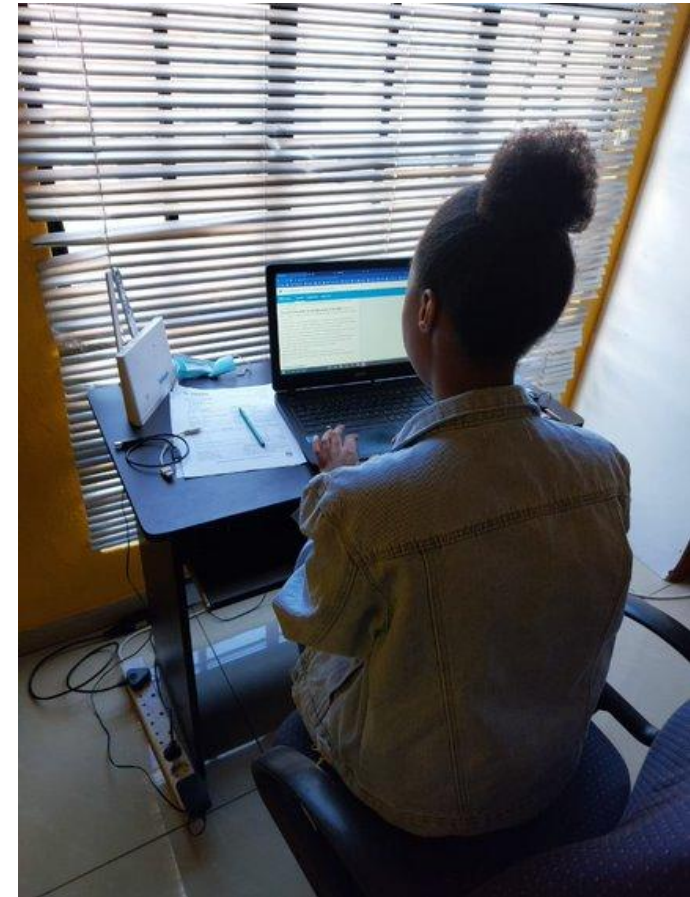
REGULATORY DEVELOPMENTS

- Subcontracting
 - Only vaguely covered by the Directive on Platform Work
 - Joint Liability Clause
 - Potentially covered by other pieces of legislation



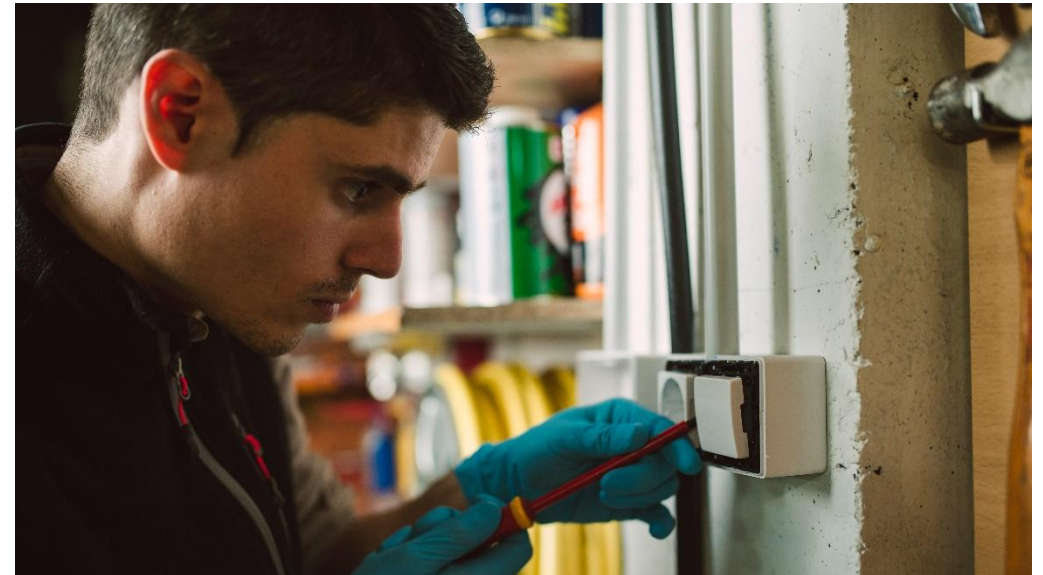
REGULATORY DEVELOPMENTS

- Pay and Working Time
 - Partly covered by regulation on reclassification
 - Right to refuse and right to disconnect



REGULATORY DEVELOPMENTS

- Health and Safety Equipment and Training, and Social Protection
 - Related to employment classification
 - Extension to self-employed workers (e.g. France, Italy and Belgium and through collective agreements in several countries)



REGULATORY DEVELOPMENTS

- Algorithmic Management and Surveillance
 - Chapter of the EU Directive entirely devoted to algorithmic management
 - Some countries already implemented some (ineffective) regulations (e.g. Spain, Italy)



REGULATORY DEVELOPMENTS

- Data protection
 - GDPR comprehensive but not always suitable
 - Only partly addressed in the Directive on Platform Work



REGULATORY DEVELOPMENTS

■ Collective Representation

- In some EU countries the self-employed can collectively bargain
- Restrictions often due to breach of competition regulation
- EU Commission's Guidelines removed limitations



OTHER FORMS OF REGULATIONS

- The International Labour Organisation is discussing an international convention on platform work
- Civil society organisations can also push for improvements in working conditions
 - **Fairwork**
 - **Platform Cooperatives**



International
Labour
Organization



THE FAIRWORK PROJECT

- Action-research project based at the Oxford Internet Institute and Berlin Social Science Centre
- Evaluates and scores platforms based on the working conditions they provide



Fairwork Principles for Gig Work



Fair Pay

Workers, irrespective of their employment classification, should earn a decent income in their home jurisdiction after taking account of work-related costs.



Fair Conditions

Platforms should have policies in place to protect workers from foundational risks arising from the processes of work and should take proactive measures to protect and promote the health and safety of workers.



Fair Contracts

Platforms provide clear and transparent terms and conditions and they do not impose unfair contract terms.



Fair Management

There should be a documented process through which workers can be heard, can appeal decisions affecting them and be informed of the reasons behind those decisions.








Fair Representation

Platforms should provide a documented process through which worker voice can be expressed. Irrespective of their employment classification, workers should have the right to organise in collective bodies, and platforms should be prepared to cooperate and negotiate with them.

METHODS

SCORING SYSTEM



Principle	First point		Second point		Total
 Fair Pay	1	+	1	=	2
 Fair Conditions	1	+	1	=	2
 Fair Contracts	1	+	1	=	2
 Fair Management	1	+	1	=	2
 Fair Representation	1	+	1	=	2

Maximum possible Fairwork Score



PLATFORM WORK COUNTRY LEAGUE TABLES

Germany Ratings 2021/2

Minimum standards of fair work

Zenjob	09 /10	●●●●●●●●○
Lieferando	07 /10	●●●●●●○○○
Wolt	07 /10	●●●●●●○○○
Flink	06 /10	●●●●●○○○○
Careship	05 /10	●●●●○○○○○
Getir	05 /10	●●●●○○○○○
Amazon Flex	03 /10	●●●○○○○○○○
Betreut.de	02 /10	●●○○○○○○○○○
Gorillas	02 /10	●●○○○○○○○○○
Helping	02 /10	●●○○○○○○○○○
FreeNow	01 /10	●○○○○○○○○○○○
Uber	01 /10	●○○○○○○○○○○○

South Africa Ratings 2022

Minimum standards of fair work

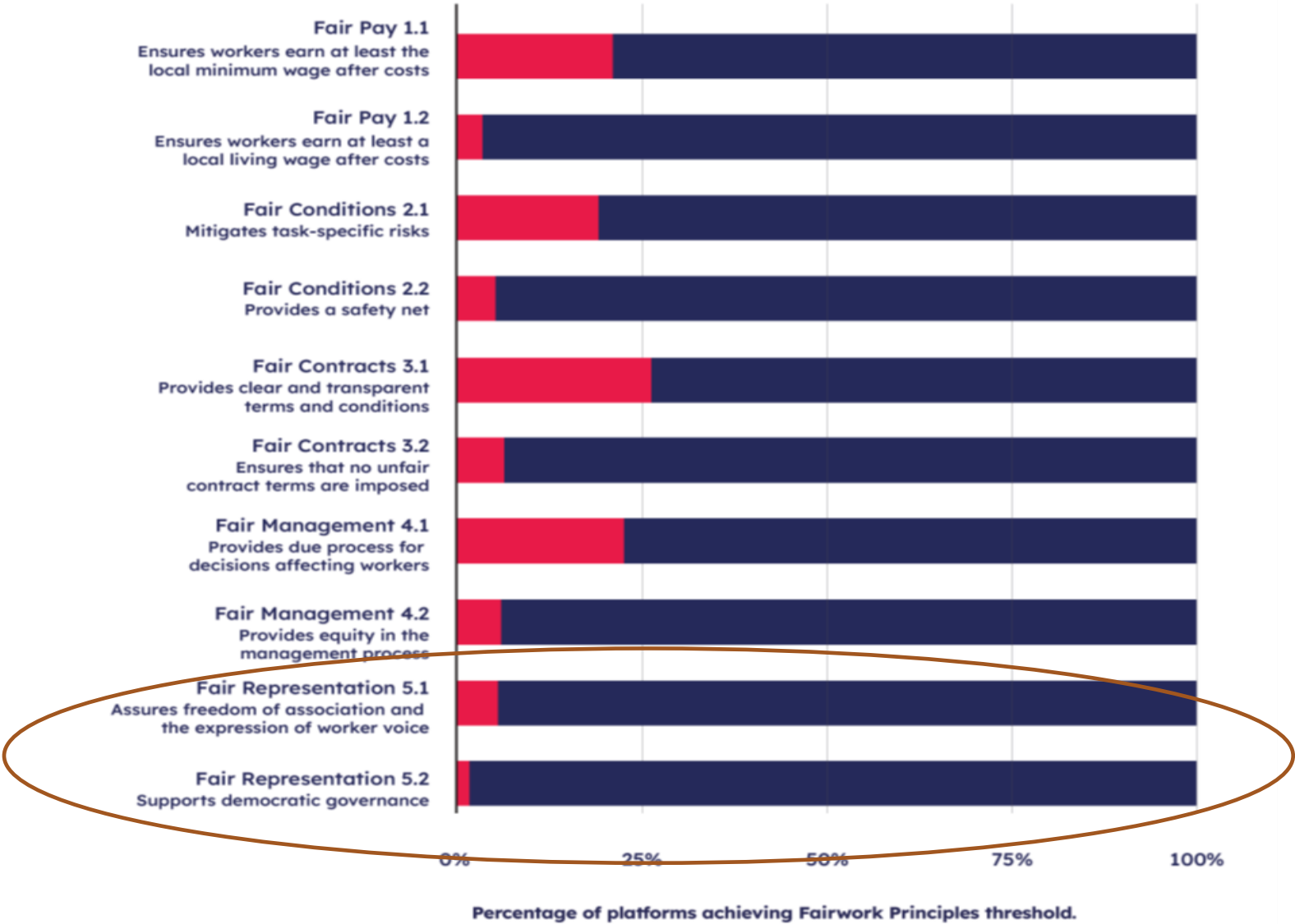
SweepSouth	07 /10	●●●●●●○○○
*getTOD	06 /10	●●●●●○○○○
M4Jam	06 /10	●●●●●○○○○
Mr D	06 /10	●●●●●○○○○
NoSweat	5 /10	●●●●○○○○○
Kandua	3 /10	●●●○○○○○○○
Uber	2 /10	●●○○○○○○○○○
Uber Eats	2 /10	●●○○○○○○○○○
Bolt	1 /10	●○○○○○○○○○○○
Picup	1 /10	●○○○○○○○○○○○
Droppa	0 /10	○○○○○○○○○○○
InDriver	0 /10	○○○○○○○○○○○
Secret Agent	0 /10	○○○○○○○○○○○

Ecuador Ratings 2022

Minimum standards of fair work

Asoclim	06 /10	●●●●●○○○○○
Tipti	06 /10	●●●●●○○○○○
Go Girl	03 /10	●●●○○○○○○○
AloApp	02 /10	●●○○○○○○○○○
Cabify	00 /10	○○○○○○○○○○○
Didi	00 /10	○○○○○○○○○○○
PedidosYa	00 /10	○○○○○○○○○○○
Rappi	00 /10	○○○○○○○○○○○
Uber	00 /10	○○○○○○○○○○○
Uber Eats	00 /10	○○○○○○○○○○○

PLATFORM SCORES BY PRINCIPLE



THE COOPERATIVE PLATFORM ECONOMY

- Platform economy based on **cooperative principles**
 - voluntary and open membership,
 - democratic member control,
 - member economic participation,
 - autonomy and independence,
 - education, training and information,
 - cooperation among cooperatives,
 - and concern for community
- Staying true to a 'sharing economy'?



THE COOPERATIVE PLATFORM ECONOMY

- Attention to Working Conditions embedded in its cooperative model
- Worker representation and ownership vs Venture capital
- OSH central to the cooperative model

...but important limitations...



THE COOPERATIVE PLATFORM ECONOMY: CHALLENGES

- Funding
- Scale
- Access to technology and expertise
- Sustainability
- Live up to its principles





Thank You!