(6 October 2021) On 7 October, the World Day of Decent Work, trade unions join forces and call on the European Union to ensure decent work for workers in platform companies. We cannot wait any longer to put an end to the poor working conditions of platform workers, especially with regard to their social security and safety.

The European Commission is committed to introduced legislation before the end of the year to address the improvement of working conditions for platform workers and the social partner consultation was completed in September 2021. In line with the European Parliament resolution on fair working conditions, rights and social protection for platform workers, the trade unions have been advocating a rebuttable presumption of an employment relationship between platform companies and workers. The trade unions have further voiced their opposition to the creation of a “third status” in addition to the traditional classifications of
workers and employees. While the unions do not dismiss genuine self-employment, they strongly oppose bogus self-employment and demand that platform companies must be liable for their legal obligations regarding labour, income tax, financing of social protection, health and safety, due diligence, and corporate social responsibility.

In the light of an emerging debate around the “Uberisation of care”, EPSU underlines the need to focus on the care sector and the growing number of care workers in the platform economy. Examples for care work platforms include curafides (Austria), pflegix (Germany), home care direct (Ireland), Supercarers (UK), the multi-national platforms care.com and yoopies, as well as many others. The fact that care seekers and caregivers usually meet in private spaces for highly personal encounters and the absolute dependence of the care seekers on care services makes platform-facilitated care work more delicate than other platform services.

The business models of existing care work platforms range from marketplace concepts with a subscription fee to comprehensive setups where the platform is involved in different stages of the caregiver-care seeker relationship. Some platforms only work with registered self-employed workers, while others neither offer formal employment nor demand registered self-employment. With regard to long-term care services offered through digital platforms, a 2020 report by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) raises the question whether this type of service can be provided at all without an employment relationship.

There is a high risk that platform work leads to a downgrading of labour standards for qualified carers and to unpaid working time for things such as commuting and job searching. Even though many platforms allow care workers to offer and select their tasks on their own, sorting and listing happens according to an algorithm, which diminishes the autonomy of the carers. The fact that ratings are not transferable to competing platforms aggravates workers’ dependency on the platform they work on. In contrast to many other platform services (e.g. Uber driving), care work is usually done by women, which adds a gender dimension to the debate. There is a considerable risk that platforms force women into low paid work.

EPSU calls on the Commission to present an ambitious legislative proposal which is followed by a substantive improvement in working conditions for workers in
platform companies, including care workers. As a minimum it should include the presumption of an employment relationship between workers and platform companies. Proving the opposite should become the obligation of the company, not the individual worker.

The Commission should further ensure that platform companies follow the same rules as other companies in the sector, and that platform workers enjoy the same rights as every other worker. These should include health and safety provisions, the obligation for platform companies to offer training opportunities for workers, the right to collective bargaining and freedom of association, as well as the transferability of skills certificates to other platforms. EPSU further calls for more independent research in the field, which should take the particularities of platform-based care work into account.

An EPSU delegation will join the ETUC protest on 7 October 2021.

**For background information:**

- [Resolution by the ETUC](#) (reply to the second phase consultation of social partners under Article 154 TFEU on possible action addressing the challenges related to working conditions in platform work, adopted at the extraordinary Executive Committee meeting of 9 September 2021).


- [Resolution by the European Parliament](#) on fair working conditions, rights and social protection for platform workers – new forms of employment linked to digital development (2019/2186(INI) - 16/09/2021).

- [Report by EPSU](#) on low pay in sectors dominated by women.

- [Statement PSI](#), World Day for Decent Work, 7 October : Pandora Papers Show Where The Funding for Decent Work and Public Services is

**For more information on the ETUC protest**