

# Newsletter of the Project CrowdWork

EC Reference: VP/2018/004 Improving expertise in the field of industrial relations



**Nº 1**

## Summary of the action

The rising of work in digital platform creates many difficulties to represent and organize crowd workers and bring new challenges the traditional forms of organized labour and the European social model. The goal of this project is to analyse strategies of alternative unions or movements and trade unions aiming to represent crowd workers in Europe. It will reflect on strategies to organise and represent these crowd workers, produce policy options ensuring social protections and labour rights, and elaborate new pathways for exploiting the potential positive effects of gig economy and platform-based work.

In order to address these challenges, we will conduct four case studies per country about strategies of alternative unions or movements, trade unions and activities in four European countries. The partnership is composed by countries representative of the Mediterranean, Centre-West and Eastern model of industrial relations (i.e. Portugal, Spain, Germany and Hungary). The analysis will be shared and discussed in three mutual learning international conferences involving partners, experts and stakeholders (e.g. crowd workers, key individuals in alternative unions and movements, trade unions, platform firms, crowd companies and associations and policymakers). Evidence from these activities will be assessed, compared, summarised in three reports (peer-reviewed by experts), one book and in policy recommendations. The project will include a distinct international expert assessment committee to contribute throughout the monitoring process, the peer review process and our meetings to ensure the highest level of scientific results.

## Objectives of the project

The objective of this project is to identify alternative self-organised actions to improve crowd workers' working conditions, analyse their strategies and compare them with trade unions' plans in and across countries. The Consortium includes partners from countries representing different models of industrial relations, namely the Mediterranean, Centre-West and Eastern model (i.e. Portugal, Spain, Germany and Hungary).

Our **1<sup>st</sup> International Conference** will be held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020 in Karlsruhe, Germany.  
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## Research topics

The project will address 4 research topics:

- 1) Work in digital platforms across Europe
  - a. What type of workers exist in each country and why?
  - b. What are the differences in the digital workforce across countries?
- 2) Trade union strategies across Europe
  - a. What are the strategies and activities followed by trade unions to organize single and self-organised workers of digital platforms?
  - b. What is the contribution and effectiveness of trade unions' actions to organise crowd workers and improve their working conditions?
  - c. How can traditional trade unions react or shape further developments occurring in crowd work?
  - d. What are the differences in trade union strategies across countries?
- 3) Self-organisation of crowd workers across Europe
  - a. What self-organised crowd workers' actions have emerged and why has this happened?
  - b. What are the main features of crowd workers actions and what is the contribution of these actions to organise crowd workers and improve their working conditions?
  - c. What are the differences in the self-organisation of crowd workers across countries?
- 4) Future political strategies
  - a. What are the main similarities and differences between trade union strategies and self-organised movements in crowd-work?
  - b. Which future actions are needed by political actors on national and/ or European level?

## Implementation of the action

The work will focus on answering the research questions by means of case study analyses. The cases will provide actual information about strategies and actions developed by trade unions as well as those autonomously developed by crowd workers. The analysis will be shared and discussed in three mutual learning international conferences, involving partners, experts and stakeholders (e.g. digital workers, key individuals in alternative unions and movements, trade unions, platform firms, crowd companies). Evidence from these activities will be assessed, compared, summarised in three reports (peer-reviewed by experts) and in policy recommendations.

Until now the project accomplished the following activities:

- Analysis of crowd work modalities in selected sectors and selected platforms
  - o Scrutinised data through literature review, secondary sources and preliminary interviews to address research questions 1 - a, b
- Analysis of trade union strategies towards crowd work
  - o Scrutinised data through literature review, secondary sources and preliminary Interviews to address research questions 2 - a, b
- Analysis of alternative unions or movements to represent crowd workers
  - o Scrutinised data through literature review, secondary sources and preliminary Interviews to address research questions 3 - a, b

The first deliverable (2.1) of the project on *“National reports of desk research and preliminary interviews (Work package 2)”* was finished in November 2019. The second deliverable (2.2) *“Project report”* is now under preparation.