



# Draft

**Tabled by:** Federation of Young European Greens (decided on: 05/15/2020)

**Title:** Power to the Gig-Workers: Guarantee the socio-economic protections of gig-workers

## Draft text

1 With this resolution the European Green Party outlines the social and economic  
2 consequences of platform work and recognizes gig-workers as workers, demands  
3 adequate working conditions that enable access to social protection, lifelong  
4 learning and right to unionise.

5 *Technology offers new ways to put workers and customers in contact with each  
6 other through online platforms. Work is broken down into its smallest  
7 constituent parts and is then distributed to workers using algorithms. These  
8 workers are paid for each completed task (gig) rather than employed through  
9 regular work contracts which include social protections. Although the EU lacks a  
10 clear definition of gig-work, it is estimated that up to 36 million EU workers  
11 have participated in gig-work, including through platforms such as Uber or  
12 Deliveroo. Considering the impact of the gig-economy on workers and the likely  
13 increase and spread to more traditional sectors of the economy, measures must be  
14 taken to limit the negative consequences.*

15 While the gig-economy can offer autonomy, flexibility and opportunity to some,  
16 the platform still holds power over the workers and their working hours. Gig-  
17 workers are completely dependent on what on-demand tasks the algorithm assigns  
18 them. Many platforms use a strict surveillance system which includes customer  
19 ratings, time constraints, response rates and GPS features. It puts gig workers  
20 under pressure and creates a vicious cycle as they must be continually available  
21 and take risks to complete tasks quickly in order to keep up with the system, to  
22 get good reviews and be assigned enough profitable tasks. This blurs the work-

23 life balance, particularly in cases where the worker uses the platform as their  
24 main source of income.

25 Gig-work often puts workers in very precarious situations. Many struggle to earn  
26 a sufficient income even when working full-time causing financial insecurity and  
27 instability. As they are not employed through regular contracts, basic social  
28 security as well as health and safety controls are lacking. Gig-workers are  
29 denied pensions, parental benefits, health and work-related accident insurance,  
30 meaning workers are either obliged to work when sick, or must receive no income  
31 during the illness. Many platforms are also unwilling to provide training as  
32 they are afraid that granting this will lead to gig-workers being recognised as  
33 employees.

34 Platforms take advantage of existing discriminations, gender roles and of the  
35 failure of social security systems to provide adequate support for vulnerable  
36 groups. These groups make up a large proportion of gig-workers. Women\* who  
37 undertake caring responsibilities, for example single mothers, often take up  
38 gig-work to allow them to work irregular hours and balance with their  
39 responsibilities at home. But in some cases, single parents are forced to take  
40 their child with them to work, leave them at home or turn down work, thus  
41 leading to fewer tasks. The lack of a screening process by platforms and the  
42 unsocial hours that gig-workers sometimes undertake also leads to an increased  
43 risk of violence and abuse. Unregulated gig-work therefore contributes to  
44 increased socio-economic inequalities.

45 As gig-workers are isolated or can easily be replaced by others, they lack  
46 bargaining power towards the platform and face difficulty when they have to  
47 defend their rights. Organised unions and workers' cooperatives can be very  
48 efficient in balancing the distribution of power between company and worker,  
49 even if some platforms try to prevent their development.

50 Lack of regulation across Europe allows platform companies to exploit gig-  
51 workers who work for them by labelling them as self-employed. By denying that  
52 their workers are their employees they deny them social protections. In several  
53 countries, courts have ruled that gig-workers should be recognised as employees.  
54 False self-employment can be determined when the gig-worker lacks control or  
55 autonomy over the organisation of their work, lacks their own resources and  
56 equipment, or has been engaged with a single platform for a long time.

57 This exploitation of workers is only a part of some of these companies' strategy  
58 to avoid taxes, taking responsibility over their workers, and contributing to  
59 social protection schemes. They often take advantage of the gaps in fiscal  
60 legislation and the existence of fiscal paradises inside the EU itself to pay

61 the smallest taxes and concentrate wealth, while also relying on EU member  
62 states to bail them out in economic downturn.

63 The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has laid bare the dependence society has on gig-  
64 workers, yet they are not provided with workplace or welfare protections. The  
65 resulting economic crisis which we are witnessing will impact livelihoods in the  
66 next years, and all workers including those in precarious circumstances must  
67 have support.

68 **In order to ensure that no worker is forced into precarious and intolerable**  
69 **working conditions without social and financial protection, European Greens**  
70 **demand that the EU and national governments:**

- 71 • Establish a European definition of a worker to ensure that gig-workers  
72 will be seen as such and to prevent false self-employment;
- 73 • Grant gig-workers basic social protections, including health and work-  
74 related accident insurance, parental benefits and pensions provided by the  
75 platform companies and governments;
- 76 • Ensure gig-workers the right to collective bargaining over working rights,  
77 and to form unions and workers' cooperatives;
- 78 • Grant gig-workers access to training schemes;
- 79 • Implement a minimum or living wage, limit working hours per week, prevent  
80 forced over-time and support a work-life balance;
- 81 • Require platform companies to properly employ those gig-workers under  
82 false self-employment who ask for it, while maintaining flexibility of  
83 work;
- 84 • Introduce a proper regulation and taxation of platform companies and  
85 reinforce the fight against tax evasion;
- 86 • Guarantee the transparency of the algorithm and the criteria that are used  
87 to determine the distribution of tasks and the price being paid for them;
- 88 • Provide protection for gig-workers against pre-existing societal biases  
89 embedded in algorithms, for example based on gender or race and ethnicity;

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- Commission an EU-wide study on legal and insurance statuses of gig-workers.