



Work package 10: Policy hackathon

Date: 10 December 2025

Format: Online

Host partner: UCLL – Reinhilde Pullinx & Nore Hamers



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Abstract

This report presents a analysis of the Policy hackathon conducted within Work Package 10 of the TRANSFORM project. The event convened a diverse group of stakeholders to collaboratively examine the implications of digitalization, sustainability transitions, and evolving labor market structures for the future of work in Europe. Through a structured, case-based methodology, participants generated a comprehensive set of policy recommendations addressing artificial intelligence, green transitions, worker rights, well-being, and social protection. The findings underscore the necessity of coordinated, EU-level governance frameworks and highlight the importance of inclusive, participatory policymaking in navigating the twin digital and green transitions.

1. Introduction

The European labor market is undergoing a period of profound transformation, driven by rapid technological advancements, environmental imperatives, and shifting socio-economic dynamics. Digitalization and automation are reshaping occupational structures, while the transition toward sustainable production models demands new competencies and organizational practices. Simultaneously, the rise of non-standard employment forms challenges the adequacy of existing social protection systems. These developments necessitate forward-looking policy responses that are both evidence-based and socially inclusive.

In this context, the TRANSFORM project organized a Policy Hackathon to facilitate collaborative reflection and co-creation of policy solutions. As noted in the original document, “The Policy Hackathon was organized as an interactive and solution-oriented event that brought together a diverse group of stakeholders...”. There were 160 registered participants; however, possibly due to the event being online and free of charge, several individuals withdrew. Ultimately, 85 participants attended the session.

The hackathon brought together participants from a diverse group of 24 countries, reflecting the project’s broad international reach. Core involvement came from Belgium, Portugal, Slovenia, Poland, Greece, Italy, Germany, Sweden, and Malta, representing the main countries contributing to the project. In addition, participants from fifteen other nations further enriched the event’s global character. These additional countries included Finland, Hungary, Kosovo, Latvia, the Netherlands, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Romania, Spain, Ukraine, the United States, and Zimbabwe. Together, this wide international representation fostered a dynamic, multicultural environment that strengthened collaboration, creativity, and knowledge exchange throughout the hackathon.

representing a wide range of professional backgrounds, including human resources professionals, policymakers, researchers, employees, students, and self-employed workers. This diversity enriched the deliberative process and ensured that the resulting recommendations reflected multiple perspectives.

2. Event structure and agenda

The hackathon followed a structured agenda designed to foster collaborative learning and systematic problem-solving.

2.1 Opening session

The event commenced with an introduction to the TRANSFORM project and its objectives, followed by opening remarks from State Secretary mag. Tine Seršen of the Slovenian Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Energy. Her intervention emphasized the urgency of preparing Europe's workforce for the twin transitions and highlighted the role of participatory policymaking in shaping resilient labor markets.

2.2 Team formation and icebreaker

Participants were assigned to breakout rooms to facilitate initial interaction and establish a foundation for collaborative work. This step was essential for creating a psychologically safe environment conducive to open dialogue.

2.3 Problem framing exercise:

Each group was provided with a detailed case study corresponding to one of the five thematic tracks. Participants analyzed the case, identified key challenges, and discussed the broader implications for workers, employers, and policymakers, recording their insights collaboratively on the Padlet platform:

<https://padlet.com/norehamers/policy-hackathon-c7p3bn58t7yt9gju> to ensure transparency and shared knowledge building.

2.4 Plenary presentations

Groups presented their findings in a plenary session, enabling cross-group learning and critical reflection. This format ensured that insights were not siloed within thematic tracks but contributed to a shared understanding of systemic challenges.

2.5 Closing session

The event concluded with a synthesis of the main insights and an outline of subsequent steps within Work Package 10, including the development of a Policy Brief and the organization of follow-up workshops.

3. Methodological approach

The hackathon employed a collaborative, multi-track methodology that combined case-based learning with participatory policy design. As described in the document, “The hackathon employed a collaborative, multi-track approach that encouraged active participation and knowledge sharing among all attendees.”

3.1 Case-based analysis

Case studies served as the primary analytical tool, enabling participants to ground their discussions in concrete, real-world scenarios. This approach facilitated the identification of practical challenges and the formulation of context-sensitive policy recommendations.

3.2 Digital collaboration tools

Padlet was used as a central platform for documenting insights, sharing resources, and enabling asynchronous collaboration. This tool enhanced transparency and ensured that all contributions were captured systematically.

3.3 Guiding questions

To structure the deliberations, participants addressed four guiding questions:

- What are the most pressing challenges in the thematic area?
- Which stakeholders are most affected?
- How urgent is the need for policy intervention?
- What policy measures could effectively address these issues?

3.4 Collective validation

The plenary presentations allowed for collective validation of the recommendations, ensuring that they were robust, coherent, and reflective of diverse viewpoints.

4. Thematic analysis and policy recommendations

The hackathon focused on five thematic tracks, each representing a critical dimension of the future of work. Below is an expanded academic analysis of each track.

4.1 track 1: artificial intelligence and automation

4.1.1 case study overview

The logistics company examined in this track implemented ai-driven route optimisation and warehouse automation to increase efficiency and throughput. While these technologies delivered measurable productivity gains, they also caused significant labour disruptions. Workers experienced layoffs, rapid role reassignments and declining morale, largely due to insufficient retraining and lack of preparation for new tasks. The transition was implemented quickly and in a predominantly techno-centric manner, with limited attention to human, social and organisational impacts.

4.1.2 Analytical insights

The case illustrates the dual-edged nature of ai adoption in the workplace. Although technological benefits were substantial, the social and organisational consequences were underestimated. The absence of structured transition planning and limited worker involvement intensified negative outcomes rather than mitigating them. Productivity gains did not translate into reduced workload or increased autonomy, but instead into work intensification, tighter monitoring and accelerated work rhythms.

Algorithmic opacity emerged as a core concern. Ai systems influenced task allocation, performance evaluation and work pace without transparent explanation of their logic or criteria. This raised concerns about fairness, bias and accountability in employment-related decisions. Workers perceived ai as uncontestable, which weakened trust and exacerbated power asymmetries between management and employees.

The track also highlighted a structural “double pressure” on workers. On the one hand, automation increased fear of job loss or downgrading. On the other hand, workers were expected to rapidly adapt and retrain under intensified monitoring and time pressure. This combination heightened psychosocial risks such as stress, burnout and safety concerns, particularly in high-pressure warehouse environments.

Overall, the case confirms that ai functions not merely as a technical tool but as a system of work organisation that reshapes authority, responsibility and control.

4.1.3 Policy recommendations

- **Mandatory transition planning:** Organisations should be required to conduct comprehensive workforce impact assessments before deploying ai systems,

covering employment effects, task changes, skills needs and psychosocial risks.

- Worker participation: Social dialogue mechanisms should be strengthened to ensure meaningful worker and union involvement throughout ai-related decision-making processes.
- Algorithmic transparency: Employers must disclose when ai systems are used and explain the logic, criteria and data underlying algorithmic decisions that affect working conditions or employment outcomes.
- Human oversight: Critical employment decisions, such as evaluation, disciplinary measures and dismissal, should remain under human supervision to safeguard fairness and accountability.
- Targeted training investments: Eu funding should support accredited ai and digital skills programmes, with priority given to workers most exposed to automation risks, including low-skilled, older and migrant workers.
- Osh directive expansion: Psychosocial risks linked to algorithmic management, surveillance and work intensification should be explicitly addressed within occupational safety and health regulations.

4.2 Track 2: Sustainability and green transitions

4.2.1 Case study overview

The manufacturing firm transitioning to eco-friendly production faced significant skills gaps among its workforce. Training programs were fragmented, and no coherent policy framework linked sustainability objectives with workforce development.

4.2.2 Analytical insights

The case underscores the interdependence between environmental and human capital strategies. Without adequate training and institutional support, sustainability transitions risk exacerbating inequalities and undermining organizational performance.

4.2.3 Policy recommendations

- Integration of GreenComp and DigComp: These frameworks should be embedded across vocational education and corporate training systems.
- Financial incentives for SMEs: tax incentives and subsidies should support SMEs in adopting green technologies.

- Compliance audits: Regular audits should verify sustainability claims and prevent greenwashing, aligned with the EU taxonomy.

4.3 Track 3: Worker rights and inclusion

4.3.1 Case study overview

The technology startup lacked formal HR policies, resulting in microaggressions, unequal pay, and unclear grievance procedures, particularly affecting marginalized employees.

4.3.2 Analytical insights

The absence of institutionalized HR structures can perpetuate inequities and undermine organizational legitimacy. The case highlights the need for regulatory frameworks that ensure minimum standards of fairness and inclusion.

4.3.3 Policy recommendations

- Mandatory Anti-Discrimination Policies across all companies.
- Strengthened Enforcement of EU equality directives.
- Capacity Building for HR departments through Erasmus+ and ESF+.

4.4 Track 4: Well-being and work-life balance

4.4.1 Case study overview

The IT company's use of strict productivity monitoring tools for remote workers led to heightened stress, blurred work-life boundaries, and increased burnout.

4.4.2 Analytical insights

The case illustrates the psychosocial risks associated with digital monitoring and the erosion of temporal boundaries in remote work environments. Managerial capacity gaps further exacerbated these issues.

4.4.3 Policy recommendations

- EU-Wide Right to Disconnect to protect workers' personal time.
- Mandatory mental health support and managerial training.
- Remote work standards ensuring adequate equipment and connectivity.

4.5 Track 5: Social protection and income models

4.5.1 Case study overview

The freelance graphic designer lacked access to basic social protections, highlighting the vulnerabilities inherent in platform-based and non-standard work.

4.5.2 Analytical insights

The case demonstrates the inadequacy of traditional social protection systems in addressing the needs of freelancers and platform workers. The absence of portable benefits creates significant precarity.

4.5.3 Policy recommendations

- Portable benefits systems across EU borders.
- Platform contributions to social security.
- Dependent contractor status to protect workers in hybrid employment forms.
- UBI Pilot programs under EU social innovation initiatives.

5. Outcomes

Summary of EU policy recommendations

The policy hackathon findings show that digital, green and organisational transitions are deeply interconnected and require a coherent, worker-centred eu response. across all thematic tracks, the main challenge is that technological and economic change is advancing faster than social governance, participation mechanisms and protection systems.

As a first principle, just transition values should be embedded horizontally across all eu transition agendas. economic efficiency, innovation and sustainability objectives must be systematically linked to job quality, inclusion, worker protection and long-term social sustainability. EU funding instruments should demonstrate how they contribute to decent work and equality, not only to productivity gains.

Second, the EU should harmonise anticipation and transition planning across policy domains. major transformations such as automation, green restructuring or new employment forms should be accompanied by integrated planning that addresses employment impacts, skills needs, working conditions, health and social protection in a coherent way. this reduces fragmentation and strengthens policy consistency across member states.

Third, social dialogue must be reinforced as a core governance mechanism. workers and social partners should be involved early and continuously in decisions about technology use, work organisation, skills strategies and restructuring. eu-level guidance and capacity-building should support sectoral and cross-sectoral agreements, including in non-standard and platform-based work contexts.

Fourth, well-being and job quality should be treated as structural objectives of eu labour policy. psychosocial risks linked to digitalisation, monitoring, work intensification and blurred work-life boundaries should be explicitly integrated into occupational safety and health frameworks. comparable eu indicators on job quality and mental health should complement traditional employment metrics.

Fifth, EU skills policy should guarantee access to lifelong and transferable competences. training systems must support mobility across sectors and employment forms, combining digital and green skills with social, ethical and critical competences. priority should be given to workers most exposed to transition risks, such as low-skilled, older, migrant and non-standard workers.

Sixth, social protection systems must be modernised to reflect diversified employment forms. portable, rights-based protection should ensure continuity across contracts, careers and borders, preventing gaps in income security during periods of transition. EU social innovation frameworks can support experimentation, provided adequacy and sustainability are safeguarded.

Artificial intelligence and automation cut across all these areas and require additional attention. ai should be understood as a socio-technical system that reorganises work, redistributes power and shapes accountability. workers face a structural double pressure of automation-related insecurity and accelerated adaptation under intensified monitoring. eu policy should close responsibility gaps by ensuring transparency, human oversight and clear accountability for ai-assisted decisions, while integrating algorithmic management into labour law and osh policy.

Overall, the central message is that transitions succeed only when social governance keeps pace with technological and economic change. a coherent EU approach must combine general, cross-cutting protections with targeted measures for high-impact technologies such as ai, ensuring that innovation strengthens rather than undermines decent work, well-being and social cohesion.

6. Next steps

Future activities include:

- Dissemination of the Policy Brief to EU institutions and Member States.
- Monitoring progress through TRANSFORM project indicators.

- Encouraging Member states to integrate the recommendations into national labor market strategies.