



FOUR PRIORITIES FOR A WORKER-CENTRED QUALITY JOBS ACT

WHAT THE NORDIC EXPERIENCE TEACHES EUROPE ABOUT REGULATING AI IN THE WORKPLACE

ABSTRACT

Algorithmic management (AM) and artificial intelligence (AI) supported systems have long been shaping not only the platform economy, but increasingly also conventional workplaces and the public sector. However, the European protective measures developed for this purpose remain largely fragmented across sectors and limited to individual groups of workers.

Evidence from Nordic countries shows that strong worker representation and transparency mitigate negative consequences, such as bogus self-employment and surveillance, but are insufficient without binding occupational safety and health standards, early worker involvement, effective human oversight, and collective bargaining policy.

The Quality Jobs Act should therefore (1) extend protective rights beyond platform work; (2) enshrine employee participation and co-determination before the introduction of AM and AI systems; (3) define effective human oversight; and (4) ensure that the productivity gains generated by technology benefit not only companies but also employees.



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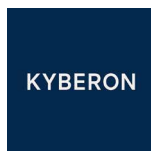
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Why AI at work belongs at the centre of the EU Quality Jobs Act	4
1.1 Responding to rapid technological change	4
1.2 Real-world insights on AI and algorithmic management	5
2. From platform work to a Europe-wide workplace governance gap	6
3. The Nordic lesson: Participation is necessary but not sufficient	8
3.1 Why the Nordic experience matters	8
3.2 What the evidence shows for job quality	9
3.3 Participation is necessary but not sufficient	10
4. Policy recommendations: Four priorities for a worker-centred European approach	11
4.1 Extend algorithmic-management protections beyond platform work	11
4.2 Make worker participation an ex ante governance requirement	12
4.3 Define meaningful human oversight and protect job quality	12
4.4 Share productivity gains and build institutional capacity	13
5. Conclusion: Turning AI-driven productivity into quality jobs	14
Endnotes	16
About the authors	20
About FEPS and partners	22

1. Why AI at work belongs at the centre of the EU Quality Jobs Act

1.1 Responding to rapid technological change

The EU has recognised algorithmic management (AM) as a labour policy issue mainly in platform work. Existing regulation of AM primarily encompasses the regulatory and legal framework for artificial intelligence (AI), established by the Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act), the data protection rules enshrined by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the minimum standards established by the Platform Work Directive (PWD) to improve working conditions in the gig economy. In the current context, the legislative initiative of the EU Digital Omnibus Package aims to adjust and align various digital laws to reduce compliance costs and achieve a US-style blueprint digital policy framework, diluting European regulatory autonomy and loosening protective measures.

Yet, even before this deregulation push, the EU's AM framework was already uneven in scope: particularly in the realm of the platform economy and the associated PWD, significant progress is attributable to the work of European socialists and social democrats, but equivalent protections have not yet been established for workers across the wider economy. However, algorithmic systems for delegating decision-making processes, management tasks and the evaluation of work have long since ceased to be used solely by platform companies. At the same time, the use of AI is on the rise in businesses and public institutions. This is why former EU Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights Nicolas Schmit called for a horizontal law on AI in the workplace during his mandate from 2019 to 2024. By 2025, more than a third of companies in Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands were

already using AI, creating a regulatory gap:¹ whilst the technological forms and possibilities of work management are converging across sectors, workers' rights remain fragmented.

The rapid spread of AM and AI raises important economic and social questions for both employers and employees. The key policy question here is not merely whether AM and AI enable productivity gains, but how these gains are generated and distributed. Higher productivity can strengthen real wages and public finances and raise living standards.² However, it does not automatically lead to better working conditions or higher incomes. Consequently, distributional issues are becoming increasingly important. At the same time, AM and AI systems are transforming organisational structures, decision-making processes and power relations within companies. A European policy focusing on AI in the workplace must therefore systematically link productivity with job quality, workers' rights and fair distribution.

With the second social partner consultation, which has been underway since July 2026, the drafting of the Quality Jobs Act (QJA) is now in a crucial phase that will run until the end of September 2026. AM and AI in the workplace are explicitly among the areas for which the Commission is examining additional European measures. This opens up a political window of opportunity to bring these issues together. However, a European approach to decent work in the context of digital transformation must not be limited to technical safety and individual data protection rights alone. Rather, it must also regulate how AM and AI systems are introduced into companies, what rights of co-determination employees and their representative bodies have in this process, how psychosocial risks to employees are mitigated, and how the productivity dividend is distributed.

1.2 Real-world insights on AI and algorithmic management

This policy brief brings together the findings from six studies conducted as part of the FEPS Nordic Digital Programme. It examines what lessons can be drawn from them for the European regulation of AM and AI in the workplace. It treats AM as a key area of application for AI in the workplace, whilst also taking into account rule-based AM systems and AI applications that alter professional discretion and the quality of work without themselves taking over management functions.

Nordic countries provide a particularly challenging test case in this regard: despite high levels of collective bargaining coverage, institutionalised co-determination and comparatively strong relationships of trust between social partners, significant risks to workers' autonomy, transparency and quality of work are evident there too. To this end, the research programme's broad empirical findings are summarised concisely to derive concrete policy recommendations.

The evidence from Nordic countries shows that the impact of AM and AI varies from case to case; however, there is a considerable risk that these technologies have a negative impact on employees. This suggests that the manner of implementation plays a key role in determining whether AM and AI combine productivity with decent work or whether they exacerbate work-related pressure, a lack of transparency and unequal distribution. This not only highlights which protective rights are needed, but also under which institutional and organisational conditions they actually become effective.

Against this background, four priorities emerge to broaden the ongoing debate on the QJA:

1. Work-related protective rights should extend beyond the platform economy.
2. Worker participation must begin even before the procurement and introduction of AM and AI systems.
3. Effective human oversight requires genuine powers of scrutiny and correction.
4. Productivity gains must be distributed fairly, and the institutional capacities for shaping AM and, in particular, AI must be strengthened.

BOX 1. EVIDENCE FROM THE FEPS-NORDIC DIGITAL PROGRAMME.

The FEPS-Nordic Digital Programme is a joint research initiative of the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) and its member foundations, as well as trade unions in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The first edition (2023-2024) examined platform work and AM and included case studies, employee surveys and analyses of online platforms. The second edition (2025-2026) broadened the focus to include AI and productivity, the use of AI systems in the public sector, and trade unions' capacity for action. The evidence base combines a large-scale survey of trade union members, qualitative case studies across seven private-sector industries, analyses of platform and administrative data, literature and policy reviews, and three comparative case studies from the public sector.³ Together, the studies cover platform work, conventional employment in the private sector, changes to work brought about by AM and AI in public administration, and AI-related productivity issues. The combination of methods makes it possible to establish links between the prevalence of the technology, its specific impacts on the workplace and the institutional conditions under which it is deployed.

2. From platform work to a Europe-wide workplace governance gap

BOX 2. AM AND AI AT WORK.

AM refers to the use of computer-based, rule-based codes and procedures (algorithms). AM is used to organise and control labour input by allocating, monitoring and evaluating workers using tracking data and other information.⁴ AI refers to computer systems that draw patterns from data to make recommendations, predictions or generate other useful outputs, often with varying degrees of autonomy.⁵ AM does not refer to a single technology, but rather to a form of digitally supported work management. It may be based on simple rule-based procedures or on AI systems. Both technologies can be used for the data-driven structuring and automation of administrative decision-making processes and management functions.⁶ Compared with AM, however, the use of AI encompasses a broader spectrum of applications, which, particularly in the case of generative AI, extend beyond the management sphere, such as summarising texts or writing code.⁷ Not every AM system is based on AI, and not every AI application in the workplace fulfils a management function.

The platform economy was the first major testing ground for algorithmic work control, to which the EU responded with the PWD.⁸ A much-discussed example of this has been self-employed drivers working for food delivery companies, where work assignments, monitoring and evaluation of the drivers are mediated and managed by online platforms' automated systems. The PWD, therefore, addresses both employment status

(against “bogus self-employment”) and the misuse of AM practices for at least 5.5 million platform workers in the EU.⁹ In doing so, the EU is setting a significant regulatory precedent, the protective principles of which are not intended to be limited to platform work.¹⁰

This is because AM is no longer a marginal phenomenon in the platform economy. A significant proportion of respondents across sectors already report computer-assisted task allocation.¹¹ Qualitative case studies highlight such systems in logistics, retail, finance and the media.¹² At the same time, general business data from Denmark confirms that AI is rapidly gaining importance, particularly in larger and knowledge-intensive companies.¹³ A protection framework that is exclusively platform-specific is therefore structurally inadequate.¹⁴

A lack of transparency in the use of AM and AI systems is a common problem that now extends across sectors.¹⁵ Employees often know neither which system is being used nor what data and criteria are factored into management decisions when AM systems are employed.¹⁶ Added to this is the risk of *function creep*: data collected for a specific purpose is later used for other management or monitoring purposes.¹⁷

Algorithmic systems intervene throughout the entire work process: systems assign tasks, monitor their execution and evaluate results. The Nordic survey of trade union members documents computer-assisted time recording, location tracking, monitoring of work pace and performance evaluation.¹⁸ Labour-related protective rights must therefore not be limited to fully automated individual decisions, but must take into account the full scope of managerial activities.

Nordic studies, particularly those from Norway, show that technological complexity and

external system development exacerbate these information asymmetries between employees and management, both in the private sector and in public administration. This, in turn, plays an important role in issues of transparency, as an example from the public sector in Sweden illustrates: the profiling system (PES) used by the Swedish Public Employment Service is the subject of academic and legal review in terms of transparency, explainability and risks of discrimination.¹⁹ Where such systems rely on historical data or proxy variables, they risk reproducing or even amplifying existing patterns of discrimination and thereby perpetuating broader societal inequalities. This could have particularly detrimental effects for vulnerable groups in the workforce, such as ethnic and racial minorities, migrants, women, older and early-career workers, persons with disabilities or illness or mental health conditions, and workers in precarious or non-standard employment. The PES case demonstrates that transparency cannot be achieved solely through internal explanations provided by the operator but requires independent legal and technical scrutiny. Protective measures must therefore not only guarantee information about the use of a system, but also cover its purposes, data sources and decision-making criteria. Case studies in the public sector are not included solely as classic examples of AM, but because automated systems alter the activities, responsibilities and professional discretion of employees.

In the public sector, the governance issue surrounding the scrutiny of algorithmic decision-making systems is becoming more complex. Automated systems there not only control work processes but also shift professional discretion and administrative responsibility into system design, procurement and organisational procedures.²⁰

The systems examined range from profiling in job placement services, through automated sickness benefit procedures, to the processing of residence permits.²¹ In this context, automation influences not only the organisation of work but also the exercise of public authority. Consequently, issues of professional discretion, accountability and public value become integral parts of the organisation of work. European regulation of AM and AI in the workplace must, therefore, go beyond traditional issues of surveillance and control.

To date, the EU has no coherent, cross-sectoral and employment-specific protective framework for AM. Whilst the European legal framework addresses individual risks associated with AM, it remains institutionally and sectorally fragmented. The EU AI Act regulates certain AI applications on a risk-based basis, the GDPR primarily grants individual rights to information and data protection, and the PWD contains specific work-related rules for AM but with a specific focus on the platform economy.²² However, this provides only incomplete coverage, particularly with regard to the collective shaping of systems in the workplace. This results in two regulatory gaps: (1) a “coverage gap”, as only certain workers, systems or decisions – predominantly within the platform economy – are covered; and (2) the GDPR’s focus on individual rights creates a collective governance and enforcement gap, as these rights cannot be enforced through workplace representative bodies.

Platform work has highlighted the labour law risks of algorithmic control at an early stage. However, evidence from Nordic countries shows that the same issues of transparency, participation and accountability are now arising across the entire economy and in the public sector. The key European challenge is, therefore, to develop a comprehensive framework for AM

– and, in particular, AI in the workplace – based on the experiences of the specific rules that already address the platform economy.

3. The Nordic lesson: Participation is necessary but not sufficient

3.1 Why the Nordic experience matters

The Nordic labour markets are comparatively heavily regulated by institutions and, thus, offer favourable conditions for a worker-centred introduction of new technologies. High collective bargaining coverage, strong trade unions, institutionalised co-determination and a spirit of trust-based cooperation between social partners make it easier to negotiate technological changes and to balance out the resulting benefits and risks.²³ It is precisely for this reason that Nordic countries present a challenging test case for AM and AI in the workplace.²⁴ These institutions facilitate access to information and expertise, enable negotiations on objectives and conditions of use, enhance the enforceability of existing rights, and create structures for the continuous adaptation of systems.

If AM poses challenges in highly regulated labour markets, these challenges are likely to be at least as relevant elsewhere in Europe. The Nordic findings are therefore not merely of regional relevance. They show that strong institutions can mitigate risks but cannot prevent them entirely. However, this does not imply that the Nordic model could be transferred unchanged to other EU member states. Differences in trade union density, employee protection rights, skills systems and digital maturity within workplaces require tailored instruments.²⁵

Even within Nordic countries the scope for action varies considerably. Stakeholders in sectors

with high trade union density are better placed to demand information, negotiate the use of technology and limit negative consequences.²⁶ Sectors with weaker trade union organisation, such as the retail sector, require additional institutional support. The effectiveness of AM and AI governance, therefore, depends not only on statutory rights, but also on the ability of stakeholders and trade unions to exercise these rights collectively.

3.2 What the evidence shows for job quality

The impact of AM on jobs in the private sector and the public sector can be assessed across four dimensions: autonomy and professional discretion; effective human oversight; psychosocial wellbeing; and productivity and distribution.

In the private sector, the consequences for jobs do not depend solely on the technical function of a system. The quantitative survey and sectoral case studies of the Digital Programme link algorithmic control in particular to reduced autonomy, intensified monitoring and increased work pressure.²⁷ Transparency and participation, by contrast, are associated with better outcomes in terms of trust, job satisfaction and motivation, without eliminating stress and job insecurity.²⁸

Concerning the public sector, automation does not necessarily eliminate professional discretion but rather shifts it to some extent. This can restrict employee autonomy. In the case of the Finnish immigration authority *Migri*, routine cases are becoming more automated, whilst complex decisions continue to require human judgement.^{29,30}

EU regulation must take these findings on employee autonomy into account: it should not only ensure formal human involvement in the introduction and application of technology

but also examine where and by whom relevant decision-making scope is exercised.

Whether automation via AM or AI is even suitable also depends largely on the nature of the task (use case). Standardised mass-processing procedures by immigration authorities are more amenable to automation than decisions requiring complex life situations or contextual professional judgement.³¹ Case studies in the public sector show that success in applying automation through AM and AI does not depend solely on technical performance, but on governance, accountability, organisational capacities and the preservation of professional discretion for staff.³² AM and AI governance must, therefore, consider activities, organisational aspects and responsibility as a whole.³³

Furthermore, fully automated decisions appear to be less common: among surveyed union members in selected sectors in Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway who reported being exposed to AM, 20% reported that task-allocation decisions were made without human involvement, compared with 10% for shift-scheduling decisions.³⁴ However, this does not imply that existing *human oversight* is effective. Human oversight may be limited to formal validation (“human-in-the-loop”) without providing sufficient information, time or authority to correct the algorithmic systems.³⁵ Case studies from the public sector show, for example, that formal human oversight can easily be limited to merely validating automated proposals. It is, therefore, not only crucial whether a human is involved, but whether they are actually able to understand and follow the reasoning behind decisions, question them and – where necessary – correct them.³⁶

Studies to date also point to various psychosocial strain associated with the use

of AM and AI in the workplace. In the private sector, AM is often accompanied by fragmented and repetitive tasks, increased work pressure and a reduction in autonomy.³⁷ In public administration, automated systems can reduce the number of routine tasks, but, at the same time, make the remaining tasks both cognitively and emotionally more demanding.³⁸ Added to this are uncertainties regarding responsibility for decisions made with the involvement of automated systems.³⁹ These findings suggest that psychosocial risks should be systematically taken into account in the assessment and implementation of AI systems.

Lastly, good working conditions and employee participation can create the key conditions for successfully introducing technical innovations into practice, identifying errors at an early stage and distributing productivity gains fairly. The Nordic model combines technological openness with the expectation that efficiency gains will be shared across society. High wages and social security require high productivity.⁴⁰ However, the public sector case studies illustrate that productivity gains achieved through automation occur only gradually, unevenly, and depend on data quality and case complexity.⁴¹ Furthermore, the success of automation projects must not be assessed solely based on speed and cost. Equally relevant – particularly in the public sector – are service quality, fairness, accountability, good working conditions and a fair distribution of productivity gains. Algorithmic systems and AI may potentially support workers under certain conditions; in practice, however, they often restrict their autonomy, increase work pressure, and promote non-transparent performance and competition structures.⁴² It is, therefore, crucial to consider whether, and under what institutional conditions, AM and AI are introduced and used, including whether these conditions allow productivity gains to be effectively redistributed.

3.3 Participation is necessary but not sufficient

The Nordic case studies show that systems developed and introduced without the involvement of employees and their representative bodies are more frequently associated with negative consequences for meaningful outcomes for work. Participation must, therefore, begin as early as the procurement phase, system design and definition of the conditions of use, and continue throughout the entire product life cycle.⁴³ However, AM systems are often developed outside the specific operational and institutional contexts.⁴⁴ This creates the risk that existing collective agreements and co-determination structures, which are fundamental to the Nordic model, will be undermined.⁴⁵ In the public sector, too, co-determination and participation are key prerequisites for successful automation and continuous learning, as well as for close collaboration between developers and frontline staff.

Nordic evidence shows that employee participation is generally associated with better outcomes in terms of autonomy, trust, satisfaction and motivation.⁴⁶ However, employee participation does not automatically eliminate workload, stress or job insecurity.⁴⁷ Participation is, therefore, a necessary condition that also promotes acceptance, but it is not a sufficient condition for good working conditions in the context of digital transformation.⁴⁸

It must be complemented by effective occupational health and safety measures, social protection, collective bargaining arrangements, and binding limits on algorithmic control and work management.⁴⁹



Transparency obligations must be coupled with effective oversight by employee representatives, avenues for them to lodge complaints and prompt sanctions by regulatory authorities.



4. Policy recommendations: Four priorities for a worker-centred European approach

Four priorities for European labour market policy can be derived from the consolidated findings of the FEPS-Nordic Digital Programme, each requiring different policy instruments and starting points. Cross-sectoral minimum standards for transparency, participation and human oversight should be enshrined in the QJA. At the same time, existing rights under the GDPR, the EU AI Act and the PWD must be implemented more consistently and made accessible for collective use. The European member states and their social partners are, therefore, called upon to shape AI through collective bargaining, skills development and workplace participation structures. Finally, public sector employers and procurement bodies must build up their own capacities to independently assess AM and AI systems and effectively monitor external providers.

4.1 Extend algorithmic-management protections beyond platform work

The QJA should not simply replicate the sector-specific provisions of the PWD but rather translate its fundamental principles of protection into cross-sectoral minimum standards. These include mandatory information on AM and AI systems, as well as consultation rights for workers' representative

bodies, analogous to Article 13 of the PWD.⁵⁰ Fundamental principles, such as transparency, consultation, the protection of sensitive data and verifiable human decision-making, can, therefore, serve as a starting point for cross-sectoral minimum standards in the development of the QJA. The GDPR also already provides important individual rights to information and data protection (Articles 13 and 14), but only covers the collective shaping of AM and AI to a limited extent.⁵¹ The QJA should, therefore, oblige companies to inform employees and their representative bodies about the purpose, data basis, functioning and potential consequences of algorithmic and AI-based systems, and to disclose any changes to the intended uses.⁵²

Nevertheless, protective rights remain ineffective if existing rights in the workplace are not consistently enforced and if breaches cannot be identified and sanctioned. Experience from the platform economy shows that transparency obligations must be coupled with effective oversight by employee representatives, avenues for them to lodge complaints and prompt sanctions by regulatory authorities.⁵³

A general European legal framework should, therefore, supplement individual data protection rights – which are already addressed in existing legislation (GDPR, PWD) – with *collective* rights to information, consultation, co-determination and oversight for interest groups.

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The QJA should (...) enshrine a precautionary principle: participation rights should apply whenever systems significantly influence the organisation of work, working hours, performance appraisal, monitoring and professional discretion.

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4.2 Make worker participation an ex ante governance requirement

However, information and general protection rights alone are not sufficient to enable decent work in the context of digital transformation. Employees and their representative bodies must be able to exert a real influence on decisions regarding the introduction, objectives and conditions of use of AM and AI systems. This is also a societal demand, as shown by the 2025 Eurobarometer data.⁵⁴ 77% of survey respondents in the EU consider the involvement of workers and their representative bodies in the introduction of new technologies such as AI to be important or very important; in Nordic countries, this proportion is even higher.⁵⁵ Worker participation should not come into play only once negative consequences or conflicts surrounding the use of AM and AI have already arisen. The QJA should, therefore, enshrine a precautionary principle: participation rights should apply whenever systems significantly influence the organisation of work, working hours, performance appraisal, monitoring and professional discretion.⁵⁶ The Nordic case studies also show that continuous participation can improve the practical suitability of AM and AI systems and highlight undesirable developments at an early stage. To this end, employee representative bodies require timely access to technical and organisational information, independent expertise, and

collective rights to lodge complaints and access data.⁵⁷ Data shop stewards enshrined in collective agreements also demonstrate how continuous expertise and participation can be institutionally safeguarded.⁵⁸

4.3 Define meaningful human oversight and protect job quality

However, employee participation is only an effective safeguard against the misuse of algorithmic or AI systems if it is accompanied by sufficient information, professional expertise and genuine decision-making power. Effective human oversight is required at two levels: (1) in the case of high-stakes individual decisions, a competent person must ultimately be able to decide on the outcome; and (2) at the system level, responsible bodies and employee representatives must continuously review the system's functioning, error rates, impacts and changes in purpose.

At the individual level, purely formal human oversight is not sufficient to ensure adequate scrutiny of decisions. Employees must not be held responsible for automated decisions if they lack the actual means to review and correct them.⁵⁹ Rather, complex and far-reaching decisions continue to require professional judgement by competent and empowered employees. Effective human

oversight, therefore, requires that employees can understand, question, correct and – where necessary – override decisions.⁶⁰ European minimum standards should, therefore, define the powers, information, time resources and qualifications required for human oversight.

Furthermore, work-related AI systems must be incorporated into work risk assessment and psychosocial occupational health and safety.⁶¹ The assessment should cover not only technical errors, but also work intensity, loss of autonomy, pressure from surveillance, uncertainties and changes in professional responsibility. Given that some AI-enabled tools and monitoring systems put pressure on working time, particular attention should be paid to ensure the right to disconnect. In the public sector, the success of automated systems in terms of public value should be measured not solely by cost and efficiency gains, but by criteria such as fairness, accessibility, service quality and accountability.⁶²

4.4 Share productivity gains and build institutional capacity

Potential productivity gains from AM and AI do not automatically lead to higher wages or better working conditions.⁶³ Evidence from the Danish study shows that their distribution depends largely on trade union bargaining power. Without

appropriate institutions, the expected gains may largely remain with employers.⁶⁴ A worker-centred AI policy must, therefore, combine technological investment and innovation with collective bargaining policy and social protection for workers. The European Minimum Wage Directive, for example, demonstrates that the EU can strengthen not only individual minimum standards such as the GDPR, but also the institutional prerequisites for collective bargaining. The Uni-Europa database on AI-related collective bargaining clauses can also serve as a model for strengthening collective participation, as it makes the diverse approaches in collective agreements transparent and, thus, encourages further agreements.⁶⁵ In parallel, to further strengthen trade union capacity, EU-level legislation such as the GDPR must be translated into practical guidance, including through toolkits for shop stewards negotiating workers' data rights.⁶⁶ The QJA should also set minimum requirements and provide incentives; however, the specific regulations governing the distribution of productivity gains must be determined by the respective member states, whilst the development of capacity for shaping policy must be driven primarily by trade unions and social partners in private-sector companies and public administration.

The successful deployment of AM and AI also depends on organisational capacities in the

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governance of these systems. Furthermore, the expected productivity gains from AM and AI materialise gradually and depend largely on how it is actually implemented.⁶⁷ Investments in skills development, employee participation and organisational learning processes are therefore not merely retrospective compensatory measures, but form part of the productive use of the technology. This aligns with Principle 1 of the European Pillar of Social Rights, which enshrines the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning as a precondition for workers to adapt to technological change.⁶⁸

Furthermore, if companies or public institutions lack their own legal, technical and administrative expertise, this leads to long-term dependencies on external, mostly private, providers.⁶⁹ Procurement departments in public institutions, therefore, require the expertise to define requirements, assess available systems, secure data access and effectively monitor providers from outside their field of expertise. Sometimes external IT developers show only a limited understanding of the practical administrative tasks for which the system is intended to be used.⁷⁰ And even with the necessary expertise, technical compliance alone does not guarantee the responsible implementation of AM or AI. It is only during operational and administrative use that it becomes clear how responsibility is allocated, discretion exercised and human oversight carried out.⁷¹ Regulatory requirements

for companies and public institutions must, therefore, be supplemented by organisational expertise within their workforces and by clear accountability structures at the management level.

Europe, therefore, requires capacity in terms of both distribution and governance, which can be addressed by the QJA: collective bargaining institutions must *and can* translate productivity into higher wages, better qualifications and social security; however, private-sector companies and public-sector organisations, as well as the representative bodies of their employees and their trade unions, require the necessary knowledge and resources to be able to assess and shape AM and AI systems independently.

5. Conclusion: Turning AI-driven productivity into quality jobs

AI and AM are already transforming the organisation of work, decision-making processes and the distribution of power within companies and public authorities. European regulation already recognises individual risks, but continues to address them in separate legal acts and, in some cases, only for specific segments of the workforce (the platform economy). Negotiations on the QJA offer a decisive opportunity to develop a coherent and

cross-sectoral framework for regulating AM and AI in the workplace.

Evidence from Nordic studies shows that a worker-centred approach is not an obstacle to productivity. Employee participation, transparency regarding the consequences and use of AM and AI, and strong collective institutions can help to introduce new systems in a way that is more practical and socially acceptable. However, they are not sufficient to automatically prevent high work intensity, stress, uncertainties in dealing with these systems and the unequal distribution of productivity gains.⁷² Good work in the age of AI, therefore, requires a combination of participation and co-determination with occupational safety and health, human oversight and decision-making power, as well as effective collective bargaining policy.

The EU should extend the existing protective principles of platform regulation under the PWD to the entire labour market, enshrine worker participation before procurement and implementation, define effective human oversight, and strengthen the institutional capacities for shaping AM and AI. The QJA should, therefore, create a cross-sectoral framework to ensure transparency and worker participation, as well as to guarantee adequate occupational safety and human decision-making. However, the effectiveness of such a framework will also depend on whether these new standards are actively demanded through collective bargaining, the operational expertise of interest groups and assertive trade unions.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Olsen, F. and A. Høegh-Andersen (2026) "Productivity and AI". Policy study. FEPS, forthcoming, p. 6.
- 2 Ibid, p. 3.
- 3 All publications of the FEPS-Nordic Digital Programme included in this policy brief, and further information on the consortium and its activities, are available on the FEPS website. Drafts of the forthcoming policy studies and the toolkit are available upon request.
- 4 Juego, B., T. Ø. Kuldova and G. R. Oosterwijk (2024) "Algorithms by and for the workers: Towards a fair, democratic and humane digitalisation of the workplace: FEPS and Nordic Partners Digital Programme on Algorithms at the Workplace". Policy study. FEPS, January, pp. 14-16; Cox, T. and G. R. Oosterwijk (2024) "Algorithmic management in the workplace: Case studies on the impact of algorithmic technologies in seven sectors in the Nordics". Policy study. FEPS, October, pp. 15-16.
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Kyberon is a consultancy with expertise in labour sociology, focusing on artificial intelligence and robotics in the workplace. Its mission is to strengthen worker participation in strategic decisions as well as the design and regulation of AI at work. Kyberon advises and supports works councils and trade unions in implementing AI and robotics, including the development of works agreements and preparation for management discussions. Its work examines how digitalisation and AI transform work, working processes, qualifications and skills. Kyberon also offer tailored advice, workshops and produce practice-oriented analyses and policy briefs on AI, work and co-determination.

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