

Meeting of Panel of Experts on the Platform Economy on 18 January 2017

Theme: Platform cooperatism

Summary of key questions from the debate at the meeting of the Panel of Experts on 18 January

Who are we talking about? How are the various groups covered by existing laws and regulations? Is the existing legislation relevant and adequate?

Pricing on digital platforms – who and what determine the price?

How can we create transparency about the platforms, including collection and use of data?

How are the consumers who buy services/products on the digital platforms protected if unforeseen problems occur in connection with a purchase?

How do we ensure that platform businesses operate in a market environment where regulation promotes fair competition and discourages the formation of monopolies and where we actively support new business models and give them an opportunity to flourish and contribute to economic growth?

How can we accentuate the benefits and reduce the risks involved in finding work 'on demand' via platforms?

Is the Danish model sufficiently robust to withstand the challenges of the future labour market, or does it have an expiry date?

Presentation by Trebor Schulz, The New School in New York City

A large variety of platforms

New technologies in a global market open up a wealth of opportunities for employers, workers and society at large. Digital business models will be key in the development of new and old businesses alike.

Many young people see great potential in working on these platforms – because it is an easy and short route into the labour market which can also provide access to a larger and more international labour market.

How do digital platform businesses operate?

Some businesses play the role of classic employer as known from temp agencies, while others are merely a group of owners teaming up to solve tasks and share the profit. Some businesses offer digital solutions internationally, others only locally.

Platforms owned by cooperatives

Characterised by communal, joint and democratic ownership. Products and services are owned jointly by workers, consumers or citizens. These types of platforms evoke memories of the Danish cooperative movement.

International regulation of the platform economy

Diverse experience of regulation, particularly in large cities like New York, Barcelona and Berlin. Governance structures in cities can assist in developing an improved framework for platforms to prevent them from absorbing all value creation activities from the area in which they operate. Today, few places are regulated at national level to secure a 'level playing field' for businesses.

It is essential to regulate in a manner that does not keep the development of alternative platforms away from the market. A ban on AirBnB may for instance mean that all private rentals and holiday-home hosting will become illegal.

Terms of reference

The panel will map out how Denmark can make full use of growth and job opportunities through the platform economy and will also raise awareness of the future implications of the changes for Danish society and the labour market, in particular.

Objectives

- To present specific proposals for how Denmark can become a world leader in using the potential of the platform economy
- To raise awareness of the changes the platform economy creates for our society in general and our labour market in particular – and their impact on workers
- To analyse how the labour market and the Danish model are affected and secured in the platform economy
- To shed light on the types of jobs created by the platform economy

Over the course of 2017, the panel will discuss the development of the platform economy and expectations for future needs in the labour market and will present recommendations on how to strengthen the proliferation of the platform economy. The panel will meet for four theme sessions:

- 1) Digital platforms – new business models or an old business concept in new clothes?
- 2) Growth, tax and competition – between innovation and regulation
- 3) Digital platforms – and the social safety net
- 4) Digital task platforms ensuring proper working conditions – responsibility of trade unions

Members of HK's and Akademikerne's Panel of Experts on the Platform Economy

Platform businesses

Michael Bugaj, Co-founder of Meploy
Alexia Nielsen, Senior Marketing Manager, Upwork
Andreas von Buchwald, Mintebe
Mathias Linnemann, Worksome
Sara Green Brodersen, Deemly
Henrik Arent, Senior Partner and CEO, Right People Group
Steffen Hedebrandt, Airtame, and former Country Manager of Upwork Norden

Experts

Martin von Haller, Lawyer specialised in IT law
Marie Jull Sørensen, Associate Professor at Aalborg University, Department of Law
Anna Ilsøe, Associate Professor at University of Copenhagen, FAOS Bent Greve, Full Professor of Social Science at Roskilde University

Employee representatives

Geert Laier Christensen, Vice President, Confederation of Danish Enterprise
Katia Østergaard, CEO, HORESTA
Kent Damsgaard, Vice President, Confederation of Danish Industry

Nordic representatives

Christl Kvam, State Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Norway
Fredrik Söderqvist, Chief Economist of Unionen, Sweden

Trade union representatives

Kent Pedersen, President, Financial Services Union Denmark
Lars Werge, President, Danish Union of Journalists
Lars Øvistgaard, President, Akademikerne
Kim Simonsen, President, HK
Nanna Højlund, Vice President, LO (Danish Confederation of Trade Unions)
Simon Tøgers, President, HK/Private

Global IT companies Morten Pedersen, Google/DK LinkedIn

Local government representatives
Jacob Bundsgaard, Mayor of Aarhus
Frank Jensen, Lord Mayor of Copenhagen

Representative of unemployment insurance funds
Verner Sand Kirk, President, Unemployment Insurance Funds in Denmark