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Press release

AUSTRIAN STUDY SHOWS THAT *GIG ECONOMY* IS ON THE RISE THROUGHOUT EUROPE

A substantial Austrian minority (18%) earns today a significant part of its income through sharing economy platforms such as Upwork, Uber or Handy, although this income is often modest. This is revealed in the most recent Gig Economy Survey done in Austria, which was carried out by the University of Hertfordshire and Ipsos MORI, in association with the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS), UNI Europa and AK Wien. This new economic landscape is confirmed throughout Europe according to a series of similar surveys already published in the [UK](#), [Sweden](#) and the [Netherlands](#).

A particular feature of the gig economy is the fact that the range of work types is extremely broad, from high-skill professional work at one extreme to running errands at the other. The most common type of crowd work, done by some 74% of crowd workers, is office work, short tasks or 'click work' done online – but almost equally large numbers say they are doing creative or IT work (62%) or professional work (49%). The same variety can be found in work carried out offline though managed through online platforms. From almost half doing driving work (48%) or personal service work (44%) to more than half running errands or office work on their clients' premises (52%) and similar proportions doing regular (53%) or occasional work (51%) in other people's homes. This reinforces the picture of workers piecing together a livelihood from a range of different activities as stated in earlier results of the study.

Oliver Roethig, Regional Secretary of UNI Europa said: *'The Austrian results show once more how rapidly the world of work is changing. We are witnessing the development of new forms of employment. In the future, traditional security systems will not be sufficient to tackle the increasing polarisation of the labour market leading to growing income and wealth inequality, particularly in the services industry. Current social security systems at national level as well as EU competition law need to be reformed. At UNI Europa we are convinced that we need a dedicated policy framework, which provides the same social and labour rights to all workers, regardless of whether they are part of the on- or the offline workforce.'*

Catalin Dragomirescu-Gaina, Senior Economist at FEPS, also considers that *'a complex set of policy challenges and difficult trade-offs lie ahead. There is a need to act preemptively to insure that labour market institutions and regulations respond to workers' needs, and fulfill their expectations. In the same time, innovation and technological progress must be encouraged as long as it fosters wellbeing.'*

Rudi Kaske, President of the Austrian Chamber of Labour, states: *'We do not intend to prevent crowd work. However, new technical developments do not justify unlawful acts. People who work online should have the right to social security and fair payment as well as the right to exercise their trade union rights.'*

Ursula Huws, Professor of Labour and Globalisation at the University of Hertfordshire says *'It has been really important to get an objective view of the characteristics of the crowd workers. In the next step, we want to do much more in-depth work to find out how and why they do this work, and whether it could be sustainable'*.