



Ressort: Wirtschaft und Finanzen

## Europe's labour market is becoming more and more polarized

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Europe's labour market is becoming more and more polarized, principally due to the growth of jobs at the very bottom of the wage distribution. However, across the EU28, there is considerable diversity in the occupational structure and many Member States projected to promote their higher paying jobs. The ad hoc report "Wage and task profiles of employment in Europe in 2030" by Eurofound,

the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, investigates the projected structural change for the wage and task structure of employment in EU Member States, up to 2030, by means of the framework developed in Eurofound's European Jobs Monitor.

[https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef\\_publication/field\\_ef\\_document/ef18085en.pdf](https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef18085en.pdf)

The most striking finding is the forecast of a more polarized labour market in the European Union. Manufacturing jobs, which are predominantly located in the middle of the European wage distribution, face the twin threats of routinization and globalization. Consequently, much of the decline in the middle of the wage distribution is to be found there.

In fact, globalization and technology are not fully distinct drivers of structural change.

The tendency towards an upgrading of the wage structure and the shift towards more autonomy, less routine tasks, more ICT, less physical and more social and intellectual tasks, is most prominent in the Member States that joined the European Union after 2004. This implies an upward convergence of the employment structure in the European Union. The consequences of the projected structural change up to 2030 on tasks in European workplaces was analysed along two main dimensions: the content of the tasks and the methods and tools with which tasks are performed.

In terms of the content of tasks, there is a projected decline only in physical tasks with an across-the-board growth in all the sub-categories of intellectual and social tasks.

Three types of tasks are noticeable in terms of their projected proliferation: business literacy, selling/persuading and serving/attending. The first two are related both statistically and conceptually, as both have a highly commercial nature. The observed increase in serving/attending jobs might also be related to caring tasks, which was not directly measured in the otherwise comprehensive task framework.

The biggest general change in any of the indices was the use of basic ICT skills (one of the means and tools for performing tasks). There was also a predictable increase in autonomy and a decline in routine. A highly

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significant decline in work with (non-ICT) machines is correlated both with physical and routine tasks. The European labour market is challenged by variations in the demographic composition of the labour force and by expanding work complexities and processes. Skills forecasting makes a useful contribution to decisions by policy-makers, experts and individuals. This analysis confirms the progressively more polarized occupational structure, a trend also highlighted by the main projections.

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