

# Union servicing for platform workers in Belgium

Karolien Lenaerts (HIVA-KU Leuven) & Melinda Kelemen (DIESIS)  
**BreakBack Project Final Conference, 18-19 November 2021**



# Platform work in Belgium

- Rise in new non-standard forms of work (platform work) and self-employment (as a secondary profession) (freelancers) in Belgium
    - Very limited data are available about platform work (size, workers' profiles)
  - Such workers are considered 'employers' under social dialogue logic and traditionally represented by employers' organisations
  - Unions have taken a leading role in the debate on platform work, aiming to defend the working conditions of all workers
- Belgium is one of the EU MS with the highest levels of union density and collective bargaining coverage
  - 3 'representative' trade union confederations, of which 2 have 1.5 million members each (membership stable/growing, but renewal is still a priority)
  - Servicing is the main approach used to attract and retain members, much less experience with organising

# Policy and actions

- Legislative framework on ‘sharing economy’
  - Favourable regime for work through licensed platforms
  - No attention for working and employment conditions
- Highly anticipated court case and decisions by the Administrative Commission for the Regulation of Labour Relations on status
- Grassroots organisations by platform workers (CouriersCollective)
- Trade unions as a point of contact for workers faced with issues:
  - **Servicing** → same / similar services as provided to other workers
  - **Organising** → using social media (Facebook, WhatsApp)
  - All initiatives are still in the early stages

# ABVV-FGTB platform for platform workers

<https://www.abvvplatform.be/>



QUI SOMMES-NOUS?

VOS DROITS

BESOIN D'AIDE?

COMMUNAUTÉ

NL



Vos droits

En savoir plus



Communauté

En savoir plus



Besoin d'aide?

En savoir plus

Help

- Launched by ABVV-FGTB in February 2020
- Promoted by several sectoral trade unions, which collaborate, point of entry
- 10-15 people directly involved, many more indirectly

# ABVV-FGTB platform for platform workers

## What services are provided?

- **Website serves as a platform:**
  - For platform workers in all sectors ('same rights')
  - Information about rights as a worker:
    - Legal framework, social security, taxation, ...
  - Community page to interact with other platform workers
  - Dispatch to sectoral trade union that is best able to help
  - Same service package is offered, but also dedicated services
- **Why dual approach of servicing and organising:**
  - Getting to know potential target groups
  - Getting experience with issues that are new for unions
  - Positive media attention