

Quality Jobs in a Dynamic Labour Market

The Adecco Group's Perspective on a Quality Jobs Act

High-quality jobs should enable people to thrive, develop their skills, and contribute productively to society and the economy. The Adecco Group welcomes the European Commission's initiative to strengthen job quality across Europe's labour markets.

As one of the world's leading talent advisory and workforce solutions companies, we support millions of people and thousands of employers every year. Our perspective is informed by extensive experience connecting individuals with employment opportunities, developing skills, and supporting greater labour market participation across the European Union.

Europe can strengthen job quality while supporting participation, productivity, and competitiveness. This paper sets out the Adecco Group's perspective on how to achieve that.

Importantly, we believe that the quality of a job is not determined by the contractual arrangement, but rather by the value it delivers to workers and the economy through fair remuneration, appropriate protection, opportunities to develop skills and **remain employable**, and an inclusive environment that enables people and businesses to be productive. Flexible forms of work **can and do** provide quality jobs.

The Commission should prioritise the implementation, enforcement, and clarification of existing regulations, introducing additional requirements only where specific protection gaps cannot be effectively addressed through the existing acquis. Any further action should preserve the diversity of employment models that enable people to enter, remain in and transition within the labour market.

WE BELIEVE THAT A QUALITY JOBS ACT SHOULD:

Position long-term employability at the heart of job quality, by placing a stronger emphasis on skills development and transitions between jobs

Recognise that flexible forms of work can and do provide quality employment, and avoid measures that inadvertently restrict access to diverse forms of work

Enable responsible and human-centred AI at work, through effective implementation and clarification of existing protections, with additional requirements limited to clearly evidenced gaps

Avoid blanket restrictions to labour market intermediation, but rather protect workers in subcontracting chains through targeted, risk-based enforcement

Strengthen the implementation and enforcement of existing worker protections before introducing additional requirements, while safeguarding diverse pathways to employment

Place Long-Term *Employability* at the Heart of Job Quality

Labour market policy should not focus only on protecting existing jobs, but particularly on enabling workers' **long-term employability** and ability to transition across jobs. As technological change and the green transition reshape jobs and sectors, workers need the skills, adaptability, and support to move successfully between roles and sectors, and respond to changing labour market demands. Support for workers affected by restructuring should begin before displacement occurs, with prompt access to skills assessments, relevant training and pathways into sectors and occupations with growing demand. As the Adecco Group has argued before, we

believe that policy makers should commit to rigorously increasing public spending on lifelong learning, to at least 0,5% of GDP.¹

The EU's approach to anticipating and managing change should therefore place long-term employment and effective transitions between jobs as central elements within the Quality Jobs framework. EU action should build on the existing framework for restructuring, with emphasis and priority placed on effective implementation and practical support for workers and employers, rather than additional and overlapping requirements. This is consistent with the Commission's assessment that the existing framework is comprehensive and fit for purpose, and that further legislative action risks creating overlap and reducing scope for tailored solutions.²

Private labour market intermediaries can play a vital role to play in making these transitions work in practice. Through labour market matching, skills development, and career transition support, they can help connect workers affected by restructuring with sustainable employment opportunities. The Quality Jobs Act should strengthen cooperation between public and private employment services with the objective of identifying emerging skills needs, matching workers with available opportunities and aligning training more closely with labour market needs.

Recognise Flexible Forms of Work as Quality Employment

Diverse forms of work can provide quality employment by supporting worker choice, labour market participations, and business adaptability. Job quality should therefore be assessed by the outcomes and protections that employment provides, rather than the contractual form alone.

All relevant workers' rights should, and do, also apply to flexible and digitally enabled work. We should therefore assess whether specific rights are still relevant, up to date, and enforceable in a digital world of work. So, while the Adecco Group supports the objective of ensuring that workers can disconnect during rest time without adverse treatment or negative consequences, EU action should avoid prescriptive requirements that unnecessarily restrict voluntarily agreed flexible working arrangements. Implementation should allow arrangements to be adapted at company, sectoral or national levels, as appropriate, and should be reflective of different working patterns and national industrial relations systems.

Enable Responsible and Human-Centred AI at Work

Artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithmic management can support productivity and more effective workforce management. Their responsible deployment can therefore contribute to both job quality and European competitiveness.

At the same time, workplace technology should remain human-centred. Transparency, meaningful human oversight, and accountability should remain integral where AI and algorithmic systems materially affect workers or employment decisions. Workers should receive appropriate and understandable information about the use of such systems, while significant employment decisions should retain meaningful human review. Workplace monitoring should likewise remain necessary and proportionate to its legitimate purpose, consistent with existing privacy and data-protection safeguards.

¹ The Adecco Group: Global Skills Investment - <https://www.adeccogroup.com/-/media/Project/Adecco-Group/AdeccoGroup/Articles/Investment-in-life-long-learning/TAG-Global-Skills-Investment-Whitepaper-Sep2025.pdf>

² European Commission: *Second-phase consultation of social partners under Article 154 TFEU on possible EU action to improve working conditions, health and safety at work and implementation of workers' rights – Quality Jobs Act*

As explored in the Adecco Group's 'AI that Works for all' whitepaper, there are barely any regulatory gaps when it comes to the use of AI at work. Instead, the Commission should concentrate efforts on practical guidance clarifying how obligations under the AI Act, GDPR and existing labour law interact when AI and algorithmic systems are used in workforce management.³ This would provide workers with appropriate safeguards while giving employers the legal certainty needed to adopt productivity-enhancing technologies responsibly.

No blanket restrictions on subcontracting chains

Subcontracting and labour intermediation are legitimate and economically valuable activities that enable businesses to access specialised expertise, respond to changing workforce needs and improve labour market matching. The existence of abuses in particular sectors or complex subcontracting chains should not lead to the presumption that subcontracting or labour intermediation is inherently associated with lower-quality employment. Where decent work deficits appear in subcontracting chains, they are not the result of subcontracting per se. There are plenty of bona fide actors, whose actions do not warrant disproportionate legislative action.

Furthermore, it is important that EU action distinguishes subcontracting from regulated forms of labour market intermediation such as temporary agency work, which operate within their established EU and national employment law frameworks.

The Adecco Group supports a risk-based enforcement approach that concentrates controls on sectors, operators, and subcontracting arrangements where evidence indicates elevated risks of non-compliance. Priority should be given to effective enforcement of existing labour standards, stronger cooperation between competent authorities and better identification of non-compliant operators. This would target enforcement where risks are greatest, without unnecessarily burdening compliant operators.

Before introducing additional liability mechanisms, the Commission should clearly identify the enforcement gap being addressed and assess their interaction with existing EU and national liability regimes. Any liability should correspond to an undertaking's ability to identify, prevent, and influence the relevant risk. Additional registration, certification, or transparency requirements should recognise existing regulatory requirements and avoid duplicative obligations for already regulated operators.

The guiding principle should be clear: *where there is a protection gap, **close it**; where there is non-compliance, **enforce the rules**. Neither should result in blanket restrictions on legitimate labour intermediation or subcontracting.*

Prioritise Implementation and Enforcement of Existing Worker Protections

Effective enforcement is essential both to protecting workers and to maintaining a level playing field for responsible employers. Where appropriate protections already exist, priority should be given to their effective implementation and enforcement before introducing additional requirements addressing the same risks. Enforcement should be targeted towards identified areas of non-compliance.

Where responsibilities are shared across competent authorities, the Quality Jobs Act should ensure clear allocation of responsibilities and effective co-ordination between them.

The Quality Jobs Act should apply the Commission's "simplicity by design" principle by avoiding duplicative obligations, clarifying how overlapping EU requirements interact and ensuring that compliance requirements are

³ The Adecco Group: AI that works for all: Aligning the EU AI agenda with quality jobs - <https://www.adecco.com/-/media/Project/Adecco-Group/AdeccoGroup/PDF-Files/2026-May/AI-That-Works-For-All-Adecco-Group-Whitepaper-May2026.pdf>

proportionate to the risks addressed and workable for businesses of different sizes.⁴ Effective worker protection depends on rules that are clear to comply with and practical to enforce.

Takeaway

The Quality Jobs Act should target EU intervention at clearly evidenced protection gaps, while prioritising the effective implementation, enforcement, and clarification of existing rules. A targeted and proportionate approach can strengthen employment standards while preserving flexible employment, responsible innovation and the labour market pathways needed to navigate structural change.

⁴ European Council, & Council of the European Union: *Simplification of EU rules*.