Job Quality in a Turbulent Era: Rethinking What Makes a Good Job

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Key Outcomes from the Bridges 5.0/EUWIN webinar on 24th April 2026

In a period marked by rapid economic change, technological disruption and shifting labour markets, the question of **what constitutes a "good job"** has regained prominence. This was the focus of a recent **BRIDGES/EUWIN webinar** on 24th April 2026, which brought together leading researchers to explore how job quality should be understood, measured and improved in today's turbulent world of work.

The webinar was framed around the themes of the book ***Job Quality in a Turbulent Era***, which examines how long-term trends such as digitalisation, the green transition, labour market fragmentation and demographic change are reshaping work across Europe and beyond. Rather than treating job quality as a secondary outcome of economic growth, the discussion positioned it as a **central economic and social challenge**.

Why job quality needs new thinking

Opening the webinar, **Agnieszka Piasna** of the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) set out the motivation behind the book and the wider debate. She argued that while job quality has been studied for many years, the **tools traditionally used to analyse it are increasingly misaligned with today's reality**. Digital technologies, new forms of work organisation and algorithmic management are introducing features of work that were largely absent when earlier job quality frameworks were developed.

As Agnieszka Piasna noted, technological change does not simply raise or lower job quality in a linear way. Instead, it reshapes work organisation itself, often in hybrid and uneven forms. This makes it harder to detect shifts in job quality using

established indicators alone and strengthens the case for revisiting both definitions and measurement approaches.

The webinar also highlighted that job quality has returned to the policy agenda at European level, including through ongoing debates on a possible **Job Quality Act**, signalling renewed political attention to the issue.

Measuring job quality in a changing world

A central theme of the discussion was the **challenge of measurement**. Participants reflected on whether traditional metrics are adequate for capturing emerging risks and opportunities associated with platform work, artificial intelligence, multiple jobholding and increased work intensity.

Rather than suggesting a single new index, the webinar emphasised the need for **richer analytical frameworks** that can capture changes in autonomy, learning, security, work intensity and participation within evolving forms of work organisation. The implications extend beyond academic research to policymaking, collective bargaining and organisational practice, where simplified indicators may conceal significant variation in day-to-day work experience.

Employee voice and the quality of work

A second major contribution came from **Stewart Johnstone**, Professor of HRM and Employment Relations at the University of Strathclyde, who explored the **relationship between employee voice and job quality**. His contribution highlighted that job quality is not only shaped by formal job design or contractual conditions but also by workers' capacity to influence decisions affecting their work.

The webinar discussion reinforced the idea that **voice mechanisms – whether through direct participation, representative structures or social dialogue – play a crucial role** in mediating the impacts of restructuring, digitalisation and organisational change. Where voice is weak or absent, even technologically advanced workplaces can drift towards fragmented, intensified or degraded forms of work.

Implications for policy and practice

Taken together, the webinar contributions pointed towards a more **integrated understanding of job quality**, linking work organisation, participation, skills and

technological change. Rather than treating job quality as a residual outcome, the discussion suggested it should be considered a **design principle** in economic development, innovation policy and company strategy.

For initiatives such as **BRIDGES 5.0 and EUWIN**, the webinar reinforced the importance of human-centric approaches to digital and green transitions. Improving job quality, the speakers argued, is not only a social goal but also a condition for sustainable productivity, resilience and workforce engagement in the face of ongoing turbulence.

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