

Flexible Working and Social Protection Are Not Contradictions in Terms

Digitalization is fundamentally changing the world of work. Flexible working and employment relationships are becoming increasingly popular and are raising social issues that are being tackled by politics and social partners. The associated challenges must be overcome with targeted measures. This is key for the Swiss economy, because flexwork can provide a significant amount of the additional labor force it needs. In its white paper “Flexwork and Social Protection,” swissstaffing – the Association of Swiss Recruitment Agencies – has examined social protection for those taking advantage of flexwork (or “flexworkers”) in a variety of working patterns. This shows temporary work to be exemplary from a sociopolitical perspective.

Flexwork – Temporary Work as a Trailblazer for Social Protection

Comparing social protection in a variety of employment situations shows that when it comes to temporary work, flexworkers are very well protected in the event of illness, accidents, unemployment or old age. Furthermore, temporary workers are often better off than permanent employees as regards further training. “In temporary work, Switzerland has discovered a form of employment that has long combined flexibility with social protection,” explains Myra Fischer-Rosinger, Director of swissstaffing. However, complex labor market regulation and the lack of a simple electronic signature are factors that discourage online platforms from taking on employer responsibility. “Regulations on flexible forms of working should therefore not be made any more complex. This will enable flexwork to become a forward-looking form of employment that combines social protection and flexibility both online and offline and boosts Switzerland’s economic power.”

Flexwork – A Long-Held Dream for All Age Groups

swissstaffing used a survey of 4000 temporary workers to examine flexworkers’ motives. The results speak for themselves: “Young, unattached employees are particularly likely to consciously opt for flexwork. However, at no less than 31%, the need for flexwork is widespread across all age groups,” explains Marius Osterfeld, a swissstaffing economist. The top reasons stated are a better work-life balance (44%) and professional variety (39%). Other temporary workers use flexible forms of work to reorient themselves in the labor market, or as a stepping stone to a

permanent role. They receive support from the temporary training equal-opportunities training fund for this purpose.

To guarantee its future success, the labor market needs a culture that accepts flexwork and dynamic transitions between different forms of employment. This also requires a social protection system that protects employees against fundamental risks, whatever their form of employment, and promotes lifelong education and training. A system of this kind has already been developed for temporary workers.

The full **white paper “Flexwork and Social Protection”** is available to download at www.swissstaffing.ch/whitepaper.

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