The increasingly flexible and heterogeneous world of employment poses new challenges for the welfare state. Therefore, we develop proposals for a proactive design of the future of work, which is socially secure and economically dynamic.

Driven by the megatrends of globalisation, digitisation, demographic change, migration and a change in social values, employment, the world of work and labour markets are undergoing tremendous change. Employment is becoming more and more dynamic and heterogeneous. New forms of employment beyond the standard employment relationship are emerging, and many people have unstable employment patterns.

- Digitization and automation go hand in hand. It is still controversial how many jobs will fall prey to automation. It is undisputed, however, that job profiles within the existing professions will change massively, and new job profiles will emerge. This leads to increased dynamism in the labour market and demands an increased degree of flexibility from employees. Through continuous qualification, it is important to ensure individual employability throughout the entire course of employment.
• We are witnessing an increase in atypical employment forms, particularly in the low-wage sector. This trend towards flexibility is also reinforced by the desire for a better work-life balance and the compatibility of work and family life. However, it not only opens up opportunities, but also contributes to increasing income and wage inequality. Our traditional social security systems are challenged by this trend.

• The ageing of society means Germany’s labor force will shrink in the long term. This threatens the financial basis of the social security systems. Due to increasingly interrupted and unstable employment biographies, significantly more people will also be affected by old-age poverty in the future.

• Despite the overall positive overall employment trend in recent years, labour market integration for various “disadvantaged groups” (low-skilled, long-term unemployed, refugees) remains difficult.

Shaping the future of work

Under the theme “Future of Work”, the project “Future of Employment” develops long-term solutions for an inclusive and economically dynamic labour market and sustainable social security systems based on studies and analyses. In doing so, we take the model of a social market economy as our starting point. Only an inclusive labour market can provide economic momentum.

While our focus is Germany and its economic and social security arrangements, we also look beyond the national horizon to learn from the successful policies of our European neighbors. Through intense dialogue with representatives from the fields of politics, business and civil society, we want to raise awareness of the existing challenges and to develop constructive solutions together.

Main questions

• How do we have to adapt social security systems in the light of changes in employment in the future?
• How can people’s employability be ensured throughout the course of their employment and how can transitions be successfully managed?
• How can we foster a more inclusive labour market?