

# Portugal: Bloc launches petition to guarantee rights for shift workers

Tuesday 10 December 2024, by [Esquerda.net \(PT\)](https://esquerda.net) (Date first published: 30 November 2024).

**Mariana Mortágua announced a petition to make shift work allowances mandatory, to bring forward the retirement age and to set a maximum of 35 hours for those who work shifts. The Bloco coordinator also spoke about the dangers of Uberization and the challenges facing unionism today.**

The Left Bloc launched [a petition this Saturday to guarantee rights for shift workers](#) . Speaking at the Left Bloc's National Labour Meeting, the party coordinator drew attention to the 800,000 workers in the health, glass, automotive, call-center and many other sectors who work shifts and live "against the clock".

Many of these people "have already fought for and managed to include shift allowances in their contracts", but many others "demand to be respected for their work", explained the Bloco leader. The petition demands that the shift allowance be mandatory, but also a maximum of 35 hours per week for those who work shifts or nights, the retirement age to be brought forward by six months for each year of shift work, the right to be exempted from shift work for pregnant workers and workers with children up to the age of three.

The demands also include strict criteria for authorizations for continuous work and 24 hours of rest when changing shifts and at least two weekends of rest every six weeks of work. The Bloco coordinator pointed out that in a universe of 800 thousand shift workers, families also suffer and that therefore the people affected by this type of work are many more.

At the National Labor Meeting, Mariana Mortágua also said that "new forms of work make union work difficult". Referring to *uberization* , the coordinator of the Left Bloc highlighted that this new form of work "trivializes the transfer of risks and labor costs from the employer to the worker".

"It is a false autonomy" that pits workers against workers "to provide a service". "The *Uberization* of work is the materialization of decades of legislative changes that aimed to weaken any conditions and regulations of work", said the leader of the Left Bloc.

Speaking about the social and cultural changes that have led to an increase in individualism, Mariana Mortágua says that we are moving towards a vision in which "everyone is an entrepreneur and everyone is a boss", which is a "challenge for the organization of work".

Regarding trade union work, the coordinator of the Left Bloc considered it essential to "avoid sectarianism and overcome anachronism" in the way trade unions have operated in Portugal. According to Mariana Mortágua, these problems prevent trade unions "from representing the majority of workers" and from "creating new bridges of dialogue" to unite workers.

"The risk of sectarian trade unions that are incapable of looking at the present and future of work is that they will fall into a proclaiming role that is incapable of dialogue," he said. "At Bloco, we have

sought to look at work as it is, and that is why we brought precariousness into the political lexicon, that is why we regulated green receipts, that is why we fight fixed-term work, that is why we fight *outsourcing* and that is why we want to regulate algorithms.”

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