

LEGAL LIMITS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EMPLOYEE MONITORING AND TASK ALLOCATION UNDER LABOUR LAW

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Abstract: *The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in work management is increasingly extending to employee monitoring and the allocation of work tasks. This paper examines whether AI may be lawfully used to monitor employees in the performance of their work and what the legal and ethical limits of such practices are. The aim of the paper is to analyse the compatibility of AI-based monitoring systems with the fundamental principles of labour law and personal data protection. Through a normative legal analysis and from the perspective of organisational management, the paper examines the relevant regulatory frameworks and key legal standards governing employee monitoring. The main finding is that AI may support organisational efficiency and managerial decision-making; however, it cannot replace human oversight nor transfer legal responsibility from the employer. Monitoring based on AI must therefore remain transparent, proportionate, and subject to genuine human oversight.*

Keywords: *AI, employee monitoring, labour law, managerial authority, organization of work*

1 Introduction

The digitalisation of work processes and the development of artificial intelligence (AI) are significantly transforming the organisation of work in contemporary organisations. Technological systems based on the analysis of large datasets and algorithmic models are no longer used merely as support tools for business processes, but increasingly also as instruments for managing employees' work. In the literature, such practices are commonly described as algorithmic management, whereby digital systems participate in the allocation of work tasks, the monitoring of work performance, and the evaluation of employees' productivity (Aloisi & De Stefano, 2022). De Stefano similarly refers to these developments as management-by-algorithm, in which algorithms are involved in organising work and monitoring workers' performance (De Stefano, 2019). These systems may significantly affect the organisation of the labour process and the efficiency of managerial decision-making, while simultaneously raising numerous legal questions concerning the limits of employer supervision over employees and the protection of their fundamental rights. Scholars have also pointed out that the increasing use of AI-based systems in workplace management may lead to more continuous and data-driven forms of employee monitoring, which can intensify existing tensions between managerial control and the protection of workers' rights (Aloisi & Gramano, 2019). This paper focuses in particular on the Slovenian legal framework, while taking into account relevant European and international legal developments. Digital technologies can thus assume certain functions traditionally associated with managerial supervision, such as the allocation of work tasks and the monitoring of employees' performance (cf. De Stefano, 2019). In recent years, the international context has seen an increasing use of automated systems for recruitment, screening and selecting candidates, monitoring employees, disciplinary decision-making, and even termination of employment relationships, which may further strengthen the employer's position in relation to the employee (Kim, 2024). More broadly, it has been noted in the literature that AI-based systems are increasingly used to support managerial functions such as

task allocation and performance monitoring within employment relationships (De Stefano & Wouters, 2022).

Such developments raise important questions for labour law and the regulation of digital work. The use of AI in work management raises the issue of whether technological systems may assume functions that have traditionally belonged to the employer or management, particularly in relation to the supervision of employees' work and the allocation of tasks. At the same time, the question arises to what extent such forms of monitoring are compatible with the fundamental principles of labour law, the protection of personal data, and the protection of workers' dignity.

This paper proceeds from the thesis that AI can support the organisation of work and managerial decision-making; however, it cannot replace human oversight nor transfer legal responsibility from the employer to a technological system.

1.1 Digitalisation of Work

At the level of the European Union, the issue of the digitalisation of work and the use of digital technologies in employment relationships is increasingly addressed in legislative and policy documents. An important step in this field is represented by Directive (EU) 2024/2831 on improving working conditions in platform work, which primarily regulates the position of workers on digital labour platforms and also addresses issues of automated decision-making and algorithmic management.

The Directive already notes in its introductory provisions that automated monitoring systems and automated decision-making systems driven by algorithms are increasingly replacing functions that managerial staff traditionally perform in companies, such as assigning tasks, determining remuneration for individual tasks and work schedules, issuing instructions, evaluating completed work, providing incentives, or imposing sanctions. Digital labour platforms in particular rely on such algorithmic systems as a standard method of organising and managing platform work through their digital infrastructure (recital 8). The Directive also highlights the broader impact of digitalisation on the world of work, noting that algorithm-based technologies enable new forms of work organisation while simultaneously potentially leading to increased levels of worker surveillance, opacity in decision-making processes, and imbalances of power within employment relationships (recital 4).

According to the Directive, automated monitoring systems are defined as systems used to monitor, supervise, or evaluate—by electronic means or with the support of electronic means—the work performance of persons performing platform work or activities carried out in the work environment, including through the collection of personal data (Article 2(1)(h)). Automated decision-making systems, in turn, refer to systems used to take or support decisions by electronic means that significantly affect persons performing platform work, including their working conditions. This includes, in particular, decisions affecting their recruitment, access to work tasks and their organisation, their earnings—including price-setting for individual tasks—their safety and health, their working time, their access to training, their career progression or equivalent opportunities, and their contractual status, including the restriction, suspension, or closure of their account (Article 2(1)(i)).

An important policy instrument in this field is also the European Social Partners' Framework Agreement on Digitalisation, adopted at the EU level in 2020. The agreement was concluded by European cross-sectoral social partners and applies across the entire EU and European Economic Area (EEA). It covers all workers and employers in both the public and private sectors and across all economic activities, including activities carried out through online platforms where an employment relationship exists as defined under national law.

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The agreement emphasises that digitalisation is transforming the organisation of work and requires adjustments to work processes, while at the same time taking into account both the interests of workers and the employer's managerial prerogative to organise work. The social partners further recognise that many organisations have already introduced various digital tools and procedures, which makes it necessary to regularly assess their effects on working conditions as well as on occupational health and safety (European Social Partners, 2020).

1.2 Research Objective

The objective of this paper is to examine whether AI may be lawfully used for the supervision of employees and the allocation of work tasks within the framework of an employment relationship. The paper analyses the compatibility of the use of AI-based systems in work management with the fundamental principles of labour law, particularly from the perspective of the employer's managerial prerogative to organise work, the protection of workers' fundamental rights, and the rules governing the protection of personal data.

The paper is based on a normative legal analysis of relevant European and national legal sources regulating employee monitoring and the use of automated systems in the workplace. Particular attention is also devoted to the question of the employer's liability for decisions based on AI-based systems.

2 AI and Employee Monitoring in the Employment Relationship

2.1 Employer Authority and Organization of Work

Employee supervision constitutes one of the fundamental elements of the employment relationship. According to the first paragraph of Article 4 of the Employment Relationships Act (ZDR-1), an employment relationship is defined as a relationship in which the worker voluntarily enters the organised work process of the employer and, within that process, performs work for remuneration personally and continuously, in accordance with the employer's instructions and under the employer's supervision.

A defining characteristic of the employment relationship—and the key distinguishing element separating it from other forms of work, such as independent work, self-employment, or civil law contractual arrangements in which work may also be performed—is the worker's subordination and economic dependence (Kresal, in Senčur Peček et al., 2024).

Work performed in accordance with the employer's instructions reflects the principle of subordination or the worker's obligation to comply with the employer's directions (Proposal for the Employment Relationships Act, legislative materials, 17 October 2012, EPA 728-VI, p. 123). In practice, this principle is closely linked with the general duty of conscientious performance of work, laid down in Article 33 of the ZDR-1. Under this provision, employees are required to perform their work diligently within the scope of the job for which they concluded the employment contract, and to do so at the time and place designated for the performance of work, while taking into account the organisation of work and business operations of the employer.

If an employee fails to comply with the employer's instructions, this may constitute a breach of the employee's work obligations. Case law has consistently recognised several situations as constituting such breaches, which frequently overlap with the failure to follow the employer's instructions. Examples include leaving the workplace before the end of working hours without prior notification and approval from a superior (Judgment of the Higher Labour and Social Court (VDSS) Pdp 46/2025, 12 February 2025), unjustified absence from work and failure to inform the employer of the reasons for such absence (Judgments of the Higher Labour and Social Court (VDSS) Pdp 327/2024, 18 September 2024, and Pdp 267/2024, 7 August 2024), absence from work for two days without approved leave (Judgment of the Higher

Labour and Social Court (VDSS) Pdp 402/2024, 6 November 2024), undertaking a business trip without prior authorisation from a superior (Judgment of the Higher Labour and Social Court (VDSS) Pdp 410/2024, 23 October 2024), performing work in a manner that fulfils the elements of a criminal offence (Judgments of the Higher Labour and Social Court (VDSS) Pdp 178/2024, 5 June 2024 (in this case a police officer falsified official documents), and Pdp 20/2017, 18 May 2017), violating the employer's internal rules (Judgment of the Higher Labour and Social Court (VDSS) Pdp 93/2024, 17 April 2024. In this case, the court held that the employee's conduct also constituted a breach of Articles 34 and 37 of the Employment Relationships Act) and performing work for a third party (e.g., through self-employment) during working hours (Judgment of the Higher Labour and Social Court (VDSS) Pdp 576/2023, 21 February 2024).

Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that the worker's subordination to the employer is not unlimited. The employee is obliged to comply only with those instructions and requirements of the employer that are directly related to the fulfilment of contractual and other obligations arising from the employment relationship (Article 34(1) ZDR-1). Furthermore, an employee may refuse to perform work if compliance with the employer's instruction would result in unlawful conduct or omission (Article 34(2) ZDR-1).

The refusal of work is also possible under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (ZVZD-1). Under this Act, an employee has the right to refuse work if they have not been adequately informed of all risks and hazards associated with the work and of the safety measures adopted, or if they have not received the necessary training for safe and healthy work, or if the employer has failed to provide the mandatory medical examination. Employees also have the right to refuse work where there is an immediate danger to their life or health due to the absence of prescribed safety measures, and they may require the employer to eliminate the danger. If the employer fails to do so, the employee may request the intervention of the labour inspectorate and inform the workers' council or the workers' safety representative (Article 52 ZVZD-1). In cases of serious and imminent danger to life or health, the ZVZD-1 also grants employees the right to take appropriate measures themselves, in accordance with their knowledge and the technical means available to them. In situations of unavoidable danger, employees may even leave the dangerous workplace, work process, or working environment. In both cases, the employee is not liable for any resulting damage unless the damage was caused intentionally or through gross negligence (Article 53 ZVZD-1).

Judicial practice has long been consistent in holding that employers enjoy a broad degree of autonomy in organising work and business operations. This issue most frequently arises in the context of ordinary termination of employment contracts for business reasons. In such cases, courts do not assess the appropriateness or efficiency of the employer's business decisions; rather, they review only the legality of their implementation (See, for example, the decision of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Slovenia (VSRS) VIII Ips 251/2015, 5 April 2016; the judgments VIII Ips 132/2013, 2 September 2013, and VIII Ips 314/2015, 9 February 2016; as well as the judgment of the Higher Labour and Social Court (VDSS) Pdp 242/2020, 3 September 2020).

2.2 AI in Workplace Management

AI is increasingly used in contemporary organisations as a tool for organising and supervising employees' work. Such systems may automatically allocate work tasks, monitor employee performance, and detect potential breaches of work obligations. In practice, this means that digital systems can analyse data relating to the time required to perform tasks, employee performance, or the use of work equipment, and on that basis provide recommendations to management or automatically trigger certain work management processes.

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However, the use of AI in the workplace is not legally unrestricted. At the level of the European Union, a comprehensive regulatory framework for AI was introduced in 2024 through the Artificial Intelligence Act, which establishes specific rules for the deployment of AI-based systems, particularly those classified as high-risk AI-based systems. Systems used in employment relationships for the monitoring or evaluation of employees may fall within this category.

The Regulation imposes several obligations on organisations that deploy or use such systems. One particularly important obligation concerns the duty to inform workers. Pursuant to Article 26(7) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1689, employers must inform workers' representatives or the workers concerned before deploying a high-risk AI-based system in the workplace.

This obligation is further specified in Slovenian legislation. The Act Implementing the EU Artificial Intelligence Regulation (ZIUDHPUI) provides for administrative offence sanctions in cases of non-compliance with these obligations. According to Article 31(1)(9) of the Act, a legal entity acting as a deployer of a high-risk AI-based system may be fined between EUR 25,000 and EUR 250,000 if it fails to inform workers' representatives or the workers concerned about the use of such a system. Higher fines are provided for large companies, ranging from EUR 100,000 to EUR 450,000. The Act also provides sanctions for sole traders, responsible persons within legal entities, and individuals.

Such regulation indicates that the legislator perceives the use of AI in the workplace as a potential risk to workers' rights and therefore introduces specific obligations concerning transparency and responsible use of these technologies.

In practice, AI-based systems may also enable more effective detection of breaches of work obligations by analysing large volumes of data relating to work processes and employee conduct.

In such an environment, AI may significantly transform the way employee supervision is carried out. While supervision in traditional organisational structures was typically limited to direct managerial oversight or occasional performance reviews, digital systems enable continuous monitoring of various aspects of the work process. This may lead to substantially more intensive forms of supervision and a greater asymmetry of power between employers and employees. For these reasons, legal theory and legislation increasingly address the question of where the limits of permissible employee monitoring lie and to what extent AI may participate in the management of the work process. These questions are particularly important from the perspective of the protection of workers' rights, as the ultimate responsibility for the organisation of work and the supervision of employees must remain with the employer even in a digitalised working environment.

2.3 Legal Limits of AI Monitoring

In light of the risks described above, the question of the legal limits of employee monitoring in a digital work environment is becoming increasingly significant. One of the primary legal issues arises in relation to the processing of employees' personal data, as AI-based systems typically rely on extensive analysis of data concerning work performance, employee behaviour, or other aspects of their work activities.

In this context, it is first necessary to consider the rules governing the protection of personal data, in particular the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**. The Regulation establishes fundamental principles for the processing of personal data, including lawfulness, proportionality, purpose limitation, and data minimisation. In the context of employment relationships, this means that any form of employee monitoring must be justified by a

legitimate interest of the employer and must be limited to what is strictly necessary for the organisation of the work process.

A particular feature of digital monitoring lies in the fact that AI-based systems may enable continuous and highly detailed monitoring of employees' work activities. Such monitoring may significantly exceed traditional forms of managerial supervision, which were generally limited to direct oversight of work or occasional performance evaluations. Legal scholarship has emphasised that systems of algorithmic management may facilitate more intensive monitoring of workers and increase control over their work, thereby raising concerns regarding the protection of privacy, the balance of power within the employment relationship, and the broader protection of workers' rights (De Stefano, 2019; Aloisi & De Stefano, 2022).

In this context, it is also important to emphasise that AI cannot assume legal responsibility for decisions taken within the employment relationship. Although algorithmic systems may support the organisation of work or the monitoring of employee performance, the ultimate responsibility for the legality of such decisions remains with the employer. For this reason, contemporary regulatory approaches increasingly emphasise the need to ensure human oversight over automated decision-making systems.

The growing importance of regulating algorithmic management has also been highlighted by the European Parliament, which in December 2025 called on the European Commission to prepare a legislative proposal addressing the use of algorithmic systems in European workplaces. In its proposal, the Parliament emphasised that automated monitoring and decision-making systems in the workplace must be used in a transparent, fair, and secure manner, while ensuring genuine human oversight over decisions affecting workers' rights. If a worker believes that their rights have been infringed by a decision made by an AI-based system, they must have the right to request a review of that decision, and the system concerned may be modified or discontinued (European Parliament, 2025).

The proposal further explicitly stresses that algorithmic systems must not independently take key decisions within employment relationships, such as hiring, termination of employment, or other significant decisions affecting an individual's employment status. According to the proposal, workers must be informed about how such systems affect their working conditions, which data they process, and how human oversight is ensured (European Parliament, 2025).

In addition, the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law (CETS No. 225, 2024) represents an emerging international standard, emphasising the need to ensure that AI systems are used in a manner consistent with human rights, the rule of law, and democratic values (Council of Europe, 2024). These developments indicate that AI may significantly influence the organisation of work and the supervision of employees. Nevertheless, the use of algorithmic systems does not alter the fundamental legal structure of the employment relationship. The employer remains the holder of the managerial prerogative to organise work and simultaneously bears legal responsibility for the lawfulness of decisions affecting workers. AI therefore cannot act as an autonomous decision-maker but rather as a technological tool supporting managerial functions. Consequently, even in a digitalised working environment, employers must ensure that the use of such systems complies with the principles of proportionality, transparency, and the protection of workers' fundamental rights.

3 Discussion and Conclusion

The development of AI and its increasingly frequent use in the management of work processes are significantly transforming traditional forms of work organisation in contemporary organisations. Through the analysis of large volumes of data, AI-based systems

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may support decision-making processes, optimise the allocation of work tasks, and enable more detailed monitoring of employee performance. Such technologies may therefore contribute to greater organisational efficiency and to the rationalisation of work management.

At the same time, however, the use of AI in the workplace raises numerous legal and ethical questions. In particular, systems that enable continuous monitoring of employees' work activities or automated decision-making may lead to more intensive forms of worker surveillance and increase the asymmetry of power between employers and employees. In addition, risks may arise in connection with the opacity of algorithmic decision-making, potential discrimination, and interference with the rights to privacy and dignity at work.

These developments indicate that AI in the workplace does not merely represent a technological innovation but also raises important questions regarding the balance between managerial authority and the protection of workers' rights. Algorithmic management may strengthen organisational efficiency while simultaneously increasing the risk of opaque forms of monitoring and decision-making. For this reason, the role of labour law is becoming increasingly important in establishing legal mechanisms that ensure transparency, accountability, and genuine human oversight over the use of AI in the workplace.

The analysis of the legal framework demonstrates that AI cannot replace the employer's legal responsibility for the organisation of work and the supervision of employees. Even in situations where algorithmic systems participate in the allocation of work tasks or the monitoring of work performance, the employer remains responsible for the legality of the decisions taken. The use of AI-based systems must therefore comply with the fundamental principles of labour law, the rules governing the protection of personal data, and the broader standards of protection of workers' fundamental rights.

At the level of the European Union, the growing importance of these issues is increasingly reflected in legislative developments. The Artificial Intelligence Act and Directive (EU) 2024/2831 on improving working conditions in platform work emphasise the need for transparent, responsible, and supervised use of algorithmic systems in the workplace. Particular attention is given to ensuring human oversight over automated decision-making systems and to protecting workers' rights in a digitalised working environment.

From a practical perspective, employers should ensure that AI-based systems used for monitoring and task allocation are designed in a transparent and legally compliant manner. This includes clearly informing employees, limiting the scope of monitoring to what is necessary, and ensuring meaningful human oversight over automated decisions. Future legal developments will likely further strengthen requirements related to accountability and transparency in AI-based management systems.

On the basis of the analysis conducted, it may be concluded that AI can serve as an important supportive tool in the organisation of work, but it cannot assume the role of an autonomous decision-maker within the employment relationship. The key challenge for future regulation will therefore be to ensure an appropriate balance between technological development, organisational efficiency, and the effective protection of workers' rights. In this context, ensuring genuine human oversight over AI-based systems remain a fundamental condition for their lawful and responsible use in employment relationships.

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