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**IBA Global Employment Institute**

# 14th Annual Global Report

**National regulatory trends in human resources law**



Prepared by:

The International Bar Association Global Employment Institute



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## 1. Introduction

The Annual Global Report (AGR) is an annual report prepared by the IBA Global Employment Institute (GEI) highlighting general international trends in human resources law. This is the 14th AGR and is based on responses from lawyers in 48 countries. The methodology used is described in section 2. The 14th AGR covers legal developments during the calendar years 2024 and 2025. Each AGR builds on the historical perspective of previous editions. This may prompt changes to the topics covered in future editions of the AGR.

Please note that it is not the intention or purpose of the AGR to set out the law on any particular topic; its aim is to highlight changes and trends. Any reference to a particular law is not intended to be a description or summary of that law and should not be relied on as a statement of the law or treated as legal advice. Readers should seek appropriate legal advice before taking any action.

## 2. Methodology

Lawyers from 48 countries (Schedule 1) were asked to respond to the questionnaire (Schedule 2). The questions were designed to cover the most relevant issues relating to employment, industrial relations, discrimination and immigration law. Lawyers were asked to consider changes during 2024 and 2025, and very briefly explain them and their significance. The answers to the questionnaire have been consolidated and summarised in section 3 of this report (*Trends and developments*). Although survey responses mostly reflect the status as of the first half of 2025, in some instances, especially where legislative proceedings were pending, the status of such proceedings was verified and, where possible, updated during the drafting process. As previously noted, the AGR's goal is to highlight general international trends in human resources law. Readers seeking more in-depth analysis are welcome to contact the GEI or the lawyers who participated in the survey.

On behalf of the GEI Council, Björn Otto (CMS Germany) and his team (in particular Demi Pröpper, Fritz Reckenfelderbäumer and Franziska Dirr) took lead responsibility for coordinating and drafting the AGR. They updated the questionnaire with the help of co-author Todd Solomon (McDermott Will & Schulte, US; GEI Council Member), contacted lawyers from different countries (Schedule 1) and reviewed the completed questionnaires. Otto and his team, assisted by Solomon and a team at McDermott, then analysed the survey results and wrote the draft AGR. The GEI Council wishes to convey its gratitude to all those involved for their participation and interest in the development of the survey, and the preparation of the AGR.

### 3. Trends and developments

#### 3.1 Key trends and developments

As the global workplace continues to evolve, several key trends and developments have emerged or become more evident over the past year. Across the participating countries, the most pressing challenges in human resources law and practice were identified, which provide valuable insights into national and international priorities. This analysis has contributed to a comprehensive overview of current and future global trends. In addition, government actions and responses aimed at addressing these challenges were discussed.

The responses provided by the participating countries identified several key challenges shaping the current and future landscape of the workplace. The main challenges include:

- the shift towards new workplace models, particularly remote work and more flexible working arrangements;
- the shortage of skilled workers;
- the growing influence of artificial intelligence (AI) and the associated concerns regarding data protection;
- workplace safety; and
- the excessive regulatory burden faced by employers.

#### SKILLED WORKFORCE SHORTAGE

The shortage of skilled workers is recognised as a key issue in labour markets worldwide.

In many countries, an ageing population has significantly reduced the availability of skilled labour. Another significant factor contributing to skilled worker shortages is the emigration of talent to other countries, as well as early school leaving rates. Potential solutions to the reduced availability of skilled labour can include restandardisation of gradings, better access to high quality education, development of aptitude and academic excellence, development of competence of non-professional skills and providing access to opportunities.

To address these challenges, countries have identified several potential strategies, such as workforce upskilling, recruitment of foreign employees, adjustment of retirement policies and the opportunity of subcontracting services as a growing practice.

#### WORKING TIME ARRANGEMENTS AND FLEXIBILITY

Remote work and the new flexible workplace were emphasised as a significant issue by the majority of countries. What started as a necessity to maintain isolation during the Covid-19

pandemic developed into a widely adopted and partly preferred way of working. As demand for remote working options continues, the issue has remained common post pandemic, even though many country contributors point out that employers are increasingly trying to call their employees back to the office with return-to-office (RTO) rosters varying between three to five office days per week.

#### DIGITALISATION, USE OF AI AND DATA PROTECTION

Technological advantages have introduced additional challenges, particularly in the area of AI and data protection. This raises critical questions regarding AI-driven systems and their impact on the collection, storage and processing of employee data, with significant implications for discrimination, privacy and labour rights. Regulatory approaches differ, with the European Union being quoted as having a more risk-based focus, while the United States is being perceived as more AI-oriented and Big Tech-friendly.

#### WORKPLACE SAFETY, MENTAL HEALTH, DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Further ongoing issues are workplace safety, as well as the mental health of employees.

Ensuring safe working conditions is essential. Workplace safety issues, such as claims alleging employers' non-compliance with safety guidelines, remain a major source of litigation worldwide. The topic continues to be of high importance.

Equally important is the protection of employees' mental health. This is partly due to the challenges that employers faced during the Covid-19 pandemic in implementing effective health and safety measures for remote work. The increasing integration of remote work underscores the continued importance of mental health. The ongoing issue of workplace harassment is another significant contributing factor.

With increasing immigration driven by skill shortages and international conflicts, discrimination remains a critical issue. While not highlighted as a primary workplace challenge, discrimination is consistently mentioned as a key cause of litigation. Court cases often involve claims of unequal treatment based on gender, age or other characteristics.

#### REMUNERATION

Wage-related issues remain among the most common sources of workplace disputes globally. Such disputes typically arise over unpaid or delayed salaries, overtime miscalculations, bonuses, benefits and compensation for unused leave.

Trends continue to show frequent adjustments to minimum wages and attention to the gender pay gap, with renewed efforts to enforce equal pay standards in several countries. This reflects a broader global focus on wage fairness and compliance.

## GLOBAL CONFLICTS AND IMPACT ON LABOUR MARKETS

Although global conflicts are not highlighted among the top current workplace issues, their economic repercussions have a mentionable impact on labour markets. A more recent development is trade tensions arising from the US draft tariffs, which affect a wide range of countries worldwide, and prompted negotiations and the implementation of new tariffs on imports to and exports from the US.

## LEGISLATION AND OTHER MEASURES

An important aspect of addressing the evolving labour market is reviewing labour legislation across different countries.

While in a few countries an excessive regulatory environment continues to place significant burdens on employers, most countries emphasise the need for legislative amendments to expand the scope of employment law and better align with the evolving labour market. Several countries (eg, Belgium, New Zealand, South Korea and the United Kingdom) are either in the process of introducing amendments or have recently enacted changes to labour legislation. Meanwhile, other countries have not introduced legislative reform but instead focus on alternative measures, such as non-legislative but governmental programmes and guidelines to enhance working conditions.

## EMPLOYMENT DISPUTES IN COURT

The judicial system plays a critical role in regulating workplace relations and addressing human resources disputes, which often lead to courtroom litigation. Additionally, they highlight the diverse ways in which labour law intersects with human resource management, and the critical role of judicial oversight in protecting both employees and employers.

Among the most common issues, termination and dismissals, including disputes over severance payments, represent the most significant source of legal conflict in an overwhelming number of countries (eg, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, Finland, Luxembourg, Sweden, Thailand and Turkey).

According to country contributor feedback, the second most commonly litigated issue is compensation-related, including unpaid wages, overtime and extralegal benefits that generate extensive claims.

Additionally, discrimination in the workplace, the misclassification of independent contractors and workplace accidents are recurring causes of legal disputes in several jurisdictions.

### 3.2 Skilled workforce shortages

A key issue across countries is the growing shortage of skilled workers. This challenge has been particularly highlighted by Bulgaria, Canada, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Indonesia, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand and Turkey.

With regard to the workforce, Colombia, Finland and Myanmar generally identified unemployment rates as a concern. Sweden reported a rate of nine per cent, which is significantly above the EU average. As of June 2025, 54 per cent of organisations across the UK are facing skill shortages.

Several underlying factors contribute to this issue. Some countries, including Bulgaria, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Singapore, Sweden and Taiwan, linked the problem to ageing populations. The demographic change and therefore fewer employees among younger generations exacerbate the concern. In Germany, older employees in particular are being offered redundancy packages as part of restructuring efforts in many large companies, further intensifying the issue.

Responses also highlighted emigration of talent to other countries as partial reasoning, especially in Bulgaria, Finland, Romania, Spain and Turkey. In recent years, the emigration of skilled professionals has increased due to factors such as higher wages, better career opportunities, advanced training and education, more favourable working conditions, and political or economic stability abroad. This outflow places additional pressure on domestic labour markets, particularly in countries already facing demographic challenges. These nations often struggle to retain skilled professionals, which can hinder economic growth and limit their capacity to compete in high-value sectors.

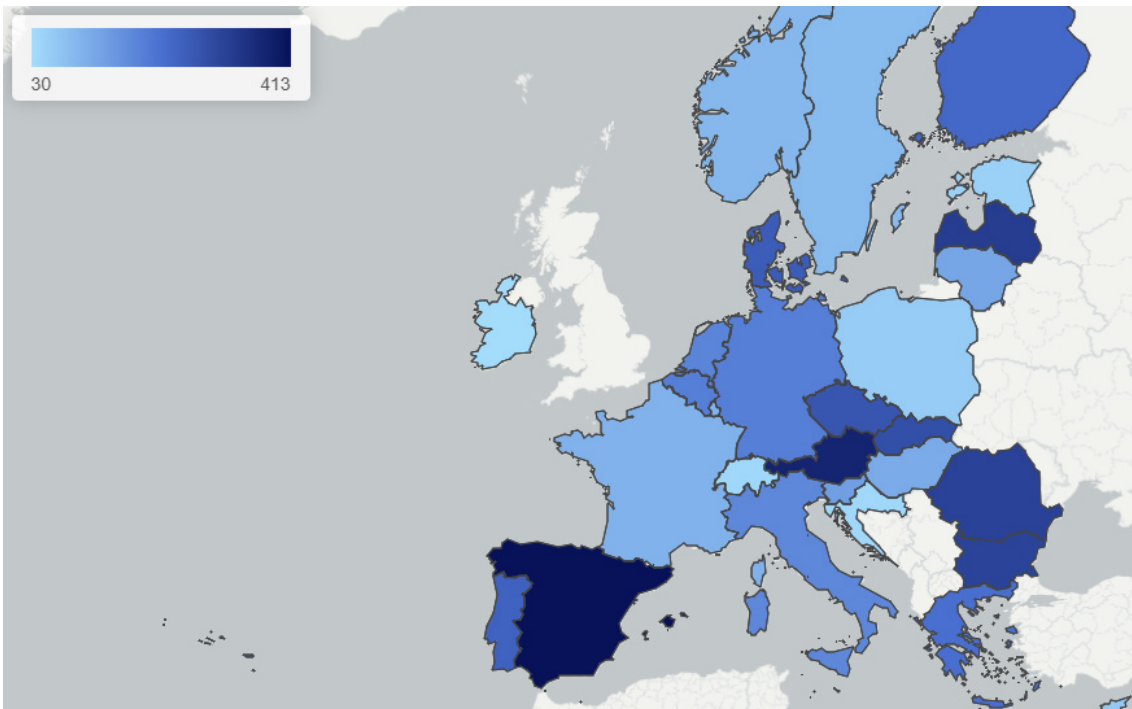


Figure 1: Labour shortages and surpluses in Europe (European Employment Services, 2024)

Romania attributes part of its workforce shortage to its high early school leaving rate, which was the highest in the EU at 16.8 per cent in 2024. Spain credited its significant labour shortage to various reasons, including a mismatch between the skills provided by the education system and those demanded by employers, and the low attractiveness of certain professions.

To address these challenges, countries have identified several potential strategies. Countries, such as Portugal and Singapore, pointed to workforce upskilling as a key priority. France emphasised the need for workforce reskilling, both in response to automation and the transition to a low-carbon economy. Japan, Singapore and Thailand, along with other countries, also see recruiting foreign employees as a possible solution to address labour shortages. Mexico pointed to subcontracting services as a growing practice. In Indonesia, the Unemployment Insurance Program was enhanced by amendments in February 2025, providing greater support for terminated workers to ensure terminated workers who have been terminated from their employment may still be equipped with necessary skills to better prepare them for future job opportunities.

#### UPSKILLING/RESKILLING WORKERS

Workforce upskilling and reskilling are widely recognised strategies to address labour shortages. For instance, Portugal and Singapore are actively focusing on upskilling programmes to prepare their workforce for evolving labour demands. Unlike hiring new workers, which can be constrained by demographic trends, immigration policies or global competition for talent, upskilling can make use of the capabilities already present within an organisation or economy.

Many labour shortages stem not from a lack of workers but from unmatched skill requirements. Therefore, upskilling and reskilling addresses these gaps by training employees in areas of high demand such as technology, data analysis, renewable energy and advanced manufacturing sectors, thereby also improving labour market efficiency. Even short-term training programmes, including remote formats, can rapidly equip employees with specialised skills while minimising disruption to their ongoing work responsibilities.

It also strengthens employee loyalty and motivation, as workers are more likely to remain with a company and perform better when employers invest in their development, thereby reducing turnover-related costs. In addition, upskilling and reskilling enable governments and organisations to engage underrepresented populations. For instance, Israel has implemented programmes targeting women, Arab communities and Orthodox populations, effectively broadening the skilled labour pool without depending on immigration. Countries such as Portugal and Singapore have developed upskilling initiatives closely aligned with industry needs, ensuring that training translates directly into employable skills. In Spain, strategic projects to foster skills especially in green energy, digitalisation and biotechnology are being promoted. In Thailand, the Ministry of Labour has established the 'Digital Skill Development Academy', which is a learning institution that provides digital skills training programmes and courses to enhance digital skill development for the workforce.

Beyond addressing immediate shortages, upskilling/reskilling enhances productivity, drives innovation and strengthens economic competitiveness, positioning nations to better handle demographic challenges, automation and rapid industry shifts. Investing in structured, industry-aligned and inclusive upskilling/reskilling programmes enables employers, and potentially entire countries, to not only fill current skill gaps but also build a resilient, long-term labour force capable of sustaining growth and competitiveness in a rapidly changing global economy.

## IMMIGRATION

To address the shortage of skilled workers, many countries view immigration as a key solution. Recruiting foreign employees is a commonly proposed solution, particularly in Japan and Singapore. Policies to attract and retain foreign talent can include facilitating visa and work permit processes, recognition of foreign qualifications, targeted recruitment for in-demand sectors, competitive compensation packages, relocation support and programmes to integrate foreign workers into local labour markets, as well as communities. Additionally, creating a favourable regulatory and social environment, such as access to housing, healthcare and education, can further enhance a country's ability to attract and retain skilled professionals.

Latvia, facing a growing need to enlarge its workforce, encounters challenges in integrating foreign workers due to strict immigration regulations. Amendments to the Immigration Law, effective in June 2024, have introduced further strict requirements for employers hiring foreign nationals, including obtaining confirmation from the State Employment Agency and demonstrating the necessity of employing foreign nationals. While these measures aim to prevent illegal immigration and ensure fair labour practices, they also increase administrative complexity for employers addressing labour shortages.

In 2025, Spain eased immigration rules, granting work and residence permits to up to 300,000 migrants annually to fill critical labour gaps.

In Sweden, the government presented proposals in March 2024 to tighten regulations for low-skilled labour immigration while facilitating entry for highly skilled workers. These reforms are designed to better align immigration with long-term labour market demands and to ensure fair working conditions. Depending on parliamentary approval, the planned changes are scheduled for mid-2026.

In 2024, 78,096 highly qualified non-EU workers were granted an EU Blue Card, which is a work and residence permit designed for skilled professionals from outside the EU. Germany issued the largest share, with 56,252 cards, representing 72 per cent of all EU Blue Cards, followed by Poland with 5,852 (7.5 per cent), Hungary with 2,942 (3.8 per cent) and France with 2,775 (3.6 per cent). Among nationalities, Indian citizens received the highest number of Blue Cards in 2024 (16,268, or 20.8 per cent of the total) followed by citizens of Russia (6,657, 8.5 per cent), Turkey (5,645, 7.2 per cent) and China (4,550, 5.8 per cent).

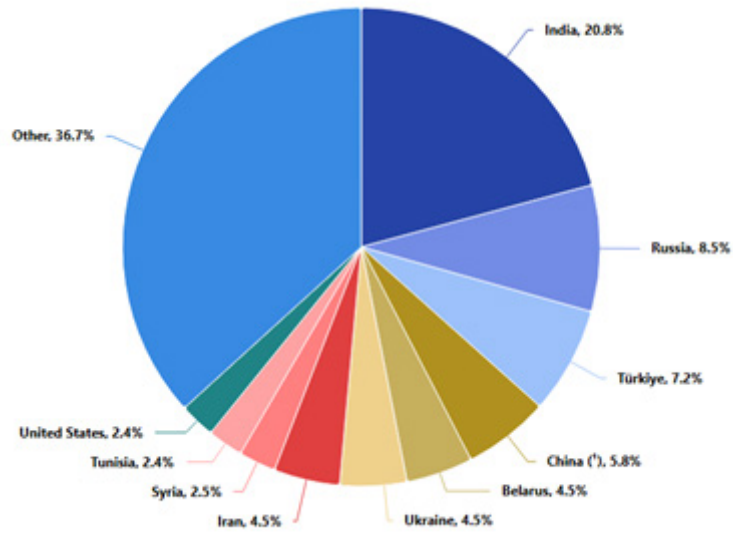


Figure 2: Share of top ten non-EU countries whose citizens were granted EU Blue Cards in 2024 (Eurostat, 2025)

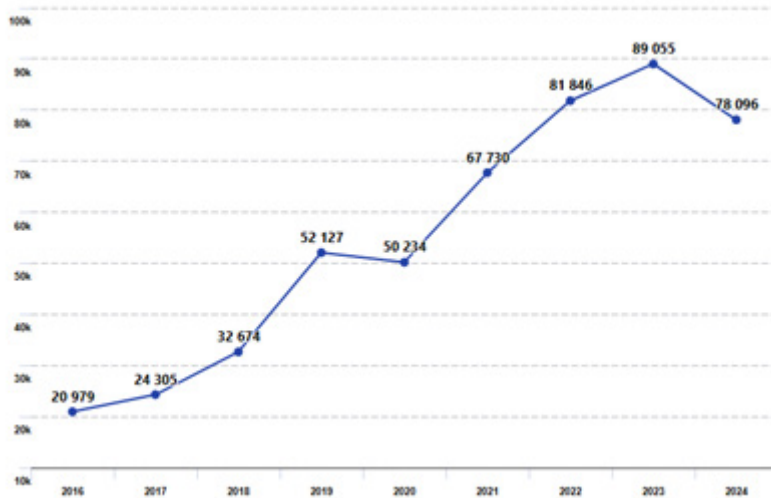


Figure 3: EU Blue Cards granted, 2016–2024 (Eurostat, 2025)

The number of EU Blue Cards issued in the EU has generally followed a positive trend since 2016, with the exception of 2020, which saw a 3.6 per cent decline due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and a significant drop of 12.3 per cent in 2024, linked to the revision of the EU Blue Cards Directive. In 2024, six EU countries issued less than 100 EU Blue Cards in 2024. Greece granted only 95 EU Blue Cards, while Sweden (62), Estonia (42), Slovakia (32), Portugal (16) and Cyprus (0) recorded even lower numbers.

## OUTLOOK

Solving the skilled labour shortage requires coordinated efforts across education systems, labour policy and immigration strategies. Countries must adapt to demographic realities and the need to integrate foreign skilled workers, invest in upskilling and create inclusive pathways to integrate all segments of the population into the workforce. Those that fail to implement such measures risk persistent skill gaps that could hinder economic growth and limit their competitiveness on the international labour market.

### 3.3 *Working time arrangements and flexibility*

Over the past years, labour markets globally have experienced significant changes in working time arrangements and workplace flexibility. Many countries, including Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Hungary, Mexico, Portugal, Russia, Switzerland and Serbia, have recognised remote work and flexible workplace arrangements as a major challenge that needs to be addressed.

The Covid-19 pandemic first drastically accelerated the adoption of remote and hybrid work models, prompting both employers and governments to reconsider traditional work structures. Since then, remote and hybrid arrangements have remained highly popular, particularly in countries such as Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Hungary, Mexico, Portugal, Russia and Switzerland. Many companies have introduced flexible policies to attract and retain talent, while other companies, namely from the US, have implemented stricter RTO requirements due to concerns about productivity.

According to various studies, remote and flexible work models in Italy driven by greater adoption of technology and modern workplace practices have become increasingly common, with around 3.55 million employees working in such arrangements in 2024. This number was projected to rise by about five per cent to 3.75 million throughout 2025. In the UK, data from the Office for National Statistics revealed that around 40 per cent of respondents worked remotely to a certain extent, demonstrating a significant demographic of workers with some degree of flexible working. A similar change can be observed in Canada, as fully in-office jobs have decreased from 69 per cent in 2023's Q3 to 63 per cent in 2024's Q4.

The shift towards flexible work arrangements is driven by several factors. Employees increasingly prioritise work-life balance and flexibility, often willing to trade higher pay for remote work options. Technological advancements in digital communication and collaboration tools have made remote work more feasible and productive. Employers benefit from access to a broader global talent pool, reduced office costs and improved employee retention. Environmental considerations, including reduced commuting and lower carbon emissions, have also contributed to the trend.

Emerging workplace models, such as four-day work weeks and flexible schedules, are making it easier to combine work with free time and family commitments. These arrangements aim to further enhance productivity, wellbeing and gender equality, even though there are also concerns over higher costs resulting from reduced hours combined with unchanged pay.

Within the past few years, many governments have moved from temporary pandemic measures towards durable legal frameworks or guidelines that recognise flexible working time, formalise rights to request flexible or remote work, and address health, tax and liability issues arising from work outside the traditional workplace. Countries piloting these models report positive outcomes in employee satisfaction.

For instance, Singapore introduced the Tripartite Guidelines on Flexible Work Arrangement Requests, effective 1 December 2024. This gives employees a clear, standardised route to request flexible work arrangements and requires employers to fairly consider formal requests from employees for flexible work arrangements regarding workplace, working time and workload arrangements. Australia extended its 'right to disconnect' laws in 2025 to cover not only non-small but also small businesses, which allows employees to refuse work-related contact outside office hours. Separately, Serbia amended its occupational health and safety law to ensure remote workers' safety, which requires employers to provide suitable equipment and maintain records of injuries. European countries such as Belgium and Portugal have also strengthened regulations ensuring compensation and rights for remote employees. Malaysia's Employment Act 1955 does not specifically address flexible work arrangements, but the Ministry of Human Resources encourages employers to adopt flexible work policies voluntarily. In the Philippines, while there is no general flexible work requirement, the government has issued guidelines clarifying telecommuting arrangements for employers.

Looking ahead, the trend towards remote and hybrid work is likely to continue and expand in many countries. Opportunities include increased productivity, broader access to skilled labour, cost savings for employers and greater employee autonomy.

However, challenges persist, such as ensuring equitable access to flexible arrangements, maintaining team cohesion and organisational culture, addressing potential burnout from blurred work-life boundaries, and keeping compliance with evolving legislation across multiple countries. Also, many employers are now increasing efforts to request employees to return to the office, particularly in the US. The future of work will require employers, policy-makers and employees to collaborate on adaptable, inclusive frameworks that balance operational efficiency with wellbeing, sustainability and legal compliance.

### ***3.4 Digitalisation, use of AI and data protection***

As mentioned, upskilling/reskilling the existing workforce is one of the most effective strategies to combat the global shortage of skilled workers. It refers to teaching new skills or enhancing existing competencies. This approach is particularly important as automation, AI and digital transformation are reshaping industries at an unprecedented pace. Employees with outdated skills are at risk of displacement, while businesses face productivity gaps; upskilling/reskilling ensures workers can operate new technologies, manage advanced systems and contribute to innovation.

At the same time, technological advancements bring new challenges, particularly regarding the use of AI and data protection.

## AI

Over the past few years, countries worldwide have faced significant challenges arising from digitalisation and technological advances. A primary concern involves the implications of AI-driven systems, particularly for privacy, performance monitoring and labour rights. Denmark, Japan, Luxembourg, Portugal and Switzerland have all highlighted the increased use of AI in the workplace.

By 2025, AI had been widely integrated into healthcare diagnostics, customer service and financial analysis. Healthcare, finance, retail and manufacturing are the leading sectors using AI for tasks such as fraud detection, predictive maintenance, personalised marketing and quality control.

Reports in the UK state that, while the long-term potential of AI is expected to be substantial, short-term returns remain less obvious. Despite nearly universal investment in AI, only one per cent of business leaders believe that full deployment has been achieved, though 92 per cent of companies plan to increase AI investment over the next three years. The report also identifies a disconnect between employers and employees: three times more employees use generative AI more extensively than employers realise, yet employers perceive employee readiness as a greater barrier to AI adoption than leadership alignment.

Few countries, including Belgium, Bulgaria, Chile, Ecuador, Hungary, Mexico, Myanmar, Pakistan, Russia and Spain, state they do not see a significant increase in employers' reliance on AI. Unlike the previous year, when reliance on AI in the workplace was considered limited in Lithuania, it has now seen an increase between April 2024 and May 2025. Around nine per cent of companies now use AI technologies, particularly for language analysis and workflow automation.

While the benefits of AI are increasingly recognised and new opportunities have emerged in AI-related sectors supported by the government by investments in reskilling workers, the fear of job loss continues to resonate across countries. Statistics show that the job market is expected to undergo major changes, with an estimated 85 million jobs displaced but 97 million new roles created. As in last year's AGR, Finland, Poland, Romania and Russia still express concerns about employment risks in sectors such as healthcare, logistics, commerce, finance and banking, with Finland additionally highlighting potential impacts on creative industries like the visual arts.

Romania, despite being behind the EU average in AI adoption, is showing a clear trend towards increased investment and integration, with both public and private organisations promoting upskilling and strategic initiatives to ease the transition. In practice, roles such as supermarket cashiers, customer service operators and bank clerks are already being replaced or supplemented by self-checkout systems, automated response software and digital banking solutions. A 2024 survey indicated that, in Romania, 54 per cent of jobs are likely to be augmented by generative AI with four per cent fully or partially displaced. Poland has reported similar patterns, particularly in banking and finance, and the spread of self-service technologies in retail. Nonetheless, Poland's unemployment rate remains

relatively low at 5.7 per cent as of November 2025. This suggests that while AI is reshaping the labour market, it has not yet translated into widespread unemployment.

#### DATA PROTECTION

AI also raises critical questions about the collection, storage and processing of employee data. In Ecuador, attendance and performance control systems have prompted serious concerns regarding privacy and the potential misuse of personal data. The national data protection authority recently issued a ruling stating that the use of biometric data, a common method for tracking attendance, violates workers' rights. Consequently, employers are now required to revise these systems, despite substantial prior investments in their implementation. The Swedish Authority for Privacy Protection has outlined a key focus of scrutinising employer's processing of employee personal data in its 2025 agenda, emphasising the importance of addressing the power imbalance between employees and employers and promoting respectful practices in employee monitoring and background checks.

#### LEGISLATION

This highlights the need for robust legal frameworks to safeguard employees. An overwhelming number of countries, including the UK, currently have no specific legislation governing the use of AI technology in employment contexts, leaving a significant regulatory gap. Canada's proposed Artificial Intelligence and Data Act failed to pass as Parliament was prorogued in January 2025. In response to the current and further potential growth, however, many governments and organisations are in the process of developing regulatory frameworks and policies to manage these challenges. The EU's AI Act seeks to ensure that workplace AI systems are transparent, fair and accountable. Switzerland and Luxembourg are introducing stricter rules on employee data collection and algorithmic decision-making, while Japan is establishing ethical standards for AI applications in employment. Legislative progress has also been notable in Lithuania, as proposals from the Ministry of Economy and Innovation to expedite AI development have been approved. Notably, in early 2025 further amendments created one of the EU's first 'AI sandboxes' to encourage safe testing and deployment of AI solutions before market deployment.

Ecuador's 2025 data protection landscape saw major developments under its Organic Law (Ley Orgánica de Protección de Datos Personales or LOPDP), focusing on implementing key obligations like the data protection officer, issuing regulations for large-scale processing, legitimate interest, data lifecycle management, contractual clauses and advancing rules for AI, for instance, by prohibiting certain biometric identification in public spaces. These changes enforce stronger accountability, transparency and security for personal data processing, with significant penalties for non-compliance.

The Federal Employment and Social Agency of Germany developed a brochure within the framework of the Initiative New Quality of Work (INQA) Experimentation Space project 'humAI work lab', which provides practical instructions, real-world case studies and a

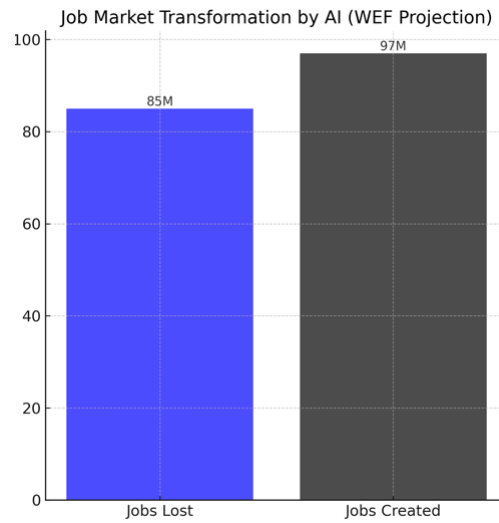


Figure 4: Job market transformation by AI (Created using data from the World Economic Forum report 'Don't fear AI. It will lead to long-term job growth', 2020)

checklist to support the implementation of AI into the workplace. Its key focus areas are fostering acceptance, promoting participation and ensuring a human-centred approach to the use of AI.

These measures aim to protect employee privacy, promote fair workplace practices and build confidence in the responsible use of AI.

#### OUTLOOK

Looking ahead, the interplay between AI, digitalisation and workforce development will continue to evolve. By 2026, 60 per cent of global companies are expected to have AI-driven operations. Companies must balance the productivity and innovation potential of AI with employee rights and privacy protections; upskilling remains essential to enable workers to engage effectively with advanced technologies. Over the coming years, legislation and corporate policies are expected to converge to create a more transparent, accountable and technologically capable workforce, capable of thriving in a highly automated and data-driven global economy. Alongside this, termination disputes, which are currently among the most litigated human resources issues, are likely to increase, particularly in the context of technology-driven restructurings.

### 3.5 Workplace safety, mental health and diversity

Ensuring the safety and mental wellbeing of employees is a fundamental responsibility of organisations. Effective workplace safety measures, combined with proactive mental health initiatives, not only protect employees from physical harm but also foster a supportive

and productive work environment. As workplaces evolve, addressing both occupational hazards and psychological wellbeing has become increasingly critical to sustainable human resource management.

#### WORKPLACE SAFETY

Workplace safety remains an ongoing issue. This is specifically stated by Indonesia, Luxembourg, Myanmar and New Zealand, as well as Serbia, where a law on occupational health and safety concerning remote work required employers to adapt their practices accordingly by 1 January 2026. It aims to enhance overall working conditions, safeguard employee rights, minimise workplace injuries and bring Serbia's regulations in line with European standards. It also addresses remote and home-based work, enabling employers to assess risks and establish measures to maintain a safe and healthy work environment outside the traditional workplace.

In New Zealand, a potential increase in employee claims alleging non-compliance with workplace safety guidelines is anticipated, while Luxembourg has specifically highlighted challenges related to workplace harassment.

#### MENTAL HEALTH

Credited largely to the rise of remote and hybrid work models, ensuring mental health support for remote employees has been an increasingly important responsibility for employers for some time.

Mental health in the workplace is seen as a major challenge in countries such as France, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Spain and Ukraine. In the UK, focus on employee wellbeing and mental health is expected to continue, with employers increasingly required to provide adequate support and resources to address mental health issues and promote overall workplace wellbeing.

In April 2025, the National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work (Istituto nazionale per l'assicurazione contro gli infortuni sul lavoro or INAIL) in Italy introduced a form for work-related stress risk assessment, which takes into consideration new ways of working due to the adoption of digital technologies. The aim is to provide companies with updated tools to recognise and prevent emerging psychosocial risks related to hyper-connection, digitisation and flexible working.

There have also been significant changes made in Canada. In Nova Scotia, the legal definition of 'health and safety' was adjusted to include both physical and psychological wellbeing. In Quebec, employers are now required to develop and implement an action plan to eliminate or reduce work-related risks to employees' mental health by identifying and mitigating work-related psychosocial risks such as high workload, low recognition, lack of support and harassment.

In Germany, a trend towards supporting mental health through various offerings can be observed. One example is the training of so-called mental health first aiders in the company, who are available as colleagues for initial contact alongside medical services.

#### DIVERSITY AND DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is a recurring cause of litigation, often involving claims of unequal treatment based on gender, age or other protected characteristics.

Workplace discrimination remains a widespread issue affecting employees worldwide, and across various industries and organisational levels, particularly in light of rising immigration driven by labour shortages and international conflicts.

Court cases commonly arise due to unclear or inconsistently applied anti-discrimination policies.

According to the 2023 Eurobarometer on Discrimination in the EU, as stated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), just over 21 per cent of individuals aged 15 and older across EU Member States reported experiencing discrimination. Reported discrimination rates across the EU vary widely, ranging from ten per cent in Portugal to 38 per cent in Belgium, encompassing factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, disability, religion and sexual orientation.

Discrimination undermines equal opportunity, often relegating individuals to roles below their skill level, reducing economic incentives, and leading to a misallocation of human and economic capital. Discrimination may negatively affect workplace productivity through mental health impacts and limit economic growth when individuals refrain from seeking work or withdraw from the labour market.

Starting 1 July 2025, major enhancements to Australia's Paid Parental Leave scheme to provide greater financial stability for new parents and promote gender equity in caregiving and retirement outcomes are now in force, granting parents 120 days of government-funded Parental Leave Pay – an increase from the previous 110 days.

In Chile, Law 21,643 (known as the 'Karin Law') on the prevention, investigation and punishment of workplace harassment, sexual harassment and violence at work came into effect in August 2024. This law imposed many responsibilities on employers in terms of prevention of workplace harassment, sexual harassment and violence at work, including the requirement to address psychosocial risks by establishing protocols for action and prevention, as well as the duty to train and inform employees regarding appropriate behaviour and healthy relationships for a proper work environment. Additionally, this law established that, in the event of internal investigations within a company due to workplace harassment, sexual harassment or violence at the workplace, employers, through the administrative bodies of the Occupational Accident and Illness Insurance, must provide immediate and specialised psychological care to the alleged victims.

Among others, Indonesia anticipates that addressing workplace discrimination and promoting inclusion will become crucial in the future, as new provisions in the revised criminal code, effective as of January 2026, will affect rights related to gender, sexual orientation and religion. These developments require strategic planning to ensure compliance while fostering a safe and inclusive work environment.

In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), there has been a rise in disputes involving allegations of discrimination. While the Dubai International Financial Centre and the Abu Dhabi Global Market have had anti-discrimination provisions in place within their respective legal frameworks for some time, wider protection against discrimination was only incorporated into the Federal Labour Law in 2022. Consequently, this remains a fairly recent development and one that has become increasingly important.

### **3.6 Remuneration**

Wage-related issues are among the most common sources of workplace litigation worldwide: payment affects employees' livelihoods and is often subject to complex regulations. Disputes arise when employees perceive that they are not being compensated fairly according to labour laws, contracts or company policies. The complexity of salary structures, varying national regulations and additional benefits can make compliance challenging for employers and create grounds for disputes.

As of 2025, only few countries still do not have a statutory minimum wage universally applicable across all sectors. Instead, a minimum pay level in Denmark, Italy and Sweden is still established through collective bargaining agreements and in Singapore through a progressive wage model. Denmark and Sweden continuously challenged EU Directive 2022/2041 on adequate minimum wages with an implementation deadline for EU Member States by 15 November 2024, arguing that its implementation is incompatible with EU Treaty provisions, which grant the European Parliament and the Council authority over 'working conditions' while explicitly excluding competence over 'pay'. While the Advocate General in January 2025 proposed that the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) annul the Directive, the CJEU, in a ruling of 11 November 2025, upheld the Directive's validity. They argued that its primary purpose was to improve working conditions and to promote collective bargaining rather than to determine the level of pay. They declared certain subparagraphs null and void.

Many countries report high volumes of salary-related claims. In Singapore, a 2023 report released by the Tripartite Partners on 2 August 2024 highlighted that the vast majority of employment-related claims and appeals lodged with the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and the Tripartite Alliance for Dispute Management (TADM) concerned salary issues.

Similarly, in Lithuania, the State Labour Inspectorate reported that approximately 75 per cent of cases handled by the Labour Dispute Commission (LDC) involve remuneration, including unpaid salaries, holiday pay and compensation for unused leave.

Globally, common wage-related issues include unpaid or delayed salaries, improper calculation of overtime, disputes over bonuses or benefits, and compensation for unused leave or holidays.

For example, in Colombia, extralegal benefits and perks beyond the regular salary can significantly impact total compensation, and disagreements over their calculation or eligibility often led to claims.

In Poland, disputes on remuneration for overtime frequently arise, as employees are entitled to payment for hours worked beyond the standard work week. Miscalculations or lack of payment are common triggers for litigation.

A general trend across most countries is the regular increase of minimum wages. However, the gender pay gap is still noticed in many countries. After intensifying its efforts to address the gender pay gap last year, Portugal's Authority for Working Conditions (Autoridade para as Condições do Trabalho or ACT) launched another nationwide investigation on 7 January 2025, to strengthen the enforcement of equal pay requirements by increasing the controls.

### ***3.7 Global conflicts and impact on labour markets***

Global conflicts continue to influence the development of labour markets. The ongoing war in Ukraine, as well as the Israel–Palestine conflict, continue to affect the rest of the world, especially neighbouring countries, creating heightened instability and an increased risk of armed confrontation. Large-scale migration remains a significant consequence, further impacting workforces and local economies. Especially affected are still Poland and Bulgaria due to their location.

A more recent source of disruption arises from trade tensions, highlighted by the draft tariffs announced by the US in early 2025. The policies imposed a universal ten per cent tariff on imports from over 180 countries, with additional country-specific tariffs applied according to trade imbalances and strategic considerations. These measures have generated increasing uncertainty regarding the state of global trade and, by extension, the potential impacts on employment and economic activity worldwide.

Among the affected countries, some are subject to tariffs of up to 50 per cent on numerous goods. Companies in Mexico may relocate manufacturing or service jobs to avoid tariffs or trade barriers, impacting local employment levels. In response to the draft, the EU negotiated an agreement in August 2025 establishing 15 per cent tariffs on European exports and zero tariffs on certain US exports. Furthermore, the EU is actively seeking to revive stalled negotiations with the US to reduce tariffs on steel and aluminium exports.

### ***3.8 Legislation and other measures***

Countries reported differing perspectives on whether and how their governments are considering or implementing solutions to key employment issues. In response to arising and

deepening labour market challenges, governments are pursuing a range of various strategies to properly address them.

On one hand, countries such as Chile and Ecuador reported concern over excessive regulation, and state that the regulatory environment continues to place a heavy burden of labour obligations on employers. On the other hand, countries such as Argentina pointed to the complexity and instability of its labour law regulations, and Nigeria emphasised an insufficiency in existing labour laws to address modern workplace dynamics and issues.

Countries such as Finland, France, Lithuania, Poland and Romania have not announced legislative reforms but instead focus on alternative measures, such as non-legislative programmes and government-issued guidelines to improve working conditions.

The majority of countries identify a continued need for legislative improvements. Indonesia emphasised the need for stronger compliance measures. In Taiwan, uncertainty persists regarding proposed amendments to labour laws, while Belgium, New Zealand, South Korea and the UK are actively pursuing reforms. Mexico highlights that no measures supporting flexible working practices have yet been introduced, with current legislation offering limited adaptability and prohibiting arrangements such as zero-hours contracts. In Sweden, legal uncertainty remains, especially concerning the regulation of platform work.

Another challenge noted by India is the complexity created by overlapping federal and state-level labour laws, which make it difficult for companies operating across multiple regions to implement uniform policies.

The UAE highlighted the growing difficulty for HR professionals to ensure employment contracts and policies are up to date and reflect the current laws, due to a significant number of changes in employment law in recent years.

#### AMENDMENTS

In several jurisdictions, governments are actively pursuing or considering amendments to existing labour laws.

Mexico's Ministry of Labour published a new subcontracting inspection protocol on 24 November 2025, standardising inspections to enforce the 2021 labour reform. It focuses on verifying compliance with the strict rules for specialised services – not personnel outsourcing – to detect illegal schemes, simulations and registry of specialised service providers violations through document reviews, interviews and on-site checks, aiming for technical, evidence-based enforcement with potential fines and sanctions for non-compliance.

Israel highlighted the importance of developing more effective laws and regulations for recruiting foreign employees in direct employment.

In Belgium, labour rules are being reformed to enhance workforce flexibility by modernised working time regulations and reintegrating long-term incapacitated employees. Additionally,

it has imposed stricter obligations for employees, employers and doctors, and adjusted dismissal protections, including reinstating a six-month probationary period.

Hungary regularly increases the minimum wage, while Indonesia is tackling challenges in retaining highly skilled professionals through upskilling initiatives. Lithuania has developed a comprehensive human resources development programme, including medium-term forecasting of labour demand, continuous HR support for small businesses and individuals, monitoring qualifications and workplace links, and using prognostic research for professional guidance.

New Zealand is addressing issues related to worker classification and personal grievance processes. The government plans to amend the Employment Relations Act 2000 to clarify contractor status, mandate faster delivery of Employment Relations Authority (ERA) decisions, remove remedies if employee behaviour is at fault and limit the ERA's power to unilaterally reinstate employees.

In South Korea, the newly elected government is expected to take significant action in the labour and employment sphere by reducing the maximum regular work week, raising the minimum age at which employers can implement mandatory retirement, and strengthening the unions. Among its priorities is the enactment of the 'Yellow Envelope Act' legislation that would grant unions representing subcontracted workers the authority to seek negotiations directly with the client companies that exert substantial influence over their working conditions, as well as provide additional protections for organised labour. These changes are likely to compel many large companies to rethink how they engage with key outside contractors, either by negotiating with their unions or by reshaping their contracting arrangements to limit the degree of control they exercise over working conditions.

The UK government has pursued significant changes through the Employment Rights Bill, which has now received Royal Assent and is law. Once fully commenced, the Act will require employers to review and update employment contracts, workplace policies and people management processes. Key measures include strengthened family-friendly rights, enhanced protections for pregnant employees and those returning from maternity leave, and the introduction of a new preventative duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. The Act also introduces two significant structural changes. First, it extends the time limit for bringing most Employment Tribunal claims from three months to six months. Second, it reduces the qualifying service requirement for ordinary unfair dismissal from two years to six months. This latter change has substantial implications for probationary arrangements, performance management and early-stage dismissal decisions, and is expected to require a fundamental rethink of how employers manage risk, capability and documentation during the first months of employment.

In Taiwan however, uncertainty regarding amendments to labour laws persists as frequent changes to labour regulations create concerns and misunderstandings among businesses and employees.

As the current law in Thailand primarily addresses gender equality, a need for comprehensive coverage for factors such as sexual orientation, age, race, ethnicity, religion and disability has been noticed, and was recently met by the government. Two draft bills were approved in principle in September 2025, proposing broad non-discrimination guarantees aligning Thailand with international labour standards and promoting inclusive workplaces.

#### OTHER MEASURES

In addition to legal reforms, governments are implementing other measures to reduce legal uncertainty in the labour market.

Finland is encouraging earlier participation in the workforce by setting quotas for first-time university applicants, and is considering new solutions about restricting financial support of unemployment benefits.

France is providing guidance for redundancy processes, transposing EU directives such as the Pay Transparency Directive, along with other EU countries, and investing in training programmes to prepare workers for emerging green and technological jobs.

Poland is confronting demographic challenges by providing social benefits and financial support to parents and relaxing immigration policies, though results so far have been limited. Romania is addressing strong regional disparities in economic and social development by offering targeted financial support to less-developed regions, aiming to balance the concentration of investment and employment opportunities.

### **3.9 *Employment disputes in court***

The judicial system plays a central role in regulating workplace relations and resolving human resources disputes, ensuring that both employees and employers are protected under labour law. Litigation often arises where there is ambiguity, inconsistency or perceived unfairness in employment practices.

With regard to the judicial system, Serbia pointed to inconsistent court practices and varying interpretations of employment laws, whereas Turkey reported issues of judicial overload. Nigeria further noted that a lack of confidence in the judicial system discourages individuals from pursuing legal action in cases of misconduct or labour disputes thereby contributing to ongoing legal uncertainty.

Disputes over terminations, dismissals and severance payments are the most frequently litigated human resources issues, reported across numerous countries, including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Israel, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand and Turkey. These cases often stem from unclear contractual terms, disagreements over 'urgent cause' or justifications for dismissal, and

inconsistent application of local labour laws. In response to the number of termination-related disputes, the Czech Republic implemented amendments to the Labour Code, effective from 1 June 2025, to extend trial periods, clarify grounds for termination and severance, adjust notice periods and deadlines, and strengthen protections for invalid terminations.

Compensation-related disputes, including unpaid wages, overtime claims and the treatment of extralegal benefits, represent the second most common source of litigation. Countries reporting significant wage-related claims include Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and the UK. Such disputes frequently arise due to differences in interpretation of pay regulations, delays in payment or incomplete documentation of employee entitlements.

Another frequently recurring cause of litigation involves discrimination claims, including perceived differences in treatment based on gender, age, disability or other protected characteristics. Such cases often stem from unclear or inconsistently enforced anti-discrimination policies.

Disputes over the classification of independent contractors are also common across several jurisdictions. These cases typically arise from ambiguities in labour law or gaps in enforcement, highlighting the challenges of regulating emerging work arrangements.

Workplace accidents continue to generate litigation in countries such as Argentina, the Czech Republic and Portugal. These disputes often reflect shortcomings in occupational health and safety regulations, inadequate reporting mechanisms or differing interpretations of employer liability.

According to recent statistics from Ireland, although the number of individual complaints filed with the Workplace Relations Commission has not risen significantly in recent years, the number of complaint applications has increased. This trend suggests that claimants are increasingly submitting multiple claims simultaneously to test which may succeed. As each side generally bears its own expenses and the costs are not typically awarded to the prevailing party before the Commission, the cost structure may encourage such an approach.

The new government of South Korea has pledged to change the structure and power of the prosecution service and judiciary. The effects of such changes are hard to predict.

## OUTLOOK

As termination remains the leading cause of human resources-related litigation, future cases may arise during technology-driven restructurings, particularly concerning whether employers have taken sufficient steps to inform and prepare employees or their representatives before implementing terminations. The CJEU requires such information to be supplied at earlier stages.

## 4. Conclusion and outlook

The global workplace is evolving, yet certain key issues are consistently highlighted each year, and some topics are growing in significance. This underscores an outlook in which emerging and intensifying challenges are expected to play an increasingly important role.

Among the most pressing issues are the growing influence of AI, which raises questions around data protection, performance monitoring, workforce displacement, the rapid adoption of flexible and remote work models, and ongoing shortages of skilled workers. A common expectation among country contributors is that, over the next couple of years, the digitalisation and use of AI will become a central challenge in human resources law and practice. Countries including Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Chile, Denmark, France, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the UK are all grappling with the implications. Specific concerns include the fear of job losses or termination due to AI, and raising legal questions about whether companies have provided adequate employee training before termination due to AI taking over certain tasks: this is especially exemplified by Denmark. HR professionals will have to deal with the balance of leveraging technology with maintaining human-centred practices.

A second major trend is demographic shifts combined with persistent skill shortages and a lack of qualified labour. This oftentimes goes along with organisations moving away from traditional job titles and educational credentials towards a 'skills-first' mindset, focusing on the actual capabilities and competencies of their workforce.

Finally, there is a continuing and growing focus on employee wellbeing and flexible work models. This focus drives new legal requirements and risks, including new or updated legislation around the right to disconnect and pay. Related regulatory changes in pay equity and transparency aim to ensure fair compensation, which is a key component of employee wellbeing and retention.

Flexible work arrangements are increasingly gaining importance, as they appeal to a growing number of employees. Countries such as Australia, Brazil, Canada, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, Hungary, India, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Romania, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey and the UK place a growing emphasis on hybrid and other flexible work models. With the rise of remote work and flexible work models, there comes the challenge of managing employee wellbeing and mental health more effectively. The pandemic's lingering effects, combined with increased workloads and the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life, have placed immense strain on employees. This issue is expected to deepen as remote and hybrid arrangements continue to dominate the workplace. However, many country contributors point out that employers are increasingly trying to call their employees back to the office with RTO rosters varying between three to five office days per week. At the same time, developing more robust support systems and fostering a workplace that prioritises mental health without stigma is mentioned as an essential task for HR. Creating spaces where employees feel safe to express their struggles and access help will be critical in maintaining a healthy and productive workforce.

The general modernisation of labour legislation is another priority. Many countries want to update their regulatory framework to accommodate new forms of work beyond established remote work and hybrid models. These challenges will require employers to adopt more strategic workforce planning and invest heavily in upskilling and reskilling initiatives. Companies will need to explore alternative talent pools, including older workers, underrepresented groups and remote international talent, to fill these gaps. Additionally, creating more attractive work environments and flexible policies will become crucial in retaining and engaging scarce talent in these competitive markets. Without proactive measures, these demographic and workforce shortages risk undermining organisational growth and economic stability in the affected regions.

Within the EU, the upcoming implementation of the Pay Transparency Directive in 2026 will coincide with the need to manage hybrid and remote work structures, respond to workforce pressures including mental health needs, address skills shortages and navigate talent migration. Finally, climate change is emerging as a workplace-related challenge, with Chile, France and New Zealand among the countries addressing its implications for labour law and practice.

Other issues to monitor relate to flexible employment relationships and contractual frameworks, including freelancer rights and self-employment. Such emerging concerns are especially prominent in Ecuador, Finland, Israel and Nigeria, with self-employment also notable in the Netherlands and Russia.

Diversity, equity and inclusion policies are receiving increasing attention worldwide, as the importance of fostering a more equitable and representative workplace that values different perspectives, promotes fairness, and supports the development and retention of diverse talents is recognised.

## **5. About the IBA GEI**

The International Bar Association Global Employment Institute was established in 2010. Its primary purpose is to develop a global and strategic approach to the main issues in the human resources and human capital fields for multinational groups and global institutions.

The Executive Council Officers of the IBA GEI are:

- Co-Chair: Oscar De La Vega Gómez
- Co-Chair: Regina Glaser
- Senior Vice Chair: Ignacio Funes de Rioja
- Vice-Chair: Jelle Kroes
- Vice-Chair for Multinationals: Ronnie Neville
- Vice-Chair for Knowledge Management: Philip Berkowitz
- Vice-Chair for Website and Publications: Valeria Morosini

- Vice-Chair of Membership: Marianne Granhøj
- Vice-Chair for Diversity and Inclusion: Anne Frances O'Donoghue
- Vice-Chair for Communications: Peter Talibart
- Vice-Chair for Internal Affairs: Karl Waheed
- Secretary: Caroline Andre-Hesse
- Treasurer: Ueli Sommer

## **Schedule 1: Countries and lawyers**

### **Argentina**

Juan Javier Negri (Negri & Pueyrredon) – Employment and immigration law

### **Australia**

Adrian Morris and Gabriella Lubrano (Ashurst) – Employment and immigration law

### **Belgium**

Chris Van Olmen (Van Olmen & Wynant) – Employment and immigration law

### **Brazil**

Patricia Barboza and Maury Lobo (CGM Advogados) – Employment and immigration law

### **Bulgaria**

Youliana Naoumova and Yoanna Pantaleeva (Djingov, Gouginski, Kyutchukov & Velichkov) – Employment and immigration law

### **Canada**

Charif El-Khoury (Stikeman Elliott) – Employment and immigration law

### **Chile**

Ignacio García and Camila Quiroz (Porzio Ríos García Abogados) – Employment and immigration law

Fernanda Bravo (Porzio Ríos García Abogados, transitioned to SOFOFA as of September 2025) – Employment and immigration law

### **Colombia**

Lorena Arámbula and Angela Cubides (Dentons Cárdenas & Cárdenas) – Employment and immigration law

### **Czech Republic**

Andrea Krásná and Pavla Karásková (Baroch Sobota) – Employment and immigration law

### **Denmark**

Anders Etgen Reitz and Kirsten Astrup (IUNO) – Employment and immigration law

### **Ecuador**

José Xavier Endara Madera and Juan Pablo Coronel Barrera (Lexvalor Abogados) – Employment and immigration law

## **Finland**

Jani Syrjänen (Borenius) – Employment and immigration law

## **France**

Karine Audouze (Watson Farley & Williams) – Employment and immigration law

## **Germany**

Björn Otto (CMS Germany) – Employment and immigration law

## **Hungary**

Zoltán Balázs Kovács and Martina Pataki (Szecskay Attorneys at Law) – Employment and immigration law

## **India**

Vikram Shroff (AZB & Partners) – Employment and immigration law

## **Ireland**

Ronnie Neville (Mason Hayes & Curran) – Employment and immigration law

## **Indonesia**

Abadi Tisnadisastra, Robbie Julius and Muhammad Ghiffari (ATD Law in Association with Mori Hamada & Matsumoto) – Employment and immigration law

## **Israel**

Tsvi Kan-Tor and Daniel Aspiro (Kan-Tor & Acco) – Employment and immigration law

## **Italy**

Patrizio Bernardo, Claudia Schmiedt and Sara Salmeri (ADVANT Nctm) – Employment and immigration law

Marco Mazzeschi (Mazzeschi Srl) – Immigration law

## **Japan**

Masako Banno (Okuno & Partners) – Employment and immigration law

## **Latvia**

Sintija Radionova (WALLESS) – Employment and immigration law

## **Lithuania**

Robert Juodka and Jaroslav Pavlovski (Noewe) – Employment and immigration law

## **Luxembourg**

Anne Morel, Alexandra Simon and Pauline Wirtzler (BSP) – Employment and immigration law

## **Malaysia**

Vijayan Venugopal (Shearn Delamore & Co) – Employment and immigration law

## **Mexico**

Francisco J Peniche Beguerisse and Julio Rodrigo Alvarez Ortega (Creel, García-Cuéllar, Aiza y Enríquez) – Employment and immigration law

## **Myanmar**

Kyaw Min Tun and Nwe Oo (Tilleke & Gibbins) – Employment and immigration law

## **Netherlands**

Eva Boertien, Cara Pronk and Lotte van Kessel (Van Doorne) – Employment and immigration law

## **New Zealand**

John Rooney (Simpson Grierson) – Employment and immigration law

## **Nigeria**

Kunle Obebe (Bloomfield) – Employment and immigration law

## **Poland**

Tomasz Rogala (PCS Paruch Chruściel Schiffter Stępień Kanclerz; transitioned to Fragomen as of June 2025) – Employment and immigration law

Aleksander Dżuryło (PCS Paruch Chruściel Schiffter Stępień Kanclerz; transitioned to Wardyński & Partners as of September 2025) – Employment and immigration law

Piotr Kozłowski (PCS Paruch Chruściel Schiffter Stępień Kanclerz) – Employment and immigration law

## **Portugal**

Sofia Costa Lobo (CMS – Rui Pena & Arnaut) – Employment and immigration law

## **Romania**

Adelina Iftime-Blagean (Wolf Theiss) – Employment and immigration law

## **Russia**

Irina Anyukhina (ALRUD; until June 2025) – Employment and immigration law

Olga Pimanova (ALRUD) – Employment and immigration law

## **Serbia**

Milena Jakšić Papac (Karanovic & Partners) – Employment and immigration law

## **Singapore**

Jenny Tsin and Michelle Thio (WongPartnership) – Employment and immigration law

## **South Africa**

Irvin Lawrence and Kara Barnard (ENSafrica) – Employment and immigration law

## **South Korea**

Christopher Mandel, Soojung Lee, Tae Eun Lee, Ja Hyeong Ku, Yeon Chang Song, Dong Hyun Kim (Yulchon) – Employment law

## **Spain**

Ruben Agote Eguizábal (Cuatrecasas) – Employment and immigration law

## **Sweden**

Jonas Lindblad (Nordia Law) – Employment and immigration law

## **Switzerland**

Irène Suter-Sieber and Gustaf Heintz (Walder Wyss) – Employment and immigration law

## **Taiwan**

Christine Chen (Winkler Partners) – Employment and immigration law

## **Thailand**

Pimvimol (June) Vipamaneerut and Joel Akins (Tilleke & Gibbins) – Employment and immigration law

## **Turkey**

Emre Atayılmaz, Kardelen Akça and Özgür Boran Özdel (AECO Law) – Employment and immigration law

Arda Cem Karabulut (AECO Law; transitioned to Legal Counsel at Migros Ticaret as of July 2025) – Employment and immigration law

## **United Arab Emirates**

Rebecca Ford (Morgan, Lewis & Bockius) – Employment and immigration law

## **United Kingdom**

Paul McGrath (McDermott Will & Schulte; transitioned to Addleshaw Goddard as of May 2025) – Employment and immigration law

Daisy Daynes and Nadia Ahmad (McDermott Will & Schulte) – Employment and immigration law

## **United States**

Abigail Kagan and Jake Dietz (McDermott Will & Schulte) – Employment and immigration law

## **Ukraine**

Oksana Voynarovska, Valeriya Bezpala and Anna Odynokova (Vasil Kisil and Partners) – Employment and immigration law

Evelina Rozovetska (Vasil Kisil and Partners; transitioned to Legal Counsel at POS Media Ukraine as of May 2025) – Employment and immigration law

## Schedule 2: Questionnaire

### 2025 Annual Global Report Questionnaire

*Please briefly respond to each question. When relevant, please describe both legal rules and employee/employer practices (whether or not legally required).*

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I. Country: \_\_\_\_\_

II. Attorney name(s) and Employer to list in the Annual Global Report: \_\_\_\_\_

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#### I. Immigration and Talent

##### A. Skills Shortage and Changing Skills Requirements

1. Is there a skills shortage in your country? In which industries? What are its causes?
2. How is the government responding to any skill shortage?
3. How are employers responding to any skill shortage (outsourcing, recruiting foreign workers, training, re-hiring retired employees/pensioners etc)?
4. How are the government and employers addressing changes in skills needed in the workplace?
5. Has the global trend towards remote work influenced the skills shortage or the methods of addressing it?

##### B. Foreign Nationals and Business Visitors

1. What changes have there been to your country's laws regarding foreign nationals, including the right to obtain permanent residence and changes in the rights and benefits of their family members?
2. Have there been any policy changes in response to geopolitical events (like the Ukraine war, Israel–Palestine conflict etc) affecting the movement of foreign nationals and business visitors?
3. Have there been any changes in your country regarding short-term assignments for business visitors (eg, limits on length of stay, reporting requirements, specific visa obligations), in particular with regard to current geopolitical events?

C. Refugees

1. Is your country a common destination for foreign populations seeking refugee status? If so, how is your country encouraging the integration of refugees into society and the workforce?
2. Have refugee/migration flows changed due to current geopolitical conflicts (particularly the war in Ukraine and the Israel–Palestine conflict)? If so, in which way?

**II. The Work Environment**

A. Work-Life Balance

1. What changes have there been in your country's laws that are intended to have an impact on flexible working practices, including remote working and flexible hours?
2. Are employers applying flexible working practices to a greater degree?
3. What types of flexible working arrangements are most common in your country?
4. Do you see a shift from remote working/working from home (WFH) as an optional offer to a mandatory requirement (eg, with a view to reduce office space/cost) in your country? Or do you rather experience employers asking employees back to the office/to reduce their WFH home time?
5. Have there been any changes in legal rules or corporate practices regarding the 'right to disconnect' from work (ie, certain hours or days when an employee is not obligated to monitor or respond to work communications)?
6. Has there been an increase in the adoption of four-day work weeks or other innovative work models?
7. Have there been any changes in the rules relating to maternity, paternity or dependents? Are employers receptive to paying enhanced benefits over and above their legal obligations?
8. Is there a trend in your country in which employees are voluntarily resigning from their job ('Great Resignation'/'Big Quit') or are increasingly doing only what is outlined in their job description/needed as a minimum to complete their tasks ('quiet quitting')? If so, what are the reasons?
9. Is there a cost-of-living crisis in your country?

If so, how do employers and/or legislators react to higher prices/costs of living in an employment law context (eg, state-backed subsidies for food/energy in return for no-dismissal commitments, out-of-cycle wage increases)?

If so, how do employees and/or employee representatives react to higher prices/costs of living (eg, moonlighting, increasing levels of industrial action)?

10. Do you think employers will shift their focus from remote work to requesting higher office presence? Do you think employees will appreciate the option/the requirement of spending more time in the office again?

B. Alternative Workforce

1. Have there been any developments relating to the use of temporary workers, including independent contractors, agency workers, the 'gig' economy and crowd-working schemes?
2. Have regulations been enacted to ensure adequate payment, working conditions or social security (insurance) for 'gig' economy workers?

C. Stress and Mental Health

1. How have employers responded to rising mental health concerns among employees?
2. Have there been any legal developments or employer-led changes in response to employee stress and mental health issues, in particular with remote working?

D. Collective Bargaining

1. Have there been any significant strikes or other organised employee/industrial action in the public or private sectors?
2. What legal changes have there been in relation to collective bargaining, freedom of association, strikes or other industrial action?

E. Remuneration

1. Has a statutory minimum wage been introduced or modified in your country? What effects on the labour market can you identify in this context?
2. What has been the impact of inflation and economic shifts on wage adjustments in your country?
3. What changes have there been with regard to gender equality in remuneration, including legislation addressing the gender pay gap and the reporting of gender pay disparities? Are such laws showing effect?
4. What trends can you identify in terms of remuneration models and compensation structure?
5. Since the introduction of post-financial-crisis regulations, have there been legal developments regulating financial institutions and their executives?

6. Have there been changes with respect to executive remuneration (eg, CEO pay ratio)? Are laws on executive remuneration enforced and, if so, how – by the government, or in the courts?

F. Corruption and Whistleblowing

1. Have there been any legal or employer changes to address corruption and bribery in the workplace, including whistleblowing procedures? Have these been effective?
2. How effective are new technologies in monitoring and preventing workplace corruption?

G. Privacy

Have there been any legal or employer changes related to privacy, surveillance, data protection and the use of social media in the workplace?

H. Human Rights

Please describe any developments related to the protection of human rights in the workplace, including legal requirements and employer practices.

I. Discrimination

1. What changes have there been in laws on discrimination in the workplace by reason of gender, sexual orientation, age, race, ethnicity, religious belief or disability?
2. Do employers in your country provide training to their employees about workplace discrimination laws? Do employers generally comply with anti-discrimination laws?

J. Diversity and Inclusion

1. Have there been any developments in law or employer practices relating to the imposition of government quotas or targets for gender parity, including board membership, or employment of individuals with disabilities?
2. To what extent do employers in your country make accommodations for religious practices or beliefs?
3. Have there been any other changes in law or corporate practices designed to increase diversity in the workplace?

K. Sexual Harassment

Have there been any changes in laws or employer practices regarding sexual harassment in the workplace?

L. Sustainability/Ethical Business

Have there been any changes in laws or employer practices regarding sustainability/ethical business/green behaviour in the workplace (eg, anti-modern slavery regulation, corporate social responsibility initiatives)?

M. Technology/Artificial Intelligence

1. Has there been an increase in employer reliance on artificial intelligence/workforce analytics software in your country?
2. Have artificial intelligence tools resulted in a loss of jobs or in the creation of new jobs in your country? If so, in which areas/industries?
3. Have there been any laws adopted in your country related to the use of artificial intelligence?
4. Have ethical considerations surrounding artificial intelligence in the workplace been of importance in your country?
5. Who is responsible (state/government, employee, employer) for ensuring that employees obtain the skills required in an increasingly digitalised economy? Are there specific programmes of government bodies/authorities providing training/support in this respect?
6. Have you noticed any effects of digitalisation/technical systems on employee representation?
7. How do you think the digital transformation will shape the future of HR?

**III. Separation from Service**

A. Termination

1. What changes have there been that affect the ability of employers to dismiss employees? Do employers in your country generally observe these procedures?
2. Are there other trends or specific models besides termination to reduce headcount/workforce related costs in your country?
3. Have there been any significant changes in relation to enforcement of restrictive covenants and obligations of confidentiality?

B. Retirement

1. Have there been any legal or employer changes related to early retirement, including the ability to impose early retirement?

2. How have changing demographics impacted retirement policies in your country?
3. Have there been government or employer efforts to incentivise employees to work longer due to longer life expectancies, financial need, lack of qualified workers, or other demographic or corporate needs?
4. Are limited public pension funds a concern, and how are the government and employers addressing this issue?
5. Have there been any developments regarding private (company-sponsored) pension schemes?

C. Employment Disputes

1. Have there been any changes in the way employment cases before the courts and tribunals are reported, including the power to restrict reporting at the request of the parties?
2. Are employment disputes resolved more often in court or via arbitration proceedings?
3. Is it legal and common to have employment court hearings held by video rather than on site in your country? Have there been (temporary or permanent) changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic in this respect?

**IV. Impact of Recent Political and World Events**

1. What global human resources issues have arisen, or do you expect to arise, with respect to the war in Ukraine or the Israel–Palestine conflict?
2. What global human resources issues have arisen, or do you expect to arise, with respect to current trade conflicts (eg, US–China; US–EU) and the resulting impact on the economy/labour markets?
3. Have you seen any changes in the workplace as a result of increased isolationism/nationalism?
4. Have there been notable human resources issues or regulatory developments in relation to other political developments (on a global and/or regional scale)?
5. Have you noticed any effects of climate change/climate change-related regulations on the labour market in your country?

**V. Summing Up Current and Future Trends**

1. What do you consider to be the top three challenges in the area of human resources law and practice in your country right now? Is your government considering or implementing any solutions?

2. Which human resources issues in your country generate the most litigation?
3. Which challenges in the area of human resources law and practice do you expect to become more important over the next five to ten years?



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