

Call for Papers

AIPRIL/CHANGE Workshop

"Changing work, changing incomes: assessing the vulnerability of non-standard workers and self-employed"

University of Antwerp, Antwerp, Belgium, 27-28 January 2026

Topic

This workshop analyzes how changing work forms and conditions impact on earnings and income patterns, and what this means for the effectiveness of contemporary social protection systems.

We aim to assess vulnerability among the active population at large, yet with a specific and explicit focus on the broad group of non-standard workers: self-employed; atypical employees such as parttime, fixed term or agency workers; those combining different jobs, or employment with a self-employed activity; and those in new work forms such as on-demand work that hover on the edge between employment and self-employment. We ask how the increasing relevance in legal non-standard work forms impacts on concrete living conditions, and how it can and should be accommodated by a recalibration of social protection. We aim for a deeper understanding of the association between background characteristics known to be related to inadequate social protection coverage (including ethnicity, education, family type, gender, and disability).

We encourage different disciplinary perspectives and methods to improve our understanding of the living standards and financial vulnerability of non-standard workers. These include, but are not limited to, legal assessments of the social protection of non-standard workers, empirical analyses, building on survey and register data, to assess the living situation and poverty risks of non-standard workers, and more conceptual papers that explore the contemporary meaning of work, income and vulnerability. We welcome both country studies and cross-national comparisons.

Specifically, we aim to take stock of where we stand in the field of vulnerability among the broad group of non-standard workers. These are some issues that we propose to focus on:

- Work and income instability among workers
- Social security law challenges associated with new work forms
- Characteristics of those in, and the vulnerabilities associated with, new types of work
- Conceptual and empirical challenges in assessing incomes and living standards of self-employed and non-standard workers
- Welfare state eligibility, responsiveness and adequacy in the face of non-standard work patterns

The workshop is organized in the framework of the Belgian Federal Public Planning Service Science Policy Belspo-funded [CHANGE project](#), with promoters Sarah Marchal, Daniel Dumont, Wim Van Lancker and Ive Marx, in partnership with the University of Antwerp's [AIPRIL](#) network.

The workshop is intended to connect scholars working on the above topics, including advanced doctoral students and early career scholars. We aim for a lively workshop, organized around the different contributed paper presentations with ample scope for discussion and feedback from fellow experts. We are open to a wide range of papers related to assessing the vulnerability, income and welfare state protection of non-standard workers. We particularly welcome contributions drawing on rigorous qualitative and/or quantitative evidence or legal analysis. We do not require finalized papers, but a first draft is essential for a substantive and fruitful discussion.

Please send an abstract of up to 500 words by October, 25th 2025 to esmee.vanpoucke@uantwerpen.be, mentioning 'AIPRIL/CHANGE Workshop' as the subject. We will respond by November, 5th 2025.

Please note that two lunches and one dinner will be provided to presenters, but travel and accommodation are at your own expense.

Provisional schedule

| | Tuesday January 27th, 2026 | Wednesday January 28th, 2026 |
|-------|---|--|
| 9:00 | Welcome – CHANGE team | Keynote 2: Wieteke Conen |
| 9:30 | Keynote: Stephen Jenkins - Earnings volatility | Session 4 |
| 10:00 | and the design of social assistance | |
| 10:30 | <i>Break</i> | |
| 11:00 | Session 1 | |
| 11:30 | | |
| 12:00 | | Wrap-up and discussion |
| 12:30 | | <i>Lunch</i> |
| 13:00 | <i>Lunch</i> | |
| 13:30 | | |
| 14:00 | Session 2 | |
| 14:30 | | |
| 15:00 | | |
| 15:30 | | |
| 16:00 | <i>Break</i> | |
| 16:30 | Session 3 | |
| 17:00 | | |
| 17:30 | | |
| 18:00 | | |
| 18:30 | | |
| 19:00 | <i>Dinner</i> | |
| 19:30 | | |
| 20:00 | | |