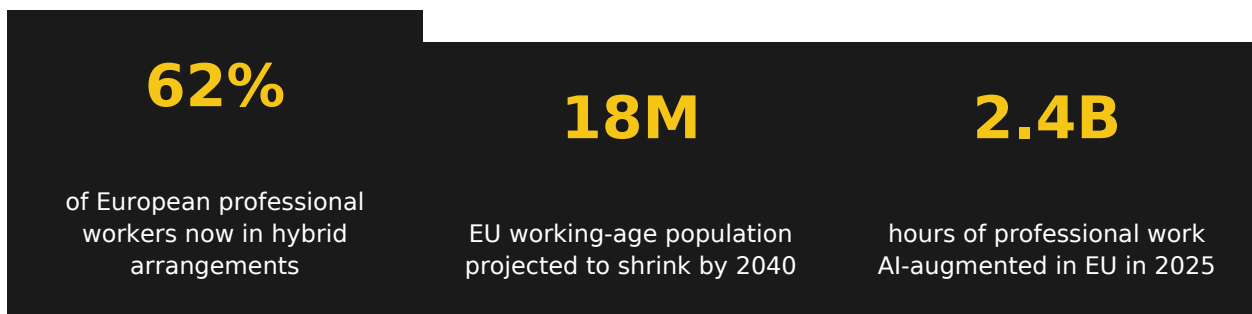


HR RESEARCH SERIES 2026 - REPORT 7 OF 10

Future of Work 2026–2030

European workforce trends: AI automation, hybrid work, demographic decline and the new talent economy.

The way Europeans work is changing faster than at any point in the post-war era. AI automation, demographic transition, hybrid work normalisation and generational value shifts are creating a labour market that will look fundamentally different by 2030.



Published: May 2026 - tenperzent.com - Report 7 of 10

This report synthesises the latest research on five major work transition trends and provides scenario analysis for HR leaders planning their talent strategies through 2030.

The five forces reshaping work

- **AI-augmented work** — 40–50% of knowledge worker tasks AI-augmentable by 2030. Net employment effect contested, but task-mix change is certain.
- **Demographic decline** — EU27 working-age population peaked in 2020; persistent labour scarcity in skilled roles.
- **Location independence** — 62% hybrid, 23% fully remote, only 15% full-time office. Employee-controlled flexibility now the default.
- **Generational values shift** — workforce spans four generations with significantly different expectations.
- **Work-life integration** — burnout up 34% since 2020; genuine flexibility outperforms remote-permission alone for retention.

Remote, hybrid and in-office — the data

Country	Full remote	Hybrid	Full office
Netherlands	28%	59%	13%
Sweden	31%	52%	17%
Denmark	29%	55%	16%
UK	24%	57%	19%
Germany	19%	54%	27%
France	18%	51%	31%
Spain	16%	44%	40%
Italy	14%	42%	44%
EU average	23%	54%	23%

AI automation — which jobs, what timeline

The question is not 'will AI take jobs' — it will take some tasks from some jobs. Susceptibility ranges from 60–75% for routine data entry and basic content generation (already automating, 2024–2027), to 5–15% for care and interpersonal services (2030+). Strategic decision-making, complex sales and original creative work remain 5–20% susceptible at most.

The generational workforce shift

- **Boomers (~18% of EU workforce)** — retiring at 2.1M/year; knowledge transfer critical.
- **Gen X (~28%)** — peak career stage; values stability and expertise recognition.
- **Millennials (~32%)** — largest segment; purpose-driven; most mobile between employers.
- **Gen Z (~22%, growing fastest)** — digital natives; AI-native; values authenticity, psychological safety, modern tooling.

New work models — liquid talent and platform work

- **Freelance / independent:** 22% of EU workforce, +34% since 2020.
- **Platform work (gig):** 8% of EU workforce, +67% since 2020. Algorithmic management creating regulatory risk.
- **Portfolio careers:** 11% of EU workforce, +48%. ATS must handle non-linear CVs.
- **Internal talent marketplace:** 18% of large EU companies, +125%.
- **Talent pools / alumni:** 34% of Fortune 500, +89%. Rehiring at 40% of new-hire cost.

The four-day work week — evidence update

- UK 4DWW pilot (61 companies): 92% maintained or improved productivity, 71% adopted permanently, sick days fell 65%.
- Microsoft Japan: 40% productivity increase from genuine process redesign.
- Critical nuance: benefits are largest with genuine process redesign, not compressed hours.
- 78% of European job seekers say 4DWW would make a job offer significantly more attractive — now top-3 benefit.

HR's role in the future organisation

The HR professional of 2030 will look significantly different — more analytical, more technology-fluent, more strategically central. The function shifts from compliance and administration to organisational capability building, with AI-fluent specialists, integrated AI-native people platforms, and analytics capability central to every decision.

Built for what's next.

tenperzent.com is the AI-native ATS designed for European hiring in 2026 - GDPR by default, EU AI Act compliant, free to start, €79/month to scale.

Start free at tenperzent.com