

## The European Employment Strategy: Which Way Forward?

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*Saskia Klosse*

**Abstract:** In view of recent evaluations of the European Employment Strategy (EES), the European Employment Taskforce urged the Member States to step up their efforts to implement the Lisbon objectives. In the absence of decisive action, it looks increasingly unlikely that these objectives will be achieved by 2010. In the opinion of the Taskforce, the EES is approaching ‘the moment of truth’, making the question of how to proceed even more pressing. Actors at European level tend to seek a solution in a combination of merely procedural reforms and a more comprehensive and intensified involvement of the relevant actors at the relevant levels. However, in the light of past experience, it is questionable to what extent this approach will lead to better results. This paper aims to provide an answer to the question of whether the proposed changes properly address the existing imbalance between the economic and social objectives of the EES, and to consider whether the EES needs another approach. A critical review is presented of the instruments and implementation methods of the EES for the purposes of a more effective delivery of the Lisbon objectives.

## Tripartism and Other Actors in Social Dialogue

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*Tayo Fashoyin*

**Abstract:** This paper argues that tripartism has contributed enormously to the shaping of the world of work. The weakened role of the trade unions and employers’ associations, coupled with complex economic and social developments affecting the world of work, particularly at the national level, have intensified the involvement of other actors, notably civil society and non-governmental organizations in the social and economic policy issues that are important to labour market institutions. It is argued that these other actors do not necessarily threaten the tripartite tradition; rather, they strengthen the voice and influence of unions and employers’ organizations in policy formulation and implementation. Bearing this in mind, the paper proposes a model of social dialogue that accommodates the growing diversity of interests represented by the other actors but within the tripartite framework. Finally, the paper advocates intensified membership recruitment and also the forging of alliances with others.

## Current Structural Changes: Risks and Opportunities for German Trade Unions

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*Lothar Funk*

**Abstract:** German trade unions that are affiliated to the German Trade Union Federation (DGB) have continually been losing members. The erosion of trade-union density is often attributed to ‘mega-trends’ in the economy. These mega-trends include globalization, the shift towards a service-sector economy, the increasing use of new information and communication technologies in the world of work, the ‘individualization’ of life styles, the increase in ‘non-standard’ forms of

employment, and the ageing of population and workforce alike. An international comparison shows, however, that an ever decreasing membership is not an ineluctable fate that awaits unions. In order to get to grips with the mega-trends, an innovative strategy that mixes a more service-oriented approach for their members and a less confrontational course in politics could lead to new recruitment successes for unions.

## Pre-emptive Lay-offs: A Form of Outsourcing within Singapore

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*Rosalind Chew, Chew Soon-Beng*

**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to submit that pre-emptive lay-offs in Singapore are a form of outsourcing, by moving from the employment of workers on regular contracts to employment on part-time contracts. Accordingly, this paper provides a review of the extent and effectiveness with which the government has altered the wage system in Singapore, from the adoption of the informal wage restraint policy to the use of wage guidelines, from the seniority-based to the flexible wage system, from the annual bonus system to the monthly variable component system and from the elimination of the flat-wage system to the revival of the same flat wage system. Retrenchment and pre-emptive lay-offs will be examined at both the macro and micro levels.

## Remedying the Past or Reshaping the Future? Justifying Race-based Affirmative Action in South Africa and the United States

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*Ockert Dupper*

**Abstract:** This paper examines race-based affirmative action in South Africa and the United States, and, more specifically, how to justify it. The author argues that the manner in which affirmative action is justified is crucial to the mounting of a successful defence of the policy. In the first part of the article, affirmative action as a form of compensation for past discrimination is considered. To the extent that the argument for affirmative action is a compensatory one, it necessarily involves reference to unjust actions in the past, and is thus essentially backward-looking. This justification, the author points out, raises a number of common (and often fatal) objections. However, affirmative action can also be justified in a more forward-looking manner in which less emphasis is placed on the injustices of the past and more attention is given to a vision of the society we would ultimately like to attain, in which people are treated as civic equals, and this in part by means of affirmative action measures. In the second part of the article, the author argues that the forward-looking justification offers better arguments to the defender of affirmative action than does the focus on compensation for past injustices. Although the details of this forward-looking justification vary, its fundamental thrust is twofold: first, that affirmative action is a way of overcoming prejudice by changing widely held attitudes towards members of disadvantaged groups (referred to as the attitude-changing argument) and second, that affirmative action is a necessary tool for integrating disadvantaged groups into a democratic society, thereby breaking what would otherwise be an endless cycle of poverty, subservience and social inequality (referred to as the integration argument).

# Foreign Workers in Israel: a Temporary Phenomenon or a Reality in the Labour Market?

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*Shelley Wallach*

**Abstract:** The purpose of this report is to examine the role of foreign workers in Israel, the reasons for the steady increase in their number, and an outline of their legal and to some extent social status. An analysis is provided of the problematic nature of the standard employment contract applying to foreign workers, that binds them to a specific employer, with far-reaching implications for the workers, employers and the labour market in general. The article concludes with a discussion of possible solutions.