



## **SHAPING THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF GLOBALISATION? AN ANALYSIS OF THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE EU AND THE ILO**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper explores the roles played by the EU and the ILO in forging a strategic partnership to advance the social dimension of globalisation. The EU and the ILO have worked in close co-operation from the formation of the Community with both actors benefiting from the cross-fertilisation of policies and methods for the adoption, observance and enforcement of transnational labour standards and, latterly, the promotion of fundamental social rights.

The paper will examine the fruits of this process of cross-fertilisation and move on to consider the reasons why there was a step-change in the relationship with the emergence of new strategies to govern the process of globalisation. The formation of a strategic partnership between the EU and the ILO – cemented by an inter-institutional agreement in 2004 – was a necessity not only as a defensive collaboration to prevent the retrogression of transnational labour standards, but also as a positive engagement to promote an alternative approach to neoliberal policies of deregulation and privatisation that have tended to dominate the discourse of globalisation at least until the complacent assumptions that underlie these policies were shaken following the GFC of 2008.

In its central part the paper will explore how the ILO's twin agenda for the promotion of its Core Labour Standards (CLS) and Decent Work Agenda(DWA) has intermeshed with the EU's approach to promoting labour rights and social dialogue with reference both to ILO standards and the European social model. Examples of collaborative action include the EU's GSP+ special incentive arrangements and Economic Partnership Agreements with regional ACP groupings.

In the final part of the paper consideration will be given to the further evolution of the EU/ILO relationship as a force for the advancement of the social dimension of

globalisation. How far is it possible, or desirable, for the EU to 'shape' globalisation by protecting its social model internally and promoting ILO standards externally?