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## **Trade Unions in Poland: Between Stagnation and Innovation\*\***

Since the beginning of the transformation in Poland, trade unions have experienced nearly two decades of declining membership numbers and influence. This article shows that not only the restructuring of the economy but also the trade union policies and organizational forms themselves contributed to the decline. The absence of strong industry-level organizations, the neglect of membership recruitment due to the engagement in party politics, and the abandonment of co-determination rights at the workplace level in the 1990s made the adaptation to new conditions more difficult. During the last years, however, several innovations started to change the industrial relations in Poland: organizing activities, experiments with organizational structures above the workplace level, and the introduction of works councils. With the background of the coming generational change in which older unionists are passing on the leadership to younger activists, these steps towards reform could be a starting point for greater changes.

Key words: **trade unions, industrial relations, organizing, works councils, Poland** (JEL: J51, J53, J83)

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