

Call for contributors & participants

Workshop *'Trade unions, democracy and political power in France, the UK and Europe'*

Co-hosted by the Maison Française d'Oxford, and the European Studies Centre, University of Oxford, and supported by the Europaem Network

Date & venue: 30th May, Maison Française d'Oxford, 2-10 Norham Rd, Oxford, OX2 6SE, UK (tbc)

We are seeking papers and contributions on the nature of **trade unionism, industrial democracy and trade union power** in the UK, France and elsewhere in Europe. Special interest will be shown for papers relating to trade unionism in France, President Emmanuel Macron's ongoing and proposed labour reforms, and the rise of the '*gilets jaunes*' (yellow vest) movement since November 2018.

Trade Unions in Europe today

Labour unions in Europe face a range of cross-cutting challenges. including the near universal decline in membership, the collapse of traditionally highly unionised blue-collar industries, and the changes that have been wrought by the 4th industrial revolution. On top of this, since the 1980s, established linkages between unions and especially social democratic parties have almost universally weakened, further depriving unions and workers of a traditionally key source of power and influence.

With this, the late-twentieth century has seen the virtual disappearance of the distinctive social formation termed 'working class' which formed the backbone of European trade unionism for the past century, and the growth of atypical, precarious and temporary forms of employment. This environment makes any collectivist vision of society, and the notion of solidarity upon which trade unionism is based, difficult to sustain.

Thus, this workshop invites papers and contributions that explore factors including (but not limited to):

- the nature of **trade union power** in Europe today
- the contribution of trade unions to government **reform agendas** through neo-corporatist arrangements and other forms of governance
- **relations and alliances** between trade unions and political parties and other civil society actors
- the regulation of **new forms of employment**, including precarious employment
- the emergence of **new forms of collective action and organisation** among workers, including via the use of digital technologies
- the coordination of **transnational activities** among workers
- campaigns and initiatives directed at **consumers**, new forms of **training and research activities**, **social movement unionism**, or other forms of collective action involving workers

The one-day workshop will run from **10.30am on 30 May** and will be arranged around three panels with up to four speakers and a discussant, and a dinner and roundtable discussion on the future of workplace democracy in Europe. There will be the opportunity for participants to contribute to an **edited volume** based on the subject and output of the conference.

To express interest, please send a **300 word abstract** and any queries to barry.colfer@sant.ox.ac.uk by **5pm (GMT) on Thursday 14th April**.

Students currently enrolled on a graduate course (master, PhD) at a Europaem member university can apply for this event. Please cc euroinfo@europaem.ox.ac.uk into your application email.