

# Abstracts

*Gijs van Houten en René Torenvlied*  
Effects of 'soft' governance in  
labor policy making

This article discusses the evaluation of the effects of broad, strategic plans and general policy recommendations. A short introduction is provided into the question of the determination and effects of policy recommendations from the Dutch Labor Council. These central policy recommendations are expected to have effects on collective bargaining agreements in industries and enterprises. Different approaches for the measurement of effects of policy recommendations are shortly discussed, as well as possible explanations for these effects.

*Maurice Rojer en Laurens Harteveld*  
Recommendations on wage moderation:  
effects of active wage coordination  
by trade union confederation organization  
FNV since 1994

This article discusses the effects of the more or less equivocal central policy recommendations by the Dutch Labor Foundation on wage moderation. The role of active wage coordination by the largest trade union peak organization (FNV) in The Netherlands since 1993 is being considered as an explanation for this effect. The wage coordination takes the form of a prescribed maximum wage demand for all its member trade unions. The maximum wage demand is the explicit translation of the policy recommendation. For the period between 1994–2002, an analysis is made of the difference between the prescribed maximum wage demand and the average wages agreed upon in collective bargaining. It appears that the trend in average wages in collective bargaining agreements follows the trend of prescribed maximum wage demands. Consequently, the data show an effect of the policy recommendation on wage modera-

tion in industries and enterprises. Moreover, the 'total' wages agreed upon in collective bargaining agreements at some moments in time and in some industries and sectors exceed the prescribed wage demands. This appears to provide a 'safety valve' to the system of wage determination – crucial if collective bargaining takes place under conditions for large wage increases.

*Marte van Santen*

**The widespread effects of the central agreement 'Agenda 2002' in policy documents and collective bargaining agreements in 1998 and 1999**

This article reports on an empirical study into the effects of policy recommendations in the central agreement 'Agenda 2002' from the Dutch Labor Council. The effects of the policy recommendations are measured by means of a content analysis of documents, written at different levels of bargaining: policy documents of peak organizations of trade unions and employers, and the agenda's and agreements of collective bargaining in industries and enterprises. Several different factors explain the effects the policy recommendations under study. The effect of central policy recommendations: (a) vary across different fields of interest or 'themes'; (b) generally, but not always, decrease at more decentralized levels of bargaining; (c) is larger for trade unions than for employer organizations. It appears that 30 per cent of the central policy recommendations from Agenda 2002 reappear in collective bargaining agreements. An important empirical observation is that the impact of the agreement increases in time. For this reason, policy makers need to be aware that it may take some time before recommendations crystallize into collective bargaining agreements.

*René Torenvlied en Agnes Akkerman*

**The in-depth effects of the central agreement 'Agenda 2002' in the agenda and negotiations of the metal-industry collective bargaining agreement in 1998**

This article presents an explanatory theory about the impact of equivocal central agreements between peak organizations of employers and trade unions in the Dutch Labor Council. It provides an illustration based upon the central agreement 'Agenda 2002' and the collective bargaining in the Dutch metal industry in 1998. Theoretically, an association is expected between the level of acceptance of a policy recommendation in the Labor Council, and its appearance on the agenda of collective bargaining in industries and enterprises. The empirical study of collective bargaining in the Dutch metal industry clearly demonstrates this association: recommendations with a low level of acceptance in the Labor Council do not, or barely, appear on the agenda of collective bargaining in the metal industry. Additionally, it is shown how recommendations, which appear on the agenda of collective bargaining, can disappear in bargaining exchanges between trade unions and the employer. The conclusion is that variation between central policy recommendations in their impact on decentralized collective bargaining can be explained from the interplay between characteristics of negotiations in the Labor Foundation and agenda-setting in collective bargaining. Even central policy recommendations can disappear during collective bargaining, they constitute more than a 'paper consensus'.