Employee participation in a voluntarist and non-adversarial context: The Swiss experience

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Employee participation rights in Switzerland are codified legally only to a minor extent. However there is a long tradition of works councils at establishment and company level in several branches of manufacturing industry and the service sector, enjoying information and consultation, and sometimes also co-determination rights. These rights are based on sectoral or firm-level collective agreements and internal company regulations as much as on legal provisions. The generally cooperative climate between employers and employees and trade unions provides opportunities for a wide range of forms and practices of employee participation through works councils at firm level. This paper will give

1an overview about participation rights in different branches and companies, based on the analysis of collective agreements and internal employee participation regulations

2present findings from cases studies undertaken in ten companies, with a special focus on the benefit management may take from participation through a works council