Sven Jochem
**Scandinavian employment policy – strengths and weaknesses in an international comparison**
This contribution analyses Nordic employment policies in a comparative perspective. Starting with a survey of the Nordic employment model, it is argued that Nordic employment policies have lost some of their distinctive features. Economic and wage policies have followed more or less the European mainstream in recent years. Nevertheless, there are some Nordic characteristics. An impressive feature of the Nordic countries is their mix of active labour market and targeted economic policies. The strength of the Nordic employment model is the encompassing integration of the population into the labour market as well as the active governance of specific employment policies. The weakness of the Nordic model turns out to be high costs of employment policies which cause high tax pressures. There are considerable obstacles to be overcome if adapting German employment policies towards the Nordic model, especially in the face of different political and cultural traditions as well as the weak, delegating and inactive German state.

Jon Erik Dølvik
**The north European pattern of labour market adjustment**
This article provides an overview of the negotiated Nordic labour market regimes and their various paths of adjustment from ‘bust to boom’ in recent decades. Developed in small, open economies, the Nordic labour regimes are often associated with strong centralised agreements and associations, high union density, and extensive worker representation, which have been embedded in social models based on close interaction between working life policies, the welfare state and macro-economic policies. In leaner forms these features have undoubtedly contributed to the high Nordic levels of mobility, equality and employment in recent years (‘flexicurity’), but an often overlooked part of the story is the increased scope for product market competition and the supply-side reforms undertaken in the Nordic countries since the crises in the 1980-90s. Another distinction of the revitalised Nordic models is the growing importance of management-union negotiations and dialogue at the company level.

Mikkel Mailand
**Perspectives of Scandinavian corporatism – Denmark and Norway in comparison**
The scientific literature on corporatism tends to bypass most Scandinavian countries and ignore state–social partner relations not related to wage bargaining and income policy. This contribution attempts to overcome both these shortcomings. It concludes that corporatism is alive in Denmark and Norway. The social partners have, as a general rule, been involved in formulating and implementing changes in welfare state policies, and corporatist arrangements are also seen in relation to some industrial relations issues. The two countries share a number of contextual features important for corporatism. However, in Norway ‘peak-level’ corporatism on wage setting remains stronger than in Denmark, whereas ‘meso-level’ corporatism (corporatism in specific policy area) is stronger in Denmark than in Norway.

Urban Lundberg
**The Nordic model – a driving force or a constraint on political developments?**
Doubts have recently been cast on the future sustainability of the Nordic Model. An ageing society, enhanced flexibility and mobility in the labour market as well as increased wage competition between the European countries are challenges. Moreover, the question about the concept of the Nordic Model and its function in the ongoing process of societal transformation needs to be asked. This article discusses the ambiguous role of ‘models’.
Thereby the question will be addressed whether the Nordic Model is a driving force or a constraint on societal progress. In the context of the Nordic experiences we need to consider not only the question of institutional adjustments but also the possibility, willingness and capability of political actors. These actors are responsible for the preservation of the Nordic Model as a place for political learning and visionary thinking in the face of European integration and global competition.

Thomas Bredgaard/Flemming Larsen/Per Kongshej Masden/Stine Rasmussen

**Flexicurity and atypical employment in Denmark**
The Danish concept of flexicurity has caused a sensation in Europe. It is often seen to be a labour model directed at regular employees. This consideration is based on insufficient research: the relationship between atypical employment and Danish flexicurity has not been thoroughly examined. In this article we therefore attempt to analyse this relationship in more detail. We describe the extent, development and regulation of part-time work, temporary employment, subcontracted employment, self-employment – and the Danish speciality – so-called ‘flex-jobs’. There is practically no empirical evidence to be found for the widespread assumption that atypical forms of employment are more usual, or that they are less regulated and less secure than regular employment relationships. On the contrary, the Danish flexicurity concept has spread to atypical forms of employment. This strategy of normalizing atypical employment could serve other European countries as a model and an alternative to attempts to loosen protection against dismissal for regular employees.

Lena Schröder

**Swedish integration policy**
Sweden today is a country which attracts a large number of immigrants. Currently 13 percent of the population was born abroad. Up to the middle of the 1970s these were immigrants seeking work. This then changed and the number of immigrants to Sweden was largely refugees and their families. Swedish integration policy has always been positively evaluated in international comparisons, all formal conditions and conventions of the EU are pursued. However, in practice Swedish integration policy cannot be seen as a success. There are big differences between migrants born abroad and persons born in Sweden when it comes to unemployment figures and levels of employment. These problems on the labour market are connected on the one hand with a lack of efficiency in applying the integration policy, and on the other hand with the discrimination of migrant groups. In order to increase integration in the labour market, and therefore in Swedish society, it is necessary that there be a change in perspective in integration policy. Immigrants should be seen as valuable and knowledgeable resources and not as problems. From such a changed viewpoint integration policy could become a part of labour market policy in the traditional Swedish model.

Joakim Palme/Johan Fritzell/Åke Bergmark

**The end of equality? The Swedish welfare state after the crisis**
In what shape is the Swedish welfare state model following the austerity measures of the 1990s? Since the model is so intrinsically connected to the concept of equality, any assessment of changes in the model should also consider how equality in people's living conditions has been affected. From an analytical perspective, the Swedish tradition of welfare research further implies that we should make a distinction between the welfare state institutions as such and the resources that make it possible for individuals to control their own lives, i.e. what ultimately determines their welfare. How, then, is inequality changing at the beginning of the 21st century after a decade of economic growth above the European average? And what are the challenges for the future, both in terms of people’s living conditions and in terms of policy reforms?
Index quality of labour: Nordic countries and Germany in comparison

In European employment strategies both quantitative and qualitative employment targets are of equal importance. On the other hand there is a widespread theory that there is tension between the targets and one can only be pursued at the expense of the other. Examining the example of the successful labour policies of the Nordic countries this article shows that this theory is not generally applicable. It is exactly these Nordic countries that do particularly well in a comparison of labour conditions. The authors set up an index of the quality of labour, based on 15 indicators which can be used to compare labour conditions in 31 European countries. On this basis it can be seen that the Nordic countries form a cluster of good working conditions that are significantly more positive than the average and more positive than in Germany. In addition, the evaluations reveal that the quality of work differs between men and women, as do atypical and normal working relationships, but with less differences at the higher level in Nordic countries. All in all, there are indications that there is room to improve working conditions.