**(Chapter number)**

**European Works Councils and the Convergence of National Collective Bargaining Processes**

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# Abstract

The emergence of European industrial relations is at the core of the European integration process. The European Works Councils (EWCs) have evolved as transnational forums for discussing work-related issues and, because of this, have turned into counterbalances to the power and control exerted by ‘European employers’. As will be argued, the regulatory framework of EWCs is characterized by divergences among the Member States in transposing the Directives regulating the establishment of a EWC and the arrangements between workforce and management for informing and consulting employees. However, the fact that an increasing amount of EWCs is developing other competencies in addition to those provided for by legal provisions suggests that national collective bargaining realities are in the process of converging. This paper aims to explore the factors influencing EWCs to expand their competencies, specifically focusing on the concept of ‘labour agency’ in order to explain the formation of a transnational collective bargaining process.