

Dr Keith P. Forrester, University of Leeds, England

**In search of a new societal paradigm; Trade union renewal strategies and citizenship learning in an enlarged Europe.**

**ABSTRACT:**

This paper suggests that renewal strategies by trade unions in western and eastern Europe needs to be situated against the unravelling of the Fordist compromise with its promise of economic, social and political progress. The weight of this breakdown together with emerging neo-liberal solutions to these problems has resulted in a rediscovered interest within an enlarged Europe of contested conceptions and practices of democratic citizenship. Engaging with this crisis and with suggested societal answers it will be argued, provides an historic opportunity for European trade unions to critically examine their rationale and activities at a regional and global level. Connecting with and mobilising around, issues of democratic citizenship that challenge neo-liberal arrangements within the workplace and wider environment provides one possible important trajectory. Recent research on trade union decline together with examples from union education will be used to support the argument suggested in the paper.