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# Regulation or deregulation of the labour market: Policy regimes for the recruitment and dismissal of employees in the industrialised countries

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## Abstract

In recent years there has been increasing interest among economists and policy-makers in the contrast between the comprehensive hiring and firing regulations in Western Europe and Japan and their total absence in the United States. The correlation between these differences and the low and high rates of employment growth of Western Europe and the United States respectively is also often thought to be significant, even if the Japanese case complicates such deductions. The present paper seeks in the first place to fill in for the serious lack of cross-country documentation of these employment regulations. It also sets out results from new surveys of how European employers

perceive the impact of these laws. Finally, the paper considers policy options for European countries, the conclusion being that a fairly wide spread of moderate but specific policy reforms appears warranted with a view to helping improve the European employment situation. However, the option of replicating the United States model by total deregulation is rejected.



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â— The present paper was prepared while the author was a Fellow at the Center for International Affairs of Harvard University, in 1985â€“1986, on leave from the Commission of the European Communities, Brussels. Opinions expressed in this paper are only attributable to the author, and not to any institution to which he is connected. The author is grateful to Professor R. Freeman of Harvard University and Professor P. Weiler of Harvard Law School for useful information on the United States, to Professor K. Sugeno of Harvard Law School similarly for information on Japan, and to G. Nerb of the Commission of the European Communities who was responsible for arranging the survey of European enterprises whose results are exploited in the text. The author is greatly indebted to Susan Young for her assistance.

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