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Trade union implication in the sustainable development: global position and contingent situations¹

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Abstract

According to us, it matters to situate the sustainable development in relation to the social responsibility and to the question of the different actors. It is in this particular context that we will analyse the relationship between the trade unions and the sustainable development in Belgium. We will show the involvement of the trade unions in relation to the three areas which define the sustainable development: the environment protection, the work quality and its organization and the benefit notion. This implication depends on the relations between the actors: state, company, workers (notably the trade unions). The question of sustainable development is culturally rooted and is linked to a certain conception of the economy and of the social contract. Obstacles are liable to appear during the appropriation of the sustainable development by the trade unions. Management question is important and among others the one of corporate culture and the one of the negotiation. The trade union involvement depends on particular situations and specific contexts. We will therefore show that a systemic and contingent approach to the problem is required.

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