

11th ILERA Asia Regional Congress – Call for Papers

Tokyo, Japan, September 3–5, 2026

Hosei University Ichigaya Campus & TKP Ichigaya

Conference Center

Challenges in the New World of Work:

How Should We Respond to Emerging Technologies?

The contemporary world of work is undergoing a **historic transformation**, driven by unprecedented advances in information technology (IT) and artificial intelligence (AI). These technological innovations are not simply enhancing productivity or efficiency; they are **fundamentally reconfiguring** the very structures, processes, and meanings of work. This transformation has given rise to wide-ranging debates concerning the **future of labor**, employment relations, and socioeconomic systems.

The emergence of new technologies compels us to ask: *How will they reshape the ways in which we work?* This question transcends issues of workplace tools or efficiency gains, reaching into the **spatial and temporal dimensions of work**—where and when it takes place—and into the **legal and institutional foundations** of labor contracts themselves.

Against this backdrop, this symposium seeks to **critically examine** the pressing challenges and opportunities posed by these transformations. Bringing together leading scholars, practitioners, and policymakers, it will provide a multidisciplinary forum for rigorous analysis and constructive dialogue. Through these discussions, we aim to articulate concrete, evidence-based strategies to foster a **sustainable, inclusive, and resilient future of work**.

Discussion Themes

(1) Labor Transformation Driven by Emerging Technologies

This session will examine how cutting-edge technologies — particularly AI, robotics, and data science — are reshaping work styles, employment structures, and labor market dynamics. Drawing on recent empirical research and theoretical perspectives, the discussion will illuminate both the transformative potential and the inherent challenges of technological change, and will situate these developments within broader socioeconomic contexts.

(2) Technology Adaptation in an Aging Society

As demographic aging intensifies, societies face the critical task of enabling older workers to adapt to rapid technological change. This session will explore concrete measures to align **technological innovation with demographic realities**, including reskilling and upskilling strategies, equitable staffing systems, and institutional frameworks that facilitate the active participation of older workers in evolving labor markets.

(3) Flexible Workplaces and the Reconstruction of Labor Law

The proliferation of telework and home-based work has generated **novel regulatory and institutional challenges**. This session will examine issues related to working time management, occupational safety and health, and the protection of workers' rights in flexible work arrangements. It will also consider the appropriate scope of employer responsibility in addressing excessive working hours and safeguarding worker well-being, alongside the need for updated legal frameworks to support these shifts.

(4) Protecting Non-Standard Workers and Rethinking Social Security

The rise of platform labor and gig work is challenging the boundaries of traditional employment. This session will investigate the legal and social protection mechanisms required for individuals engaged in non-standard forms of work. It will also explore how **social security systems and labor market institutions** must be reconfigured to ensure fairness, sustainability, and inclusivity in the future of work.

This symposium offers an invaluable opportunity for **business leaders, human resource professionals, labor union representatives, policymakers, and researchers** to engage in substantive dialogue on the evolving landscape of work. By integrating diverse perspectives and expertise, it seeks to advance a **shared vision for a more just, adaptive, and forward-looking labor environment.**

We warmly invite your active participation in this important conversation.

Track Theme 1: Work and Institutions Reshaped by AI and Technology

The rapid diffusion of artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the world of work in profound and multifaceted ways. By automating routine tasks and enhancing operational efficiency, AI enables workers to engage in higher value-added activities and new forms of collaboration. At the same time, however, its widespread adoption has intensified concerns regarding job displacement, wage inequality, and the restructuring of established labor market institutions. These developments are prompting a fundamental re-examination of traditional approaches to human resource management, labor law, and the protection of worker voice. Moreover, AI is opening new frontiers in data collection and analysis, transforming the methodological landscape of labor research and the design of labor market policies.

Against this backdrop, there is a growing need for rigorous and interdisciplinary research exploring how AI is transforming work, labor markets, employment relations, and institutional frameworks. This track invites contributions that examine the implications of AI for the organization of work, legal and regulatory structures, human resource management, the role of trade unions and other worker representatives, as well as the evolving methodologies of labor research and policy design. The following thematic areas and illustrative questions are intended to guide prospective contributors. They are not exhaustive, and submissions from diverse disciplinary and methodological perspectives are strongly encouraged.

A. How are new technologies reshaping work and labor markets?

1. Which occupations and tasks are most vulnerable to automation by digital technologies, robotics, and AI (including generative AI), and which lend themselves to hybrid forms of human–machine collaboration?
2. In addressing AI-driven job displacement, should labor law and employment policies prioritize regulatory safeguards or focus on fostering new employment opportunities, reskilling, and workforce transitions?
3. How do AI-induced changes in work influence aggregate wage levels, wage inequality, and broader wage structures?

4. What impact does AI adoption have on firm-level productivity and competitive dynamics?
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B. How should labor law respond to AI-driven transformations in workplaces?

1. How can legal frameworks protect workers from discrimination embedded in automated decision-making systems?
 2. To what extent are platform workers covered by existing labor laws? Should individuals who are not legally recognized as “employees” be granted collective bargaining rights?
 3. How can labor law address emerging risks such as work intensification, surveillance, and the erosion of privacy associated with AI-enabled workplace management?
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C. How is AI transforming careers and employment practices within and across firms?

1. What organizational, institutional, and cultural factors facilitate or impede the adoption of AI within firms?
 2. How do AI-based systems for workforce allocation and career development reshape internal mobility and the balance of decision-making power between employers and employees?
 3. In what ways does AI adoption affect promotion practices, job rotation, and wage determination mechanisms within firms?
 4. Does AI adoption blur the boundaries between internal and external labor markets by enabling skill-based matching and facilitating new career pathways?
 5. What institutional and organizational measures are required to prevent algorithmic bias in recruitment, evaluation, and promotion?
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D. How are worker representatives responding to AI adoption in the workplace?

1. How are trade unions and other forms of worker representation (e.g., works councils in Europe) negotiating the implementation of AI to mitigate risks such as job loss, surveillance, and algorithmic control, while promoting greater transparency and fairness?
 2. What roles do worker representatives play in facilitating reskilling and upskilling initiatives in response to technological change?
 3. Which legal and institutional mechanisms support meaningful worker participation in AI-related workplace decisions?
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E. How can AI transform labor research and inform policy design?

1. In what ways can labor research be advanced through AI-enabled analysis of large-scale labor market data, including surveys, job postings, résumés, and administrative records?
 2. How can generative AI support qualitative labor research, for instance, by analyzing interview transcripts, collective bargaining texts, or field notes from workplace observations?
 3. How can insights from AI-based labor research contribute to the design and implementation of labor policies on employment, wages, training, and workforce development?
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As AI continues to evolve at an unprecedented pace, its implications for labor markets and institutions are becoming increasingly complex and far-reaching. This track aims to provide a forum for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to critically examine these transformations, assess their consequences, and explore strategies for shaping an equitable and sustainable future of work.

Track Theme 2: Demographic Shifts and Labor

This track invites submissions of **theoretical contributions, empirical analyses, and in-depth case studies** that address the evolving relationship between demographic change and labor, with a particular focus on the implications for industrial relations. In many advanced economies, demographic aging is transforming labor markets, reshaping employment practices, and challenging traditional institutional arrangements. This theme seeks to foster interdisciplinary dialogue among scholars of labor law, economics, industrial relations, human resource management, and social policy.

We welcome submissions addressing, but not limited to, the following key themes:

- **Institutions for Enhancing Employment among Older Adults**

As rising social security costs intensify policy pressure to extend working lives, many countries face the urgent challenge of increasing employment rates among older adults. We invite research that examines how legal frameworks, public policy instruments, and corporate human resource management practices shape labor market opportunities for older workers. Of particular interest are comparative analyses that assess the effectiveness of different institutional models in promoting sustainable employment in later life.

- **Legal Implications of Age Discrimination Prohibition**

Age discrimination legislation is a cornerstone of equal employment opportunity, yet its effectiveness varies widely across contexts. We encourage papers that critically examine legal frameworks, enforcement mechanisms, and the role of industrial relations actors in advancing age equality in the workplace. Submissions may focus on specific national laws, international conventions, or comparative studies, with particular attention to collective bargaining, employment contracts, and workplace policy implementation.

- **Aging and Labor Productivity: Drag or Opportunity?**

The relationship between workforce aging and productivity is complex and contested. We invite contributions that analyze whether an aging workforce necessarily constrains productivity or whether factors such as accumulated experience, knowledge transfer, workplace adaptation, and targeted training—often mediated through industrial relations—can offset or even enhance productivity outcomes. Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method studies are all welcome.

- **Intergenerational Dynamics in Human Resource Management: Conflict or Complementarity?**

Demographic shifts are altering the composition of workforces, creating new intergenerational dynamics within organizations. We welcome studies that explore how these dynamics are managed through HR strategies and industrial relations mechanisms. Topics may include intergenerational differences in work styles, career expectations, compensation structures, and promotion pathways, as well as the potential for complementarity through mentorship, knowledge sharing, and the integration of diverse perspectives.

- **Impact of Workforce Aging on Labor Union Movements**

The aging of the workforce has significant implications for the strategies, priorities, and membership bases of labor unions. We invite papers examining how unions adapt their bargaining agendas to reflect older workers' concerns—such as pensions, healthcare, and flexible work arrangements—and how these shifts affect union structures, inter-union dynamics, and broader labor movement trajectories. Analyses that consider the interaction between demographic change and collective bargaining processes are particularly encouraged.

- **Balancing Work and Caregiving Responsibilities**

As populations age, more individuals are balancing professional responsibilities with caregiving for elderly relatives, children, or both. This dual burden raises profound questions for labor market regulation, workplace practices, and social policy. We seek contributions that analyze how collective bargaining agreements, organizational policies, and government regulations support work–life integration for caregivers. Papers may explore innovative policy instruments, institutional responses, and the social and economic impacts of these arrangements.

This track aims to advance **rigorous, interdisciplinary scholarship** on the interplay between demographic change and labor institutions. By bringing together diverse disciplinary perspectives—ranging from legal analysis and economic modeling to organizational case studies and sociological inquiry—we hope to deepen understanding of how demographic transformations are reshaping the world of work and to identify effective strategies for adapting labor institutions to these shifts.

Track Theme 3: Globalization and International Labor Migration

In recent years, the accelerating pace of globalization has stimulated more dynamic cross-border movements of human resources, resulting in a steady expansion of both the sending and receiving of foreign workers around the world. In many developed economies, foreign labor has become indispensable in addressing demographic aging and persistent labor shortages. Even in countries such as Japan, which have traditionally been cautious about admitting foreign workers, their presence has grown rapidly. These shifts in international labor migration have far-reaching implications—not only for the economic structures of both sending and receiving countries, but also for their societies, cultures, and institutions.

This track welcomes contributions on “**Globalization and International Labor Migration.**” We particularly encourage submissions that provide empirical or theoretical insights into the following themes:

1. The Realities and Determinants of International Labor Migration

Research examining the economic, social, and institutional drivers shaping current migration flows, including the evolution of relevant national and international policy frameworks.

2. Governance and Protection of Foreign Workers: Legal and Institutional Frameworks

Analyses of the legal and administrative structures regulating foreign labor, including work permit systems, technical intern training programs, and specified skilled worker schemes, as well as their strengths and challenges.

3. Foreign Workers as a Strategic Response to Labor Shortages

Studies exploring how the admission of foreign workers affects labor market supply–demand dynamics in aging societies, as well as its economic and social impacts. We particularly welcome research on sustainable and equitable models for foreign labor integration.

4. **Organizational and Workplace Dynamics in Multinational Labor Environments**

Empirical and theoretical work on how organizations manage increasingly diverse workforces, including practices for creating inclusive workplaces, innovations in human resource management, and cross-cultural labor relations.

5. **Labor Union Strategies and Foreign Workers**

Research on how labor unions represent and organize foreign workers, promote their rights, and facilitate their inclusion within the broader labor movement.

6. **Socioeconomic Impacts on Sending and Receiving Countries**

Analyses of how migration flows reshape economies, demographics, industries, and social structures in both sending and receiving countries, as well as their effects on the everyday lives of migrant workers and their families.

International labor migration is far more than the simple movement of workers across borders—it is a transformative force reshaping global economic and social orders. Through this call for papers, we aim to bring together diverse perspectives and foster interdisciplinary dialogue that will inform both scholarly debates and evidence-based policymaking.

Track Theme 4: Overcoming Inequality - Toward Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion through Interdisciplinary Approaches

In contemporary labor markets, persistent forms of discrimination and structural disparities in employment conditions—based on characteristics such as age, gender, sexual orientation, race, and disability—remain pressing social challenges. At the same time, the diversification of employment arrangements has produced new complexities, including differential treatment across employment categories and contractual statuses, as well as the imperative to balance flexible work arrangements with the protection of workers' economic security, health, and well-being.

Track 4: Overcoming Inequality

This track aims to foster interdisciplinary engagement with the multifaceted issue of inequality in labor and employment. It encourages submissions that bridge legal, economic, sociological, managerial, and industrial relations perspectives, exploring both structural drivers of inequality and innovative strategies for promoting equity and inclusion in the world of work.

Legal Studies

- Legal and policy frameworks addressing the prohibition of discrimination and the principle of equal treatment (e.g., mandatory retirement, age discrimination, gender, LGBTQ, race, disability).
- Challenges in regulating and adapting to diversified employment forms (e.g., telework, non-regular employment, working hours, health management, occupational safety and hygiene).
- Gaps in legal enforcement and policy implementation, and proposals for enhancing effectiveness.

Economics

The economic dimension encompasses analyses of wage differentials by gender and employment type, the structure of labor market inequality, and the design of redistributive or corrective policy interventions. We also welcome research examining the macroeconomic and microeconomic impacts of work style reforms, including their effects on productivity, employment patterns, and inclusive growth.

Business Administration

- Organizational strategies and diversity management practices that leverage workforce diversity.
- Institutional design and compensation structures that promote fairness and equity.
- Flexible work arrangements that enhance employability and strengthen performance management.

Sociology

- Structural inequality and social exclusion in employment.
- Social norms, perceptions, and organizational practices surrounding Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI).
- The construction and negotiation of gender identity in the workplace and its implications for labor market participation.

Human Resource Management

HRM systems are critical for operationalizing inclusion in increasingly diverse employment contexts. Research in this field may examine inclusive organizational design, workplace culture, employee engagement, and the sustainable integration of diverse employment forms.

Industrial Relations

- The organization and representation of a diverse workforce, and the evolving role of labor unions in promoting equity.
- Incorporating DEI principles into labor–management consultations and collective bargaining.
- New mechanisms for ensuring the voices of workers traditionally excluded from unions are reflected in negotiations and governance.

The topics above are illustrative rather than exhaustive. We welcome submissions employing a wide range of research methodologies, including theoretical analyses, quantitative and qualitative empirical studies, interview-based case research, and comparative studies across industries, occupations, or national contexts. Interdisciplinary approaches and stakeholder-inclusive perspectives—

encompassing workers, employers, unions, and governments—are particularly encouraged.

Addressing inequality in labor and employment cannot be achieved through institutional reform alone. It requires the transformation of underlying social values, organizational cultures, and governance structures. This track seeks to stimulate rigorous, interdisciplinary dialogue that advances both scholarly understanding and practical strategies for building more inclusive and equitable societies.

Track Theme 5: The Welfare State – The Role of the State in Market Competition

In contemporary welfare states, a fundamental role is played in establishing equitable regulatory frameworks that both uphold worker protection and sustain healthy competition among enterprises. This role spans a wide spectrum of dimensions, including ensuring compliance with labor law; defining the appropriate balance between labor–management autonomy and state intervention; securing the sustainability and institutional design of social security systems; regulating inter-firm competition; protecting workers through minimum wage policies; supporting the employment of the unemployed and the economically inactive; safeguarding occupational safety and workers’ health; clarifying the evolving roles of labor unions and labor movements; and addressing the effectiveness of policy responses to declining fertility rates.

These multifaceted challenges demand analytical perspectives drawn from a wide range of academic disciplines, including economics, law, social policy, and labor policy. Moreover, their manifestations are highly contingent on institutional and regulatory contexts, varying across countries and regions.

This call for papers seeks contributions that examine the **contemporary functions, transformations, and challenges of the welfare state** in the context of market competition, with particular attention to the evolving interplay between economic imperatives and social protection.

Key Themes and Questions

1. Implementation and Enforcement of Labor Legislation

Ensuring effective compliance with labor legislation remains a cornerstone of modern welfare states. What mechanisms and institutional arrangements guarantee this compliance, and what transformations are currently observable? How do regulatory frameworks adapt to shifting labor market dynamics?

2. Balancing Labor–Management Autonomy and State Intervention

An enduring challenge is the orchestration of the equilibrium between labor–management self-regulation and state-led intervention. A salient example can be found in Japan’s so-called *government-led shuntō*—a coordinated process in which the government urges employers’ associations and large firms to raise wages in

pursuit of macroeconomic objectives such as inflation control or economic stimulus. What can be learned from such initiatives regarding the changing nature of state involvement in wage setting?

3. Social Security Systems

Social security systems—encompassing pensions, healthcare, long-term care, employment insurance, and public assistance—are under mounting pressure due to demographic shifts, fiscal constraints, and changing labor markets. How can these systems be analyzed from the perspectives of economics, law, social policy, and labor policy? What transformations have they undergone, and what new sustainability challenges are emerging?

4. Minimum Wage Policies

Minimum wage systems play a dual role: protecting workers' income and promoting fair competition among enterprises. How have these systems evolved, and how is harmony between worker protection and market competition achieved in different institutional settings?

5. Employment Support for the Unemployed and Inactive

Employment support policies are central to maintaining inclusive labor markets. How have these policies developed and adapted in response to structural labor market changes, and what new approaches are being implemented?

6. Occupational Health, Safety, and Labor Movements

Protecting workers' health and well-being remains a fundamental obligation. This includes safeguarding mental health, managing working hours, preventing industrial accidents, ensuring work–life balance, and upholding occupational safety standards. In the digital era, new forms of stress and risk have emerged—driven by automation, AI, and surveillance technologies—that require renewed attention. What roles do labor unions and labor movements play in these evolving contexts, and how are their strategies and functions changing?

7. Policy Responses to Declining Fertility

The persistent decline in fertility rates poses significant socio-economic challenges. How have governments developed and adapted policies to address this phenomenon, and to what extent have these measures proved effective? What new policy challenges and demographic shifts lie ahead?

8. Cross-National Institutional Differences

Institutional variation across national systems has profound implications for labor protection, social security frameworks, occupational health, employment support, and adaptation to digital transformation. How do these differences shape national responses, and what emerging global challenges can be identified through comparative analysis?

Addressing these issues requires more than isolated policy interventions. It calls for an integrated and interdisciplinary approach that brings together legal, economic, social, and institutional perspectives. By examining how welfare states regulate labor markets and reconcile economic and social objectives, this initiative aims to deepen scholarly understanding and foster meaningful dialogue on building resilient, inclusive, and sustainable societies.

Submission Guidelines

Paper Abstract

The paper abstract should relate to one of the Congress Track Themes or special sessions and contain a maximum of 250 words without any illustrations, graphs, or tables.

- Paper abstracts are to be submitted in English.
- All abstracts will be reviewed by members of the Program Committee or appointed reviewers.
- Accepted abstracts will be published in the book of abstracts.
- The organizers will publish only the abstracts submitted by authors who have paid their registration fee.

Notes for authors

Submit an abstract using the congress webpage (<https://ilera-2026asia.com>). The 11th ILERA Asian Congress submission portal will open in January 2026.

Please DO NOT email us a full copy of your paper (neither before nor after the congress). Abstracts sent by email will not be accepted.

Authors are invited to submit their abstracts to either a Research Track, a special session, or a poster session. Even if you apply for the research track, the committee may assign you to the poster session.

Each registered participant can submit and present one paper abstract.

The submitting author will be considered the presenting author. There are NO limitations for co-authoring/co-authorship.

- Deadline for submitting abstracts: **31/03/2026**
- Notification of abstract acceptance: 30/04/2026

ILERA membership is not mandatory, but we encourage participants to become members of ILERA. You can do this directly via the ILERA website: <https://ilera.org/>

If you have any questions about the congress, please contact the organizing team by using the following email address: ilera2026@jil.go.jp

Further information on the congress including, for example, travel information, accommodation will be available on the website. Please visit the Congress website: <https://ilera-2026asia.com>

Special Sessions Proposals

Submissions for special sessions are invited for the ILERA Asian Congress 2026.

Special Session Submission Guidelines

Special sessions should typically cover topics that extend beyond the track themes or have a special focus or idea.

Each special session proposal must contain the following information:

- Title of the proposed special session.
- Names and affiliations of the organizers (including contact information for each organizer).
- Up to five keywords.
- A summary of up to 250 words stating the topic, idea, and importance of the special session.
- A tentative list of participants who could contribute to the session and the role of the participants (e.g., presenter, discussant, chair, etc.). Note that special sessions should have a minimum of 4 participants.
- Special sessions may have a different format from a regular session, e.g., panel discussion, longer summary talks, or a mix thereof. The session format should be clearly defined in the proposal. Examples of session formats are paper development sessions, presenting research papers, book presentations, round table discussions, etc.
- Proposals will be evaluated by the program committee.

Collect this information in a Word document and send it to ilera2026@jil.go.jp.

Abstracts for approved special sessions must be submitted according to the same schedule and procedure for regular papers. Please note that all speakers, including chairs, paper presenters, and discussants, must be registered participants in the congress.

Deadline for submission of special sessions: 13 February 2026

If you are new to organizing a session proposal and have questions, please email ilera2026@jil.go.jp