

Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg

Eignungsprüfung nach BerufsHZVO

Aufsichtsarbeit Englisch

Bearbeitungszeit : 120 Minuten

Name:.....

- Tragen Sie Ihren Namen in Druckbuchstaben auf das Aufgabenblatt und sämtliche Lösungsblätter ein.
- Verwenden Sie ausschließlich das Ihnen von der DHBW zur Verfügung gestellte Papier.
- Es sind keine Hilfsmittel erlaubt.
- Die Bearbeitungszeit beträgt 120 Minuten.

Merkel and the minimum

Another about-turn: the centre-right ruling party wants a minimum wage

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IT MAY be the opening shot of Angela Merkel's re-election campaign. Her Christian Democratic Union (CDU) has abandoned one core belief after another (conscription, nuclear power), and is about to do so again. At its convention in Leipzig in mid-November the CDU is likely to back an economy-wide minimum wage.

Germany is one of the few European countries to lack a statutory minimum wage. Unions and employers negotiate wages sector by sector. In ten sectors agreed minimums apply to all. But jobs are growing in fragmented services not in manufacturing. Just over half of workers in western Germany are now covered by central agreements; in the east it is only a third. In 2007, 3.7m workers earned under €7 (\$9) an hour and 1.2m under €5.

Worthilfe:

wage:	Gehalt
conscription:	Wehrpflicht
statutory:	gesetzlich
endorse:	billigen
deprive:	berauben
canny:	schlau
heed:	beachten
commission:	beauftragen
entrepreneur:	Unternehmer
fraught:	angespannt
furnish:	liefern

The opposition Social Democrats and Greens have long backed a minimum wage. Now CDU leaders have endorsed a plan for a “binding lower limit for wages”, set by an independent body representing unions and employers, similar to Britain's Low Pay Commission. The expectation is that it will be close to the floor for temporary workers: €7.79 in the west and €6.89 in the east. “This was a movement that came from the bottom up,” says Karl-Josef Laumann, chief of the workers' branch of the CDU. “If you work for eight hours you should be able to live from your wages.”

By embracing a minimum wage Mrs Merkel may deprive the opposition of a vote-winner in the next election, due in September 2013. The canny chancellor has noticed that bottom-up activism against inequality is on the rise everywhere. And she may now be convinced that a wage floor will not cost jobs. German economists have always seen minimum wages as job killers. A 2010 study said that a €7.50 minimum could eliminate 840,000 jobs at a cost of €4 billion a year. But the CDU seems to be heeding newer British and American ideas. Studies of eight sectors that have minimum wages commissioned by the labour ministry show little damage to employment. “This contradicts all the fears of mainstream economists in Germany,” says Gerhard Bosch of the University of Duisburg-Essen.

Employers may hold down wages, for example because women are tied to a local kindergarten. Minimum wages could help to correct that and even raise employment in

low-wage sectors by making work more attractive, argues Joachim Möller of the Institute for Employment Research. Most businesses still hate the idea. The number of unemployed is at its lowest level in 20 years, Dieter Hundt, head of the employers' organisation, noted in a newspaper. "Why should we risk that with a legal minimum wage?" But some entrepreneurs are relaxed, since a minimum wage could blunt competition from rivals who employ cheaper workers, perhaps imported from eastern Europe.

That softens opposition from the Free Democratic Party, the CDU's pro-business coalition partner. The coalition agreement rejects a minimum wage, but the FDP may do a deal if the CDU accepts other priorities, including tax cuts. Relations between the two have become fraught. Might a wage floor furnish a new foundation?

A. Comprehension:

1. Which core belief will the CDU probably abandon?
2. Which parties have long backed a minimum wage?
3. Why are some entrepreneurs relaxed about a minimum wage?

B. Creative writing:

1. Why do you think that the CDU probably will change their opinion on minimum wage?
2. Do you think the German industry and its workers will benefit from a minimum wage? Give three reasons that support your opinion and rebut three reasons that contradict your opinion.