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Foreword

Malcolm Sargeant *

The papers which follow were all presented at an international seminar sponsored by ADAPT, the Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training and Tohoku University in November 2013. The seminar took place in Sendai in Japan and was titled *The Labour Market Impacts of Natural and Environmental Disasters*.

What has become known as the Great Japan Earthquake took place in March 2011 and it produced a massive tsunami which killed as more than 16,000 people and devastated the lives of many others. The tsunami also hit the Fukushima nuclear power station which led to the evacuation of the population from an area within a 20 kilometre radius of the plant. It of course also had a big impact upon employment in the region.

In the Emilia Romagna region of northern Italy earthquakes took place in May and June 2012. A lot less severe than the Japan earthquake but one that also had important consequences for the people living and working in the region, including the loss of life of workers who survived the initial earthquake but were obliged to return to work too soon.

In New Zealand, during the year 2010-2011, two earthquakes hit the South Island and there was a major disaster at the Pike River coal mine, also in the South Island. More than 185 people died in the second earthquake based on Christchurch and 29 workers were killed in the mine explosion.

These are all disasters which affected whole countries in general and had devastating impacts directly upon the communities most affected. These papers, presented by experts from Europe, Japan and New Zealand attempt to both quantify the effects on employment and to discuss the way forward. The seminar participants also had the opportunity to

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observe the tsunami affected region in Japan and this brought home to us all the impact on the region and the importance of learning from each other's experiences.



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