



Welcome to issue no. 2 / 2010 of EWC News.

August 23rd, 2010

Der EBR-Fachinformationsdienst

The training and consultancy network "euro-workscouncil.net" is there to inform you about the activities of European Works Councils and related subjects.

EWC News appears four times a year.
You can download this newsletter as a [pdf file](#) and print it out.

You can find past issues in the [newsletter archives](#).



[Dieser Newsletter auf Deutsch](#)



[Cette newsletter en français](#)

Contents:

- [1. Contradictory rulings on collective bargaining competition](#)
- [2. Country Viewpoints](#)
- [3. European Work Councils organize action days](#)
- [4. Agreement on personnel policy and occupational safety](#)
- [5. EWC structure adapted after merger](#)
- [6. New European Work Councils](#)
- [7. Documents on new EWC Directive](#)
- [8. Update on the European Company \(SE\)](#)
- [9. Establishment of World Work Councils](#)
- [10. Interesting Web Pages](#)
- [11. New publications](#)
- [12. Training and consulting network " euro-workscouncil.net ": Examples of our work](#)
- [13. Current Seminar Schedule](#)
- [14. Imprint](#)

1. Contradictory rulings on collective bargaining competition

French judges strengthen collective bargaining unity



A fundamental decision was taken on 14th April 2010 concerning the collective bargaining rights for small trade unions in France. The social division of the highest French supreme court of appeal ("Cour de Cassation") is of the opinion that the uniqueness of collective bargaining within companies does not violate any European law or ILO conventions. The judges in the Paris Law Courts (photo) have therefore exactly the opposite opinion to the German Federal Labor Court in Erfurt (see report below) and place the uniqueness of collective bargaining above freedom of coalition.

- [Full text of the ruling](#) (in French)

The most extensive reform of collective bargaining legislation since World War II came into force in France on 1st January 2009 (see [report in EWC News 4/2008](#)). Following the Spanish model the

legislator has defined threshold values for negotiation rights that are derived from work council election results. Trade unions which obtain less than 10% of the votes can no longer conclude shop-floor collective agreements. Furthermore, the signing trade unions must totalize at least 30% of the votes for any shop-floor collective agreement to be valid. Union membership figures are not taken into consideration. Industry-wide sectorial agreements require at least 8% of the combined election votes for all work councils within the concerned sector. Painful experiences with the trade union pluralism favored this reform.

The FO trade union took legal action against the threshold restrictions in the Brest labour courts. Although the union had only obtained 7% of the votes in the machine manufacturer SDMO, judges in Brittany ruled, in October 2009, that it did have negotiation rights (see [report in EWC News 4/2009](#)). The Brest ruling is now invalid. The plaintiff company section of FO trade union must therefore now adapt to the new situation, as is already the case for many other companies e.g. within SNCF or France Télécom (see [report in EWC News 1/2010](#)).

Rules extended to public services sector

Following the regulatory ruling of the Supreme Court, the French parliament adopted an amendment to the collective bargaining law on 23rd June 2010. The threshold value for determining the validity of collective agreements in the public service has consequently been set to 50% of the votes. The pressure on trade unions to unite to form multi-union bargaining groups is therefore even higher than in the private sector, where this threshold value is set to 30%. The following texts are available only in German:

- [Background: The French system of employee representation](#)
- [Analysis of earlier work council elections in France](#)

German judges weaken collective bargaining

Unlike France, collective bargaining rules in Germany are not laid down by law but have been developed by jurisprudence. On 23rd June 2010 two rulings from the Federal Labor Court (BAG) in Erfurt (photo) have brought an end to a principle existing since World War II, whereby only one collective agreement can be valid within a company. All following texts are available only in German:



- [BAG Press release with link to rulings](#)
- [Press report on BAG decision](#)
- [IG-Metall trade union comment on the topic](#)

One consequence of this ruling could be the increased break-up of the collective bargaining system. Employers are already apprehending more labor disputes. The German trade union federation (DGB) together with the Federal Union of German Employers' associations (BDA) have requested the legislator to take action.

- [DGB press statement on collective bargaining](#)
- [Full text of the DGB and BDA key-issues paper](#)

Nevertheless, this position of the umbrella organizations has met with criticism from the rank-and-file trade unions. As an example, a resolution from the works council of the Frankfurter Rundschau publishing house from 20th July 2010 which takes the opposite position. Also some trade union affiliated lawyers have other opinions, such as Professor Däubler. The ruling is particularly supported by small factions such as the Christian Metalworkers trade union (CGM), who accord the court great respect and who accuse DGB of arrogance. In the past the CGM union has more frequently appeared involved in dumping collective agreements at the expense of employees.

- [Frankfurter Rundschau works council resolution](#)
- [Interview on collective bargaining with Professor Däubler](#)
- [Christian Metalworkers trade union press release](#)

2. Country Viewpoints

Former labor politician appointed as business secretary



Following the election of the House of Commons, in May 2010, a coalition government had to be formed in the United Kingdom. A conservative walkover, à la Thatcher, is therefore impossible. The coalition contract plans for a fundamental reform of the political system. The liberal democrats obtained the department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) which is crucial to employer interests. Their candidate, Vince Cable, (photo) worked in the 70's as an advisor for the then labour government, before moving in 1982 to the small social-democratic party, which merged in 1988 with the liberals and since then forms its left wing.

- [Full text of the coalition contract](#)

Although Cable is the only Minister of the coalition government having close ties with the trade unions, his invitation as a guest speaker to the annual congress of the British TUC, planned for September 2010 was cancelled on 29th July 2010. Shortly before, on 12th July 2010, during a training conference of the TUC, Cable had called for a stronger role for trade unions.

- [Report on TUC training conference](#)
- [Report on cancellation of invitation to the TUC congress](#)

Employer suggestions on labour law

While trade unions have not yet made clear their relationship with the new government, there already exist concrete political proposals from the British employers' association CBI. According to a paper published on 21st June 2010, strike rights are to be reduced, recognition of employee representation made more difficult, mass redundancies facilitated and limitations set for compensation payments for any discrimination incurred. The retirement age should also to be raised to 70.

- [Full text of the CBI proposals](#)
- [Report on employer proposals](#)

The TUC has called this catalogue "exploitation at work ". The United Kingdom already stands out as the country having the smallest level of employee participation in Western Europe, with only Bulgaria and the three Baltic states having weaker participation rights than in the homeland of Manchester capitalism (see [report in EWC News 2/2009](#)).

- [Background: Employee Representation in the United Kingdom](#) (in German)

Work council members, wishing to familiarize themselves with the current situation of employee representation in the United Kingdom after the change in government, have the opportunity in a EWC seminar taking place on 25th January 2011, in Hamburg.

Outstanding shop-floor agreement in Bulgaria

Bulgaria first introduced work councils as part of its accession to the European Union in 2007; they can be established in all companies with more than 50 employees. While there are many shortcomings when it comes to the involvement of work councils in information and consultation procedures in Bulgarian companies, the situation is substantially better in branches of multinational companies. A transfer of "good practice" apparently takes place through the exchange of experience within European Work Councils.



One example is the agreement which was signed, in February 2010, for Bulgarian employees of the Danish brewery Carlsberg. It mentions the goal of reinforcing social dialogue, information and consultation rights, and collective bargaining. An emphasis is also put on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

- [Report on contents of the agreement](#)

Soon 17 countries in the euro-zone

Following a resolution of the European Union Council of Ministers, on 13th July 2010, the 1.3 millions inhabitants of Estonia will receive the euro as legal tender starting 1st January 2011. The exchange rate for the Estonian crown has already been tied to the euro since 1999. Most recently the common currency was introduced on 1st January 2009 to Slovakia (see [report in EWC News 3/2008](#)).



- [Report on resolution of European Union Council of Ministers](#)
- [Video on introduction of Euro in Estonia](#)
- [Map of previous euro-zone](#)



Croatia about to enter European Union

Negotiations for the accession of the former Yugoslavian republic, Croatia, could be finalized before the end of 2010. They started in October 2005 together with Turkey. On the day of entry, the country, with its 4.4 million inhabitants, will transpose all social policy directives into national legislation. This includes also the directives concerning European Work Councils and participation rights in European Companies (SE). All existing European and SE Work Councils will need to be extended to accommodate delegates from Croatia.

- [Entry negotiations overview](#)
- [Current reports on entry negotiations in progress](#)
- [The Croatia Newsletter from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation](#) (in German)

3. European Work Councils organize action days

Bosch Work Councils for structural change rather than plant closure

Employees from the Bosch plant in Vénissieux (France) organized a bicycle procession, to the company headquarters in Stuttgart, on 26th May 2010, to bring attention to their situation. For this reason, the venue of the European Work Council steering committee meeting was shifted at short notice to the plant close to Lyon where there will be insufficient workload beyond 2012. After 18 plant closures within three years, the EWC is of the opinion that Vénissieux should become the turning point for a successful structural change within the Bosch group.



- [Report on the start of the bicycle procession](#) (in German)
- [Video of start of the bicycle procession](#) (in French)
- [Report on the arrival of the bicycle procession in Stuttgart](#) (in German)
- [Press report on bicycle procession](#) (in French)

A European action day took place recently, on 22nd February 2010, for the preservation of the Cardiff plant (Wales) with participants from 30 Bosch locations in seven countries. Although the action day, coordinated by the European works council, was not able to prevent the closure for its 900 employees, it did manage to secure one of the best ever compensation schemes in the history of the United Kingdom.

- [Report on the action day for preservation of Cardiff](#) (in German)
- [22nd February 2010 action day overview](#)

German Works Council helps end labor dispute in France

The American automobile supplier, TRW, wishes to dismiss 90 of its 400 employees in the Ramonchamp plant in Lorraine. Since October 2009, the delivery of parts and the production process had been disturbed over and over again in Renault and Peugeot after a series of several strikes against these plans. In order to avoid further strike-related delivery losses, TRW management wanted to put in place extra work shifts in German plants. The Gelsenkirchen works council rejected this as "strike breaking". According to German law, agreement of the works council is necessary for any additional workload.



The German employee representatives' negative attitude forced management in Lorraine to the negotiating table and led to the conclusion of a social plan on 4th May 2010. On 7th May 2010, a delegation from Ramonchamp came to Gelsenkirchen to thank personally for their solidarity (photo).

- [CGT report on strike actions](#) (in French)
- [IG-Metall report on meeting in Gelsenkirchen](#) (in German)
- [Press report on meeting in Gelsenkirchen](#) (in French)
- [Video on strike action at TRW in France](#) (in French)

European-wide demonstrations at Vaillant

In the middle of April 2010, central management of the German heating technology manufacturer, Vaillant, announced its restructuring plan, MP3, including the closure of several plants. Bad Kreuznach in Germany and Le Mans in France were to be completely closed together with partial closures of other plants in Germany, Italy and Spain. Altogether 280 jobs in Western Europe are to be wiped out, while at the same time 140 new jobs created in Slovakia.

The European works council reported on the current situation in a communication published on 7th June 2010. It requests central management to refrain from starting any dealings concerning social plans until, at the European level, the EWC has been able to render a motivated opinion on the MP3 restructuring plan with the assistance of experts. On 1st July 2010, 50 employee representatives from German and Spanish sites held a demonstration in front of the headquarters in Remscheid (photo).



- [Full text of EWC communication from 7th June 2010](#)
- [Report on demonstration at company headquarters Remscheid](#) (in German)
- [Spanish trade union web page at Vaillant](#) (in Spanish)

4. Agreement on personnel policy and occupational safety



High tech company strengthens development of personnel

In Paris on 14th April 2010, the French electronics group, Thales, signed a European-wide agreement on personnel policy. The contracting partner of central management was not the EWC but the European Metalworkers Federation (EMF). Whereas in June 2009 a previous agreement already dealt with further development of employees (see [report in EWC News 2/2009](#)), annual personnel development reviews have now been regulated. A complete set of references and a clear framework has been set out for the whole of Europe.

- [Report on the signing of the agreement](#)
- [Full text of agreement](#)

Charter on occupational health and safety

On 15th June 2010, the European works council and central management of the Belgian building materials group, Etex, signed a charter on occupational health and safety. It regulates the rights and obligations of employees, the handling of dangerous substances, which type of information employee representatives receive etc. A crucial point is the establishment of a European level Hygiene and Safety Committee, comprised of three management and three EWC representatives meeting once annually.



- [Report on the signing of the Charter](#)
 - [Full text of the Occupational Safety Charter](#)
-

Transnational collective agreement regulates social consequences of acquisition



On 5th July 2010, a European agreement was signed between central management of the French metal sector companies, Alstom and Schneider Electric and the European Metalworkers Federation (EMF). It regulates conditions for employees of the French nuclear company Areva, which is affected by the sale of both of its' power transmission and distribution divisions to both companies (see [report in EWC News 1/2010](#)). This is the first time in European Union history where the social consequences of an acquisition are regulated in a transnational collective agreement. There is a three year long guarantee for no plant closures and no redundancies.

The agreement applies to all European Union countries as well as Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. Employees from the affected divisions in Alstom and Schneider Electric are also protected. Once a year, the European works councils will evaluate compliance to the agreement, and at the end of 2010 latest, employee representatives from the new divisions will be integrated into the existing EWC structures. In addition, the European-level agreement for equal treatment, signed for Areva in November 2006 (see [report in EWC News 4/2006](#)), is to be put on the agenda of both European works councils.

- [Press release on the signing of the agreement](#)
- [Full text of the agreement](#)

5. EWC structure adapted after merger

Electric company with European Forum

On 23rd June 2010 an updated agreement was signed on the European Forum for the US group Eaton. It improves the practical work of the forum, adopts the definitions from the new EWC directive and integrates the European works council of the electrical company Moeller, acquired by Eaton in April 2008. There has been a EWC at Eaton since 1999 under Dutch law and in 2000 Moeller created their EWC under German law. The new agreement is governed by German law, since following the merger Germany has the most employees (3,600, corresponding to 22% of the European workforce).



The Forum may be interpreted as being the joint meeting of the EWC with management. All countries with fewer than 75 employees are not represented in the EWC. The 8 member steering committee is made up of five employee and three employer representatives. There is only one EWC meeting per year, and under extraordinary circumstances a statement has to be provided within 15 days. Contrary to many other EWC agreements there is a provision for out-of-court arbitration to settle disputes.

Dissolution of Cadbury EWC

In September 2010, the EWC of Kraft Foods will meet for the first time in its new configuration. Following the merger of the two food groups, Cadbury and Kraft Foods, ten representatives from the previous Cadbury EWC will join up with the 38 EWC members of Kraft Foods. Both companies have had European works councils since 1996 under British law. Renegotiation of the EWC agreement is not planned before 2011/2012.



In February 2010, the hostile takeover of the traditionally British company, Cadbury, by the US group Kraft Foods provoked strong protests from both the then Labour government and British trade unions. As soon as March 2010, Kraft Foods announced the closure of a historical chocolate factory in the United Kingdom and the relocation of its' production to Poland. Kraft foods had to publicly apologize before a British Parliamentary inquiry for breaking their earlier promises. In a press announcement, on 29th April 2010 in London, at the last meeting of the Cadbury EWC, the French CFDT trade union demanded the disclosure of the Kraft Foods accounting figures and an appropriate consultation procedure.

- [The trade union campaign against the hostile takeover](#)
- [Report on the closure of the Cadbury factory](#)
- [CFDT Press release](#) (in French)

French Construction Company with improved EWC conditions

A new term of office is to begin on 1st January 2011 for the Vinci European works council. The 27 EWC mandates are to be reassigned to countries following the integration of Cegelec. The French Cegelec group is a supplier of engineering services and has belonged, since April 2010, to the French construction group, Vinci. EWCs have been in place in both companies since 2002 under French law. For the moment EWC members of Cegelec already participate in the plenary sessions of the Vinci EWC.



On 17th March 2010, a procedure for merging both European works councils was elaborated with central management and the Vinci EWC agreement updated. It encompasses the definition of information and consultation from the new EWC Directive. All countries with more than 150 employees from the European Economic Area and Switzerland are represented in the EWC. All members have an annual right to three days of training. Countries with more than 3,000 employees have a mandate in the steering committee, which comes with an annual 120 hour time off work allowance. The EWC chairperson has an allowance of 168 hours.

6. New European Work Councils

British-Italian Armaments Manufacturer creates EWC



Since January 2010, three armaments manufacturers have been operating as joint venture under the common name of Selex Galileo. An EWC agreement was signed in Rome a few days previously, on 17th December 2009, under Italian law.

The new EWC consists of 18 members that meet up to twice annually. They are not elected, but appointed half by Italian and half by British trade unions, and select a six member steering committee. The definition for information and consultation was taken already literally from the new EWC Directive. All EWC members receive 60 hour comprehensive individual language training.

- [Full text of the EWC agreement](#)

Selex Galileo is a subsidiary of the Italian armament company, Finmeccanica, which concluded a similar EWC agreement in July 2008 for its helicopter division (see [report in EWC News 3/2008](#)).

Future EWC for Norwegian energy group

The national energy producer Statkraft, with 3.400 employees and one of Europe's largest producers of renewable energies signed an agreement, on 28th April 2010 in Berlin, for the establishment of a European Work Council under Norwegian legislation.



The EWC is composed of twelve members from four countries meeting twice annually and form a 4 member steering committee. Additional countries are to be integrated into the EWC should the company expand. The agreement not only encompasses the definitions of the new EWC Directive, but also world-wide ILO standards and focuses on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

- [Press release for the signing of the agreement](#)
- [Full text of Statkraft's code of practice](#)

Danish retail chain establishes EWC in two steps



On 18th June 2010 in Copenhagen, a EWC agreement was concluded under Danish law for Jysk Nordic. In a two-year startup phase the EWC is made up of only one representative from each of the four Scandinavian countries. Subsequently one additional representative each from Poland, Hungary, Czechia, Slovakia, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom are to be integrated. The

European works council meets twice annually and elects a three member steering committee.

There exists two separately controlled subsidiaries under to the Jysk Holding: whereas Dänisches Bettenlager is to be found in Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Spain and Switzerland, Jysk Nordic operates in many other countries. The EWC agreement does not however apply to Dänisches Bettenlager, which has more than 700 outlets alone in Germany and is therefore much larger than the entire Jysk Nordic group. The German subsidiaries are publicly criticized for their harsh HR policies.

- [Report on German HR policy](#) (in German)

7. Documents on new EWC Directive

Key Aspects for political debate



On 29th March 2010, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) submitted a list of key issues which played an important role in the parliamentary discussions on the transposition of the new EWC Directive into national legislations. The new EWC legislation had to be adopted in all European Union countries, including Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein on 5th June 2011 at the latest. However discussions on the legislative proposals have progressed very differently in the individual countries (see [report in EWC News 1/2010](#)).

- [ETUC Key Issues – full text](#)

European Trade Union Confederation leaflet

On 19th May 2010, the ETUC published a pamphlet on the new EWC Directive in three languages. A summary is given of the eight most important points in the new legislation. On the flipside a table shows how the new legal situation specifically affects the existing EWC agreements.



- [ETUC leaflet download](#)



Legal analysis of new EWC Directive

On 28th May 2010, the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) in Brussels published an extensive 140 page analysis which examines the new EWC Directive article by article from a legal viewpoint. The wording from existing EWC agreements is taken as example. The analysis was developed with the support of a group of lawyers with close ties to trade unions, working in different European universities.

- [Legal analysis - download](#)
- [Order analysis in book form](#)

Significance of new EWC Directive for restructuring

The Austrian trade union, GPA djp, has published a highly recommendable presentation on the new EWC Directive. It highlights the issue of how a European works council may use the new legal situation to strengthen its influence on transnational restructuring.



- [Presentation download](#) (in German)

8. Update on the European Company (SE)

Wind-power manufacturer as SE



Since 4th March 2010, Nordex from Rostock has been operating as a SE. Previously, representatives from 13 European Union Countries forming the special negotiation body (SNB) had negotiated the establishment of a SE works council with central management. Although Nordex Germany has 1,500 employees, there is no provision for employee participation in the supervisory board. The company has over 2.200 employees world-wide.

- [Company Press release](#)

Inspection Company to continue with parity participation

The automobile inspection company, Dekra, has been operating since 13th July 2010 as a SE. The European market leader with 22.000 employees will maintain a parity-based supervisory board of six shareholder and six employee representatives and merely freeze the number of members. Dekra is present in 28 European countries, and besides Germany, particularly in France.



On 28th June 2010, the SE participation agreement was signed at the company headquarters in Stuttgart (photo). In the future, Germany sends four employee representatives to the supervisory board, and France two. The two strongest trade unions, CGT and CFDT, designated one representative each. The SE works council is made up of 19 members and meets twice annually. Eight seats are allotted to Germany, seven to France and one each to Finland, Sweden, Czech Republic and the Netherlands. Countries with fewer than 200 employees are not represented.

- [Company Press release](#)

First ever direct election of SE supervisory board



On 22nd June 2010, and for the first time in the history of SE legislation, a direct transnational election for supervisory board employee representatives took place. The Bavarian Metal Industry company, Warema, had committed to this in its SE agreement from June 2009 (see [report in EWC News 2/2009](#)).

2,675 employees were entitled to vote in five countries. For the very first time employees from outside Germany could take part in a board election and used their right to vote to almost 100%. European works council members were elected by the work councils. Since there are no employee representatives in many of the sites outside the headquarters, 725 employees were able to elect their representatives to the European works council also by direct elections on the same day.

- [Press release on Warema elections](#) (in German)

Revision of SE legislation expected

In preparation for the revision of the SE Directive, the European Commission organized a conference, on 26th May 2010 in Brussels, to exchange past experience and identify possible improvements. Approximately 120 SE experts participated, primarily from the employer side, and a report on the operation and effect of the SE statutes was presented by the law and auditing firm, Ernst & Young (see [report in EWC News 1/2010](#)).



The discussions of two working groups are available in video on the Internet, with embedded expert presentations. Frightening results from practical observations: the SE is very frequently misused to limit the influence of employee participation and to freeze the size of supervisory boards. This explains the above average high number of SE creations in Germany, where for years the business press has deliberately highlighted this possibility to misuse it (see [report in EWC News 2/2008](#)). In March 2010, the Hans Böckler Foundation reported on the subject and noted a proportionally strong increase in employee participation evasion through the use of foreign legal forms (see [report in EWC News 1/2010](#)).

- [Conference documents download](#)
- [Video of working group on SE establishment](#)
- [Video of working group on SE operation](#)
- [Trade union viewpoint on the conference](#)

On 23rd March 2010, the European Commission initiated a public consultation on the revision of the SE legislation, whose results were published on 2nd July 2010.

- [Summary of the notes](#)
- [The 69 comments and suggestions received - download](#)
- [Background: Participation in the SE](#) (in German)

9. Establishment of World Work Councils

Globalised Euro-Works Council based on latest EU legislation



A EWC agreement was signed on 28th April 2010, at the headquarters of the IKEA manufacturing company, Swedwood, situated in the southern Swedish town of Älmhult, which not only is based on the new European Union Directive, but also includes provisions for representatives from Russia and the U.S. For the first time, therefore, a World works council is operating on the basis of the most recent European Union legislation. The council includes nine members from the European Union and representatives from Russia and USA will join one year after the agreement comes into force. The largest European countries are Poland with 7.500 and Slovakia with 1.600 employees. Five further European Union Countries have each several hundred employees.

The events on 8th July 2010 illustrated the importance of establishing co-operation beyond Europe. After a critical press report on the situation in a Swedwood factory in Virginia USA, central management broke off all discussions on the matter with the Swedish trade unions. Recognition of employee representation is being denied for the Virginian workforce.

- [Background report on Swedwood in the USA](#)
- [Report on events beginning July 2010](#)

The Swedish Press Group, Elanders, behaves in a totally different manner. In January 2009, at the same time as establishing its EWC, an international framework agreement was signed which promotes the recognition of employee representatives in the USA (see [report in EWC News 1/2009](#)).

- [Report on last Elanders EWC meeting](#)

French Automobile Group extends EWC



The international framework agreement for PSA Peugeot Citroën of March 2006 (see [report in EWC News 2/2006](#)) was updated and extended on 20th May 2010 in Paris. Provision is firstly made for the establishment of a World works council made up of all members of the European works council. Representatives then join from all countries with more than 500 employees, including Brazil and Argentina. For the time being Russia, where a new factory was opened in April 2010, will not participate.

- [Report on signing of the agreement](#)
- [Full text of the agreement](#)

Exceptional agreement at France Télécom

An agreement for the establishment of a World works council was signed on 23rd June 2010 in Paris, between several trade unions, the chairman of the European works council and the central management of France Télécom. The council is



composed of 33 members with a nine member steering committee; five from Europe, two from Africa and two from the rest of the world.

The World works council meets once annually for three days. Extraordinary meetings are possible when projects are expected to have a considerable effect on the workforce. World works council members have a provision for an annual 30 hours time off work in addition to meetings, and the steering committee members 100 hours. The agreement provides a right to training. It resembles French EWC agreements and is unusually elaborate for a World works council. In December 2006, France Télécom had also signed an international framework agreement on minimum social standards (see [report in EWC News 1/2007](#)).

- [Press release on signing of the agreement](#)
- [Management philosophy for social responsibility](#)

10. Interesting Web Pages



Own webpage for EWC

The French airline Air-France/KLM's European works council has recently put in place its own Internet website. A few of the 38 EWC members are introduced in a lively animated video. Besides contact information, important documents are available for download and weekly messages from other European works councils. The EWC was established in 2006 after the merger of the two former companies.

- [New EWC website for Air France-KLM](#)

Further exceptional European works council websites:

- [Axa](#)
- [Deutsche Bahn](#)
- [Frauenthal](#)
- [Generali](#)
- [General Motors](#)
- [UniCredit](#)

Transparent EWC Communication

Immediately following European Union accession in the year 2004, the Hungarian Energy group, MOL, created the very first EWC in Central-Eastern Europe. Now, a new website presents the results of a conference held from 23rd to 26th March 2010 in the Hungarian Spa town Zalakaros. Included is a document which describes the communication strategy of MOL employee representatives which may serve as a model for other European works councils.



- [Conference web page](#)
- [Presentation on national industrial relations](#) (in German)
- [Minutes of last EWC meeting](#)
- [New EWC communication strategy](#)

New Internet Forum for Works Councils in large beer groups



Around 100 employee representatives from the world's four largest beer groups met at a conference from 9th to 11th June 2010 in Blankenberge (Belgium) to discuss their European and World-Wide strategy. At the end of the conference a new web site was presented. The beer industry has undergone extensive restructuring in the past years. Such was the case for example, in October 2009, when the Belgian company Anheuser-Busch InBev decided to sell all of its East European breweries to a financial investor (see [report in EWC News 3/2009](#)).

- [Press release on launch of new web site](#)

- [Largest beer group's webpage for works councils](#)

Internet radio with news from the working world

RadioLabour

Recent reports from the working world can be heard on Radio Labour. Every Friday a five minute program is available with the events of the past week and every Sunday a 30 minute report is broadcast. The program is edited in Canada, and reporters provide information from all over the world.

- [Radio Labour Website](#)

We have arranged various further interesting web-pages into a [collection of links](#).

11. New publications



EWC manual for food and tourist sector

In December 2009, European Federation of Trade Unions in the Food Agriculture and Tourism (EFFAT) published a brochure on EWC activities in these sectors of the economy. It is based on the evaluation of a questionnaire and describes, in detail, all important aspects reformed in the new EWC Directive. A whole chapter is devoted to the effect of the financial market crisis on the food and tourist industries. The end of the brochure features a set of principles for transnational negotiations on the company level.

- [Manual download](#)

Transnational Project Management

In January 2010, The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) in Brussels published the 7th edition of a guide aimed at helping trade-unions with the development and running of transnational educational programs. Individual steps for project planning are covered as well as a list of the financial sources available from the European Union. The new edition of the guide is available in English and French. An older edition is also available in numerous Central and East European languages.



- [Further information and guide download](#)



Overview of participation in supervisory and administrative boards

In May 2010, the Hans Böckler Foundation submitted an updated reference aid for board employee representatives and covering in detail corporate law (PLC, Ltd) for each of the 27 European Union countries. The regulations for employee participation in supervisory and administrative boards are also included. Such an overview is particularly important for employee representatives affected by transnational mergers or involved in the establishment of a European Company (SE). The booklet is available only in German.

- [Brochure download](#)
 - [Brochure order](#)
 - [Info on European legal forms](#)
-

Manuel for EWC establishment in four languages

In the framework of the "EWC Networking" project supported financially by the EU, the Tirol Chamber of Workers published a short manual in June 2010 on the establishment of European works councils in German, English, Italian and Slovenian. The project was conducted with the help of partners from Austria, Italy and Slovenia. The training and consulting network "euro-works council.net" also provided technical support. On 1st September 2010, the project results were presented at a conference in the Slovenian capital, Ljubljana.

- [Manual download](#)



12. Training and consulting network "euro-works council.net": Examples of our work

Madrid Conference overshadowed by financial market crisis



On 13th and 14th May 2010, over 50 European works council members from Spain and guests from other countries met in Madrid to discuss the possibilities of the new EWC Directive – with special focus on crisis management. Spain has been particularly affected by the financial market crisis. In 2010, unemployment has climbed to over 20%, the highest value of all European industrialized countries.

The conference, which was organized with support of the Spanish Trade Union Confederation UGT, received such a large echo that many enrollments had to be turned down. For the UGT it was the first exchange of experience of this kind for many years. The event was organized together with the training and consulting network "euro-works council.net" in the context of a project ("REDITER"), financially promoted by the European Union. Similar conferences had already taken place in the past year in Italy and Belgium (see [report in EWC News 2/2009](#)).

- [Further information on the REDITER project](#)
- [Report on EWC project of the Spanish Trade Union Confederation CC.OO.](#)
- [Background: European works councils in Spain](#) (in German)
- [Background: The Spanish employee representation system](#) (in German)

EWC training in French Pharmaceuticals Group

From 16th to 18th June 2010, a training course was organized with the support of "euro-works council.net" in Berlin for around 60 members and substitutes of the Sanofi Aventis European works council. The employee representatives discussed their role and operation of their EWC and how communication - with both press and internal – could be improved. A full day was dedicated to strengthen their knowledge of German industrial relations and their dual vocational training. Sanofi Aventis established a EWC with 40 members after the merger in 2005, which replaced the EWCs of both former companies.



French-German EWC conference in Paris



On 6th July 2010, in the historical "Maison Internationale" building on the outskirts of Paris about 20 German and 20 French employee representatives gathered together to discuss their work experience in European works councils. Leading EWC representatives from the AXA Insurance Group, the airline company, Air France, the tire manufacturer, Michelin and the Steel and Technology group, ThyssenKrupp, made presentations on their respective activities. A participant from the French Ministry of Labour was also present.

This was the first time that a French-German conference had been organized in this form by the training and consulting network "euro-works council.net" and it is to be proposed again next year. On the previous day participants from Germany were able to familiarize themselves with the subtleties of French industrial relations in a



preparatory seminar.

- [French-German conference program](#) (in German)
- [Bericht über Mitbestimmung à la française](#) (in German)



SOLIDARITÄT IM NEUEN FORMAT

PUBLIK

European Trade Union systems

The June/July 2010 edition of the ver.di trade union member magazine devotes a two page article entitled "Other Countries, Other Customs" to the different European employee representation systems. Technical support was provided by Dr. Werner Altmeyer from the training and consulting network "euro-workscouncil.net". The ver.di magazine has an edition of over 2 million copies.

- [Article to read](#)
- [Article as pdf file for download](#)

13. Current Seminar Schedule

At present, enrollements are possible for the following seminars and workshops:

Employee representation in the European Company (SE)

13. – 16.09.2010 in Bonn

- [SE-Seminar Program](#)
- [SE-Seminar registration](#)



EWC Initiation – Basics for European Employee Representatives

15. – 17.09.2010 in the Redoute building, Bonn-Bad Godesberg (photo)
01. – 03.12.2010 in Hamburg

- [Workshop Program](#)
- [Workshop Registration](#)

EWC Workshop for professionals

11. – 13.10.2010 in Auel castle, Lohmar near Cologne

- [Workshop Program](#)
- [Workshop Registration](#)



EWC Workshop for Insurance Companies

28. + 29.10.2010 in ver.di headquarters, Berlin (photo)
Focus: Allianz, Axa, Ergo, Generali, Zürich

- [Workshop Program](#)
- [Workshop Registration](#)

Specialists seminar in Hamburg for EWC members



Transposition of the EWC Directive – current status

24.01.2011 in Hamburg

Employee representation in the United Kingdom after change of government

25.01.2011 in Hamburg

(each day can be booked separately)

- [Further information on this event](#)

Seminars from the Institute for further education of works councils (ifb)



Since 1998 the ifb has been offering seminars for European works councils which were developed in conjunction with the training and consultancy network "euro-works council.net".

Basic seminar: The path to the European Works Council

08 -- 12-11-2010 in Hannover
11 -- 15-04-2011 in Berlin
07 -- 11-11-2011 in Munich

Advanced seminar: Practical knowledge, EWC special

15 -- 19-11-2010 in Hamburg

- [Further information about the basic seminar](#)
- [Further information about the advanced seminar](#)

In-house events

Please find a survey of possible subjects of in-house events here:

- [Topics for in-house training](#)
- [Topics for in-house lectures](#)

14. Imprint

EWC News is published by:

Training and consultancy network "euro-betriebsrat.de" GbR
Von-der-Tann-Straße 4, D-20259 Hamburg
www.euro-betriebsrat.de (German)
www.euro-works council.net (English)
www.euro-ce.org (French)

Authors collaborating on this issue:
Werner Altmeyer, Sandro Maier, Rudolf Reitter, Bernhard Stelzl

Distributor of the German version: 13,899 readers
Distributor of the English version: 1,859 readers
Distributor of the French version: 1,824 readers

Newsletter archive: www.ewc-news.com

You can [obtain](#) or [cancel](#) EWC News here.

We are always pleased to receive comments and suggestions in relation to this newsletter as well as reports on your EWC activities. Please write us at: info@euro-works council.net