

Welcome to issue no. 3 / 2012 of EWC News.

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**Der EBR-Fachinformationsdienst**

The Academy for European Works Councils (EWC Academy)  
is there to inform you about the activities of European Works Councils and related subjects.

EWC News appears four times a year.  
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## 1. New highly explosive legal battle

### For the first time old agreement officially terminated

Current developments at Hewlett-Packard bring to light the legal status of more than 400 European work councils which were created before 22nd September 1996. On 24th July 2012 the EWC of the US IT-group gave notice to terminate their old agreement which was concluded in May 1996 under Belgian jurisdiction. 95% of the representatives voted in favor. At the same time they decided to take legal action against central management before Brussels' labour court for failing to carry out a consultation procedure.



According to article 14 of the new EWC Directive (article 13 of the old), agreements signed before 1996 or modified between June 2009 and June 2011 are excluded from EWC legislation. This was a concession given to employers during the legislative process and strengthens so-called “voluntary” EWC agreements, which were often concluded even below the standards of the old legislation. By providing the “threat” of having no works council for a period of up to three years, the new EWC Directive makes the termination of such agreements more difficult. As the first in Europe, the EWC of Hewlett-Packard could not be deterred anymore from this.

### Triggered by substantial cutbacks in the workforce

On 23rd May 2012, the US management announced 27,000 layoffs out of its 325,000 world-wide workforce. 8,000 jobs are to be lost in Europe alone, despite good earnings and no overstaffing. As a consequence an extraordinary meeting of the European works council was held in Amsterdam from 12th to 14th June 2012, where central management however gave no exact figures. This resembles, at that time, the situation of the IT-group, Alcatel Lucent (see [report in EWC News 1/2007](#)). Their EWC won a court ruling in Paris in April 2007 which still remains today a benchmark for the business reporting obligations of central management to the EWC (see [report in EWC News 2/2007](#)).

With a view to starting a well-substantiated consultation procedure, the Hewlett-Packard EWC requested the assistance of experts. Central management however refused and regards the EWC, as in 2008, as a sort of “rubber-stamping assembly” (see [report in EWC News 4/2008](#)). It took legal action, when actual figures had been released in France and the Netherlands and layoffs actually begun in Spain without waiting for any opinion of the EWC. The case is comparable to that of Visteon, the US automobile supplier, who wanted to close a plant in Spain without consulting the EWC and was likewise taken to court (see [report in EWC News 3/2011](#)). The cases do however differ in the applicability of the new EWC Directive, which applies in the case of Visteon and not for HP.

### Now new negotiations on EWC agreement

A formal termination of the Hewlett-Packard EWC agreement was inevitable for exactly this reason. Changes to the old agreement are now being negotiated for 18 months. If this fails, the EWC is dissolved in January 2014 and a special negotiating body (SNB) will be established to negotiate a full EWC agreement on the basis of the new legislation within three years. It remains to be seen whether central management will accept to continue under Belgian jurisdiction or prefer rather to dodge to the weaker British legislation. Currently two German labour courts are dealing with exactly the same issue (see [report in EWC News 2/2012](#)).

### The opinion of EWC chairman, Udo Verzagt



*I believe that the error in thinking of many German works council members stems from the fact that they have not sufficiently familiarized themselves with the French model, upon which the European works council is based. The rights for information and consultation are so strong that they actually force the employer to the negotiating table. On top of this at HP: the American Securities and Exchange Commission likes to see the official opinion of the EWC, before any actions are implemented. Our position can therefore be strengthened by only rendering an opinion once all the necessary information has really been put on the table.*

- [Full interview with Udo Verzagt](#) (in German)
- [Presentation on EWC work at HP](#) (in German)
- [Report on the legal filing against HP](#) (in German)
- [Trade unions' press release on the events at HP](#)

### Upcoming event on the subject

The current situation at Hewlett-Packard will be a subject on the agenda of the annual conference for European and SE works councils on 28th January 2013 in Hamburg. The EWC chairman, Udo Verzagt will report on the legal case and the negotiations.

TIPP !

- [Conference program](#)

## 2. Practical tip: How do EWC members inform the workforce?

## Collective responsibility of the whole council

Under the old legislation, European works council members were only accountable for their work and for reporting back on any consultations to their country of origin, to their electorate or to their delegating trade union.



Since June 2011, and providing they are covered by the new legislation, European works councils have the collective accountability to all countries for which the EWC is responsible. According to article 10 of the new EWC Directive “the members of the European works council shall have the means required, to represent collectively the interests of the employees” and shall inform them “of the content and outcome of the information and consultation procedure”. This also applies to countries or sites, which are not represented in the EWC or which do not have any employee representation. In such cases the EWC not only has the right, but the obligation to inform the workforce directly.

## Central or group works councils do not exist in every country

Generally speaking, communication runs smoothly in countries where the works councils of different sites are interconnected or in countries with only one site. How to manage however,

- if in Spain, there is no cross-location employee representation structure?
- if a British representative can only report on his own site and has no information about the situation of other British employees?
- if an Italian representative only informs his own trade union colleagues excluding the other trade unions represented in the workforce?
- when a Polish representative has no employee representation in the country?



## Networking is crucial

The new EWC Directive is clear: in all of these cases the European works council has the collective responsibility to fully inform all parts of the European workforce without exception. In practice however numerous questions emerge possibly involving substantial costs for the employer.

1. Can a representative from the Czech Republic organize a meeting to discuss with all of the employee representatives in the country at the expense of the employer?
2. Can a Belgian representative travel during his working hours to visit employees at other sites in the country at the expense of the employer?
3. Can the select committee assign one of its members to directly deal with the countries having no seat on the EWC or those having no employee representation and to personally visit sites?
4. Can the EWC organize a general assembly of employees in Hungary to inform them locally about the results of information and consultation? This question is of course of particular importance when the subsidiary in Hungary is about to be closed.

## The new Directive offers numerous opportunities for further initiatives

The answers to these questions have a great significance for the reinforcement of transnational co-operation. With a more thorough application of the new legal situation it can also make sense for the employer to create work councils or national works councils where they do not already exist. Why should the EWC be blown up to a “mega works council”, when much more appropriate structures can be created locally?

## Some practical examples

Already in 2005, the EWC agreement of Veolia Environnement, the French conglomerate, made provisions for the establishment of national social dialogue committees in all those countries having no central works council (see [report in EWC News 1/2011](#)). The SE agreement for the German Freudenberg group, from March 2012, not only includes the right of access to all sites but

also provides for preliminary meetings between different sites and/or divisions within a country with a view to making the appropriate connection with the SE works council (see [report in EWC News 2/2012](#)).

**N.B.: the collective responsibility does not apply automatically!**

Old agreements, which were concluded for the first time before September 1996, or those modified between June 2009 and June 2011 are excluded from the new legal situation. Renegotiation of the EWC agreement is absolutely necessary if it does not include sufficient provisions for this.

- [Background info: When is renegotiation necessary?](#) (in German)

### 3. Exemplary company agreements



**Quality of life at work is to be improved**

Areva, the nuclear power-plant supplier, signed an agreement with French trade unions, on 31st May 2012, for measures to improve the quality of life. It concerns not only the reduction of stress, but also work-life balance, teleworking and part-time working models including parental leave. An action plan is to be drawn up in every site with more than 50 employees. The role of health and safety committees is also to be strengthened. A monitoring body will supervise the agreement and submit an annual report.

In the first place the agreement will apply only to France. In some cases such agreements are extended to the European level after an initial test phase. An anti-discrimination agreement in Areva has already been in place since November 2006 and a personnel planning agreement since April 2011 (see [report in EWC News 1/2011](#)), both on a European level.

- [Report on the quality of life agreement](#)
- [Press release on the signing of the agreement](#) (in French)

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### Participation “in stile tedesco” (German style)

An agreement on extended employee participation rights was signed on 4th July 2012 in Sant'Agata Bolognese (Emilia Romagna region) for the 980 workers of Lamborghini. The Italian sportscar manufacturer belongs to Volkswagen group and was transposing a framework agreement, which was concluded in October 2009 between the central management and the company's World works council (see [report in EWC News 4/2009](#)).



The Italian employee representatives had previously been trained in 2011 for their expanded role with support of German works council members. The agreement provides for the establishment of bilateral working groups on topics such as organization of work, classification, health and safety as well as profit-sharing. The members of these working groups have the right to training and to experts. In the context of the traditionally conflict-oriented labour relations in Italy, the agreement can be considered as a milestone, since the employee representatives of the Lamborghini factory have a substantially stronger role. Volkswagen's management is of the opinion that successful management of change and lasting competitiveness can only be achieved with well trained employee representatives. In Italy, Lamborghini therefore represents a counter-model to Fiat, where the industrial collective agreements are currently being undermined in a conflict with trade unions.

- [Full text of the Lamborghini agreement](#) (in Italian)
- [Report on the situation at Fiat in Italy](#) (in German)
- [CGIL trade union flyer on collective bargaining at Fiat](#)





## Responsible workforce planning in French bank

A social charter for BNP Paribas was signed, on 11th July 2012 in Paris, with contents substantially surpassing those commonly present in such agreements. It took 18 months to negotiate with the participation of the European works council. The social charter defines a framework for the organization of restructuring and the involvement of local works councils in all countries falling under the scope of the EWC. Employee appraisals are to be subject to

European-wide minimum standards and workforce planning to be made transparent. Compliance to the agreement, in particular progress in individual countries, will be overseen once annually by the EWC in a meeting of its select committee.

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

## 4. Current reports on wages and industry

### Real wages in Europe continue to sink

The Hans Boeckler Foundation published the latest issue of its annual European wage report, in June 2012. According to this, price-adjusted earnings in the European Union in 2011 have sunk by around 0.9%. Minus 0.5% is expected for 2012, whereby the crisis countries such as Greece with 7.5% and Portugal with 6.1% are particularly strongly hit. The development is particularly positive in Bulgaria, where wage levels are still, however, very low. The largest increases in Western Europe are in Sweden and Austria, and Germany registers only a slight increase of 0.3% (click on table to zoom).



- [The results of the European wage report](#) (in German)
- [Documents from a workshop on European wage policies](#)



### Further job cutbacks in banking

On 3rd September 2012, UNI, the global union federation for skills and services published an analysis of a survey on employment in the finance industry. Although nearly all major banks are again making profits, they happily continue to downsize. Belgium is currently particularly strongly concerned by relocations to North Africa and the Middle East. In Scandinavia, the financial market crisis has had a less

violent effect on banking employees since it has apparently been cushioned by strong trade unions and wage policies. The study also reveals where working conditions have suffered the most: in France, Germany, Spain and in the UK.

- [Report on the analysis](#)
- [Analysis download](#)
- [Report on banking management philosophy after the crisis](#)

### Employment prospects in the energy industry

What effects will the reduction of greenhouse gases have on the situation of employees in the energy industry? How do credit ratings or the arrival of financial investors, including those from e.g. China, affect the development of the industry? Can the spin-off of distribution networks from the core energy production business and the emergence of international distribution network operators represent a danger for employee rights? These questions are



explored in a study carried out by Greenwich University on behalf of the European Federation of Public Services Unions (EPSU). It was published on 7th September 2012 and focuses on companies having a European work council.

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

## 5. European Commission initiatives

### Transnational company agreements are to be legally secured



On 10th September 2012 the European Commission in Brussels released a questionnaire to poll the opinion of social partners and interested members of the public on a planned legislative initiative to regulate transnational company agreements. The answers to nine questions can be submitted until the end of 2012. The questionnaire was prepared by a group of experts created in 2009.

Transnational company agreements exist since the year 2000, in a growing number of companies. They go beyond the limited scope of information and consultation within the EWC Directive by establishing binding regulations, for example on social minimum standards or the anticipation of change. At the beginning of 2012, 224 such agreements were registered in 144 companies and covering more than 10 million employees. Frequently the European works council is the initiator or is at least involved in the negotiation and the subsequent monitoring. Up to now, however, this new form of agreement is not legally water-tight. Are the agreements legally enforceable in all EU countries, including the UK? Who should be the contracting party: the European works council (= German model) or the trade unions (= French model) or both? (see [report in EWC News 3/2010](#)). So far, the employers' confederations have categorically rejected any legal regulation on this topic.

Already in 2006, a group of experts conducted an evaluation on the subject on behalf of the European Commission, and in 2008 the European Commission released its first paper on the topic together with an evaluation of the contents of agreements. There has been an on-line database of transnational company agreements since October 2011.

- [European Commission press release](#)
- [The questionnaire with the full text of the questions](#)
- [Group of experts - working documents](#)
- [On-line database of transnational company agreements](#)

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### Social Democrats in the European Parliament push for a more comprehensive initiative

This consultation could get an additional boost if the European Parliament passes a resolution which was requested on 8th June 2012 by the social-democratic parliamentary group in the Committee for Employment and Social Affairs. It goes far beyond the European Commission's working document and contains 16 concrete recommendations for employee rights in restructuring. It would hereby provide European wide minimum standards for anticipating workforce planning, social plans and for severance agreements.



Should the request obtain a majority in the Parliament, the European Commission would be forced to submit a draft Directive within three months or otherwise justify in detail the reasons for their inaction. However it is not at all certain that a majority will be reached during the vote which is planned for November 2012 during a plenary session of the European Parliament.

- [Social Democrat Request – full text](#)

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### No changes to the right to strike for the moment



On 11th September 2012 the European Commission withdrew its draft bill for the monitoring of labour disputes which it had first submitted in March 2012. It had come under substantial criticism from trade unions. Numerous parliaments from European Union countries had furthermore lodged official complaints to Brussels, since the bill would have unreasonably intervened in national affairs (see [report in EWC News 2/2012](#)).

- [Background info: the right to strike in 27 European Union countries](#)

## 6. Latecomers adopt new EWC legislation

### Greece nine months late

Finally results are to be seen following the warning from the European Commission, in November 2011, notifying three countries which had not yet transposed the new EWC Directive (see [report in EWC News 4/2011](#)). On 1st March 2012 the updated Greek EWC legislation was published in the official state gazette.



This followed several consultation rounds between the government and social partners. In the opinion of Greek trade unions the fourth version of the draft bill contained substantial improvements and was finally adopted as legislation. Although many companies have subsidiaries in Greece, only one company has established a EWC under Greek legislation: the Coca Cola Hellenic Bottling company. This listed company bottles beverages for the Coca Cola group and other companies and distributes them to Italy, Austria and Eastern Europe.

- [Report on the legislative process](#)
- [Study of European works councils in Greece](#)
- [Greek industrial trade union EWC project website](#)

### Italy 14 months late



Whereas the Italian legislator needed up to eight years to transpose (in 2002) the 1994 EWC Directive and hereby set a European record, it was now able to conclude, under pressure from the European Commission, 14 months late. The task which the Berlusconi government had half-heartedly put off for more than two years was settled in a limited time frame by the new Monti government. The revised EWC legislation came into force on 11th August 2012. It is based on a joint declaration between trade unions and employers' federations

from April 2011.

- [Full text of new EWC legislation](#) (in Italian)
- [Full text of the joint declaration](#)

### Luxembourg on the home stretch

At this stage, the Grand Duchy is the only European Union country that has not yet transposed the new EWC Directive. Although the draft bill has been before Parliament for consultation since November 2011, there are still some controversial issues such as the right to training for EWC members. Changes were made to the draft during the last meeting of the Employment and Labour Committee before the summer break on 6th July 2012. The final adoption of the legislation is imminent.



- [Documents on the parliamentary consultation](#) (in French)

## 7. Updated EWC agreements

### Italian insurance acts faster than the Italian government



The EWC agreement of Generali was modified on 4th May 2012 at company headquarters in Trieste to conform to the new EWC Directive standards. The insurance group which includes Volksfürsorge, has had a EWC since 1997 under Italian jurisdiction. Since there was no question hereby of a “voluntary” EWC agreement dating from the pre-1996 period, the basis for the agreement was implicitly the new Directive. The signing took place before the new delayed Italian EWC legislation came into force on 11th August 2012.

The EWC has been expanded from 37 to 43 members, with seven seats for Italy and six for Germany. It meets twice per year, whereby the second meeting is devoted to training without central management. Day-to-day operations are carried out by a steering committee. The EWC can also create its own working groups. If more than the half of the workforce in a country is affected by exceptional circumstances, the steering committee can request a meeting. This possibility concerning only one country goes beyond the minimum provisions of the new Directive and is based on provisions for social dialogue which were part of a European-wide social charter already concluded in November 2006 (see [report in EWC News 1/2007](#)).

- [Report on the EWC on the company web site](#)
- [Full text of the new EWC agreement](#)

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### Deutsche Post with extended consultation procedure

The EWC agreement of Deutsche Post DHL (German post office) was updated on 24th May 2012 during a meeting in Berlin (photo). The EWC, created in 2003, is one of the few “mixed” councils in Germany. Apart from the 50 employee representatives from 30 of the European common market countries, 25 management representatives are also members. The assembly meets twice annually. The steering committee has similarly two chairmen: one employer and one employee representative.



The agreement not only integrates the new standards for information and consultation, but also describes in detail the flow of the consultation procedure. This is finalized only if central management has given a substantiated reply to the opinion. The quantity and quality of business reporting have been defined in detail. In addition there are extended training rights which typically come with a EWC under German jurisdiction. The EWC agreement gives the right to all employees in Europe to establish employee representations and EWC members a right of access to all sites.

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

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### New EWC standards now also for India



An updated EWC agreement for the telecommunications company, Colt, was signed on 14th June 2012 in Munich. The EWC, created in 2004, is one of five under Luxembourg jurisdiction (together with RTL, ArcelorMittal, Transcom and Monier). Colt does business in fiber-optic networks and data centers for business customers and was founded 1992 in London by the US financial investor Fidelity. So it is not surprising that the EWC agreement bears a clear Anglo-Saxon

hallmark.

Extensively defined confidentiality rules are typical. The agreement even explicitly prohibits EWC



members from holding press conferences. Any offending members may lose their mandate. Furthermore the exclusion of any renegotiation of the EWC agreement, following changes in structure of the company, according to article 13 of the new European Union Directive, is rarely seen in any continental-European texts (see [report in EWC News 4/2011](#)).

On the other hand the scope of the agreement can be considered a positive point. Within the European and Middle-East region Colt has most employees in India, followed by the United Kingdom, Spain and Germany. India therefore has a voting member in the EWC. In the past, one ordinary plenary meeting of the EWC has already been held on the subcontinent. In Europe, 13 European Union countries and Switzerland are represented. The three member steering committee, with currently a German chairman, meets quarterly. Plenary sessions are held twice annually and last for three days. For conflict resolution there is a provision for an internal suspensive conciliation procedure. To a large extent the text adopts the definition of information and consultation from the new European Union Directive and in the future the EWC members have furthermore improved working conditions for their mandate.

We have put together a selection of EWC agreements on a [Website for download](#).

## 8. New European works councils

### TUI spin-off establishes its own EWC

A new EWC was established for Hapag Lloyd, the container shipping company, on 9th May 2012 at the company headquarters in Hamburg. The establishment of the EWC had become necessary as a consequence of its mother company, TUI, selling a majority share of its container division in 2008. Hapag Lloyd has 6,900 employees world-wide.



The EWC agreement was signed in October 2011. It provides for one annual plenary meeting and four meetings of the steering committee, which is made up of two German works council members and one representative each from Italy, Denmark and the Netherlands. Based on the new German EWC legislation the right to training was fixed at six days per term of office, which the EWC members can also use, to participate individually in external events.

- [Report on the constitutional meeting](#)

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### Spanish infrastructure company with clear consultation rules



After three years of negotiation a EWC agreement was signed for Abertis on 23rd July 2012 in Barcelona. Apart from motorways, multi-storey car parks and airports (including Luton in England) the company also does business in telecommunication equipment as well as logistics. The agreement is a benchmark for Spanish standards. It not only defines clearly transnational responsibilities, but also describes the exact flow of the consultation procedure including involvement of the workforce.

On the other hand, one of the weak points is the limited possibility for the select committee to meet together. The five members can only meet once per year immediately prior to plenary sessions, they are otherwise relegated to video conferencing. The EWC can establish its own working groups on topics such as health and safety. However these must not generate any costs and can only co-operate electronically. The EWC has a right of access to all sites throughout Europe and a right to training. Spain has eleven representatives in the EWC, France four, Sweden and the United Kingdom one each. Following texts are available only in Spanish:

- [Report on the signing of the agreement](#)
  - [Full text of the EWC agreement](#)
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## Acid test for EWC rights in the United Kingdom

EasyJet, the British airline with headquarters in Luton has had a European works council in place since end 2011 based on the subsidiary requirements of the new British EWC legislation. The negotiations for a EWC agreement to cover the 6,000 employees in seven EU-countries, which had begun in summer 2008, could not be concluded successfully. Under the old legislation the failure of such negotiations would have been a disadvantage for employees, whereas under the new it is exactly the opposite. The example of Europe's second largest low-cost airline after Ryanair shows how important the new EWC Directive is for strengthening the employee position. In the meantime, Anglo-Saxon oriented management consultants strongly advise against the establishment of a EWC, "à la easyJet", without the conclusion of an adequate EWC agreement.



Already, in June 2008, the trade union Unite had complained about irregularities in the election of SNB members in the United Kingdom, which led to a first ruling of the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC). Unite took central management of easyJet to court on 12th January 2012 over training rights for EWC members and their funding. In the meantime the case has been withdrawn, since, up to now there are no legally defined standards which could also be applicable for other companies in the United Kingdom. It remains legally uncertain whether EWC members can freely select themselves their supplier for training in opposition to the opinion of the employer and nevertheless the costs be borne by the employer (see [report in EWC News 2/2012](#)).

In the meantime easyJet central management has yielded to the pressure of the EWC and carried out a French style consultation procedure for the planned closure of its installation in Madrid. EWC members were able to receive detailed advice from business experts. Central management even accepted not to begin negotiations with Spanish trade unions until the EWC opinion was rendered.

- [CAC ruling of 2008](#)
- [Report on legal case for training rights](#)
- [Report on consultation procedure for the planned closure in Madrid](#)

## 9. The view beyond Europe

### Saab agrees on world-wide minimum standards



Saab, the Swedish arms and aircraft manufacturer, signed an international framework agreement with the trade unions in Stockholm on 13th June 2012, guaranteeing not only the respect of core-working standards for its 13,000 world-wide employees but also the recognition of employee representation. Suppliers are also included in its scope and in a supplementary protocol it excludes the promotion of "yellow" company unions by the employer. These are similar to the guarantees given by Electrolux, the Swedish electrical group in December 2010 (see [report in EWC News](#)

[1/2011](#)).

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

### Siemens halfheartedly signs

After long discussions, an international framework agreement for Siemens was signed on 25th July 2012 in Frankfurt-on-Main. It is based on the principles of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and emphasizes constructive co-operation with employee representatives throughout the world. This includes the freedom to establish employee representation bodies. Compliance to the agreement is controlled once annually by a delegation from IG-Metall and the German central works council. This includes meetings organized on a rota-basis with local employee representatives in different parts of the world. The particularity of this agreement is the fact that the



European works council was not involved.

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

The agreement was already getting its first practical test at the beginning of September 2012: local management at a US-based site had assigned special advisors to prevent the establishment of an employee representation. The activity is also called “union busting”. IG-Metall protested to central management in Munich for violation of the international framework agreement. Similar incidents are also reported time and time again from other companies (see [report in EWC News 3/2010](#)).

- [Report on events in the USA](#)
- [IG-Metall declaration of solidarity](#)
- [Study on union busting in Europe](#)

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### Spanish building group commits to social standards



An international framework agreement was signed on 19th September 2012 in Madrid between Obrascon Huarte Lain (OHL), and the Building and Wood Worker's International (BWI). The agreement guarantees a social partnership and collective bargaining for its 23,000 world-wide employees. Central management and Spanish trade unions will review compliance to the agreement once annually. The agreement provides conciliation rules for any violations: firstly the problems are discussed with local management, and subsequently within the monitoring group at the company headquarters in Madrid (photo).

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

### 10. Interesting websites

#### Meta translation service – financed by the EU



The multiplicity of languages is a great challenge for the European integration. Apart from the 23 official languages in the EU, there are also numerous minority languages e.g. Catalan. The European institutions in Brussels are major employers for translators and interpreters. Over the last few years and with financial support from the EU an on-line translation service has been developed, which can not only be used free of charge, but which differs qualitatively from other services such as Google or Babylon: it queries several programs simultaneously and presents the different results alongside each another. Entire web sites can even be translated. The translation service is coordinated by a research institute in Budapest.

- [Meta translation service input screen](#)
- [Information about the project](#)

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### European Labour Law Network



**European  
Labour Law  
Network**

The European Labour Law Network has been acting since 2008 as official counsel to the European Commission for questions concerning labour legislation. The network, which is composed of scientists from all EU-countries, runs its own website. This contains up-to-date information on the developments in European and national labour law. The network is administered by the Universities of Frankfurt-on-Main and Leiden in the Netherlands.

- [Network website](#)
- [Current developments in the European labour law](#)

- [Current developments in the national labour law](#)

## Lobbyism in Brussels

The Cologne based association, Lobby Control, has the goal of promoting awareness on power structures and on the hidden influence of business on both German and EU policy making. It runs Lobbypedia, which is an on-line encyclopedia including critical reports on lobbyism and where individual cases are documented. A new edition of Lobby Planet Brussels, a city plan of the EU-quarter with the lobby hotspots was released in September 2012. The website is available only in German.



- [Lobby Control website](#)
- [Lobbypedia, the on-line encyclopedia](#)
- [Information on Lobby Planet Brussels](#)

## International solidarity in the textile supply chain



The working conditions of female production workers in the textile industry in Southeast-Asian countries are becoming more and more visible through the exCHAINS project supported by the ver.di trade union. Background information on the individual countries can also be consulted on the website.

- [Project website](#) (in German)

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

## 11. New publications

### Intercultural Business Etiquette - not only for managers

A new edition of Business Knigge International (International Business Etiquette) was published In spring 2012, covering individually the most important EU-countries. Works councils members can learn in this book, why you have to plan more time in France, why, in England, small talk outside the meeting is nearly everything, how important empathy is, as a basis for any discussion with Italians, that the most important things are settled around the dinner table in Spain and why it's better never to interrupt a speaker from Finland. Body language and cultural pitfalls are presented in detail. There is a new chapter on appropriate etiquette in electronic communication. The book is only available in German.



- [Further information on the book](#)
- [Contents sample for download](#)
- [Book on-line order](#)

### Upcoming event: Intercultural communication for works council members

German-speaking works council members will be trained from 27th to 29th May 2013 by a specialist on intercultural communication. The seminar will take place in Hamburg on board the Rickmer Rickmers, a museum ship on the Elbe.



- [Intercultural communication seminar program](#)





## Labour relations in South-East Europe

In spring 2012, the regional project of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Belgrade, "Labour Relations and Social Dialogue in South-East Europe" released a national yearly review of eleven countries from the Adriatic to the Black sea. This includes the EU-countries Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria as well as the acceding country Croatia, which will join the EU as of 1st July 2013 (see [report in EWC News 2/2010](#)). The yearly updates for each country have already existed for some time. The country reports are supplemented by some articles on topics focusing on South-East Europe.

- [Regional project website with links to the publications](#)

## Upcoming events: Seminars in South-East Europe

A German-Romanian conference for works council members will be held from 20th to 22nd March 2013 in Bucharest and from 3rd to 5th July 2013, EWC members can get on-the-spot information in Croatia about the new EU country's labour legislation.

TIPP !

- [Overview of all seminar dates for 2013](#)

## Country review of labour inspectors

In June 2012, the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU), in Brussels published a review on the role and responsibilities of labour inspectors in 15 countries. Government authorities of this kind in Germany, Denmark and the United Kingdom have the least power, since they are only responsible for health and safety questions in the workplace. In most EU-countries, however, the responsibility of the labour inspectors goes a lot further; they monitor employment, working hours, wages and equal treatment for men and women. The national labour inspectors hereby take on the responsibilities that are attributed to the works councils in Germany.



- [Brochure download](#)



## Current situation of Polish trade unions

The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) in Brussels released, in June 2012, the second country report on trade unions in Central and East Europe (the first review of this series on the Czech Republic was published in December 2010, see [report in EWC News 4/2010](#)). This comprehensive 98 page work digs deep into the history of the Polish trade union movement, describes today's organization with its internal divisions as well as the development of its membership. We learn that only 10% of the Polish working population was unionized in 2010. The report appendix contains a time-table of major events in industrial relations and an extensive trade union glossary. One of the authors, Dr. Jan Czarzasty, was a speaker at the EWC Academy Hamburg seminar in January 2012.

- [Report download](#)
- [Further information on the series of reports](#)
- [Hamburg seminar report](#)
- [Friedrich Ebert Foundation review on Polish trade unions](#)

We have arranged further technical literature on a [literature website](#).

## 12. The EWC Academy: Examples of our work

### Reporting system for employee representatives

During a project meeting, held in Budapest from 26th to 27th June 2012, members of the Donata Holding's SE works council (photo) developed an Internet-based reporting system for business data and key employment figures. The tool was developed with support from the EWC Academy and aims at improving the use of the SE works council's information and consultation rights particularly prior to any transnational restructuring.



The SE works council of the perfume group is presently confronted with workforce relocations. Court proceedings have been underway in the Ludwigshafen labour courts since February 2012, for the violation of information and consultation rights (see [report in EWC News 1/2012](#)). The EWC Academy acts as adviser to the SE works council.

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### Space travel division of EADS about to update EWC agreement



The EWC Academy advised the Astrium EWC, during a plenary meeting held on 5th July 2012 in Bremen, on the possibilities to adapt the EWC agreement to the new EU-standards. The European Astrium Space Travel Committee - as the EWC is officially called - represents 15,000 employees of the EADS space travel division in Germany, France, Spain, Great Britain and the Netherlands. Under the roof of EADS Holding there are three further European divisional works councils, e.g. for Airbus (see [report in EWC News 1/2012](#)).

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### Third French-German works council conference in Paris

Approximately 25 seminar participants came together on 18th September 2012 in the "Maison Internationale", a historical building on the outskirts of Paris (photo), to discuss ways of safeguarding employment in times of crisis. This was the third time running that the meeting took place. Representatives from Finland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom were participating for the first time. Practical examples from TUI, the tourist group and the automobile supplier Bosch were on the agenda. On the previous day small groups of non-French speaking participants were able to familiarize themselves with the subtleties of French labour relations. A visit to a French works council trade-fair was programmed for the day after the seminar.



- [Report on employee participation "à la française"](#) (in German)

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### German Italian EWC seminar in Bolzano



Employee representatives from Germany, Italy and South Tyrol met on 27th and 28th September 2012 in Bolzano (photo), to gain knowledge on the respective labour relation system of the other country. A German EWC member reported on the activities of the Italian bank, UniCredit, on a European level and Italian representatives from the EWC of the German Volkswagen group. South

Tyrol helped bridge the gap between the two linguistic areas and facilitated mutual understanding.

- [Structure of Italian collective bargaining system](#)
- [Employee representation in Italian companies](#)
- [Up-to-date review of Italian trade unions](#) (in German)

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### Training for British American Tobacco EWC

The plenary meeting of the BAT EWC was held on 1st and 2nd October 2012 in Madrid. The EWC Academy gave training on the different systems of labour relations to around 25 representatives participating from almost all European Union countries. The world's second largest tobacco company has its head office in London and established its EWC in 1996.



### 13. Current training schedule



#### Training schedule brochure 2013

The EWC Academy and its forerunner organization have been organizing and delivering conferences and seminars for the members of European works councils, SE works councils and special negotiation bodies since January 2009. So far 406 employee representatives from 173 companies have taken part including many of them for several times. This represents 17% of all companies in Europe with an established EWC. In addition there were numerous in-house training sessions. For the year 2013 a new brochure is now available, giving an overview of the planned events. Additional events and topics are in preparation.

- [2013 training schedule for download](#)

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### German-British works council conference in London (only few places left)



For the second time already a conference is being held on 25th and 26th October 2012 in London. The meeting will be simultaneously interpreted. It is aimed at members of European works councils who fall under British legislation, as well as at employee representatives from Germany and other countries wishing to familiarize themselves with the British system.

- [Report on the last conference in October 2011](#)
- [Program of the 2012 works council conference](#)

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### Conference for women on Gender Mainstreaming

This conference taking place in Hamburg, apart from examining women's participation in supervisory boards will also study possible courses of action for works councils to prevent discrimination and to promote the reconciliation of professional and family lives. The program on 15th and 16th November 2012 includes lectures from female academics as well as practical examples of EWC and national works councils' experience in equal treatment.



- [Conference program](#) (in German)

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## Employee representation in international companies



A seminar is taking place in Hamburg, from 19th to 23rd November 2012, which will not only interest EWC members, but also members of national works councils, representatives in supervisory boards as well as works council assistants in international companies. The speakers are the lady journalist, Michaela Böhm, as well as Klaus Franz, who has been the EWC chairman of General Motors for many years (see photo).

- [Seminar program](#) (in German)

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## 5th Hamburg Conference for European and SE works councils

As every year since January 2009, a two-day conference is being organised in Hamburg covering the following topics:

**Monday, 28th January 2013:** Current trends in the EWC landscape - new court rulings and examples of EWC work

**Tuesday, 29th January 2013:** Visit to the Airbus plant in Hamburg and presentation by members of the Airbus EWC



- [Program and registration from](#)
- [Report of the last Hamburg Conference](#)

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## In-house events

Please find a summary of possible topics for in-house events here:

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

## 14. Imprint

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