



Welcome to issue no. 4 / 2008 of EWC News.

December 2008

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. New EWC Directive can become effective](#)
- [2. Which changes brings the new Directive?](#)
- [3. New collective bargaining law in France](#)
- [4. Mergers keep the EWC busy](#)
- [5. Foundation of European works councils](#)
- [6. Europe-wide EWC contract policy](#)
- [7. Worldwide framework agreements](#)
- [8. The world of SE works councils](#)
- [9. Newsletter for workers' representatives](#)
- [10. Interesting web pages](#)
- [11. New publications](#)
- [12. Training and consultancy network " euro-workscouncil.net ": Examples of our work](#)
- [13. Details of seminars planned](#)
- [14. Imprint](#)

1. New EWC Directive can become effective

Only British government refused its consent



The Council of Ministers agreed on the new Directive on European works councils on December 17th, 2008 in Brussels. On the day before the European Parliament had agreed in a plenary session with a large majority. The French Minister of Labour Xavier Bertrand (on the photo on the left, together with EU social Commissioner Vladimír Špidla) wanted to complete the procedure politically under the French Presidency in 2008. Since linguistic problems with the translation of the Directive could not be processed on time, the formal decision making will take place in a meeting of the Council of Ministers in January 2009.

26 governments from Bulgaria to Ireland from Portugal to Estonia accepted the compromise, only

the British Labour government did not want to help to carry the bill. The U.S. position is fundamentally more pragmatic against this. The adoption of the Directive is welcomed particularly by the American Chamber of Commerce in Germany because of planning safety, so that transparency is guaranteed in the European branch offices of U.S. companies.

- [Report from the meeting of the Council of Ministers](#)
- [Press release of the German Department of Employment](#) (in German)
- [Press release of the German Employers' Federation](#) (in German)
- [Report about the vote in the European Parliament](#)
- [Press release of the SPD group in the Bundestag](#) (in German)
- [Press statement of the German American chamber of commerce](#)

A common recommendation of the trade unions and employers' federations of August 29th, 2008 had already paved the way to the new Directive (see [report in EWC News 3/2008](#)). On November 17th, 2008, the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament then decided with the voices of Social Democrats, Greens, the Left and parts of its conservative members on several changes on the bill which meets trade union demands. On December 4th, 2008 the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), a consulting committee from representatives of unions, employers and other groups, demanded an improved EWC Directive. Already in September 2006 EESC had voiced in favour of it.

- [Assessment of the committee meeting of the European Parliament](#) (in German)
- [Press release of the EESC](#)
- [The EESC statement in the wording](#)

Triologue conversations brought about the breakthrough

There were informal conversations behind the scenes between European Commission, European Parliament and Council of Ministers at the beginning of December 2008. This so-called triologue led to a compromise to which the unions too finally agreed. The new EWC Directive replaces the text from the year 1994 and has to be converted within two years into the legal system of all countries of the European single market. All EU countries as well as Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein are included. Future EU countries like Croatia or Turkey will use the Directive as of the day of their joining.

- [Press release of the social democrats for the triologue conversations](#)
- [Detailed documentation of the revision procedure since 1999](#)

Hamburg specialist conference to the new EWC Directive: What comes towards us there?



Many EWC members are not sure of the new legal situation and would like to design their current EWC agreement on the basis of the new Directive. Works council members who still have the EWC foundation ahead also would like to include the new regulations early in their considerations. A number of questions will arise not least also for lawyers if the new EWC Directive is converted in the national legal system.

The training and consultancy network " euro-works council.net " offers the opportunity on **January 26th, 2009** on an EWC specialist conference in Hamburg to discuss the new legal situation with experts from Brussels as well as from German science and practice in detail.

- [Further information about the EWC specialist conference in Hamburg](#) (in German)

Further specialist conferences to the new EWC Directive

The great response to this specialist conference has induced us to offer further dates. At present, the following events are in cooperation with partners in Italy and Belgium in the planning:



Rom, Villa Borghese, May 7/8th, 2009 (simultaneous interpretation German -- Italian available, English on request)

Liège in summer 2009 (an exact appointment will soon be fixed, simultaneous interpretation German -- French available, English on request)

German works council members can take part according to § 37, para. 6, Works Constitution Act. Non-binding reservations are already possible over the [contact form](#). We then inform about the programme and the details on the participation on time.

2. Which changes brings the new Directive?

Strengthening of the EWC only possible by negotiation



Relocations as in the case of Nokia (see [report in EWC News 1/2008](#)) are no longer possible in this form in future writes the German newspaper Handelsblatt under the heading "European works councils get more powerful". This is, however, only valid in a qualified sense, because all currently valid EWC agreements are operated on a continuation permit until they are discontinued. At first better regulations must be negotiated in every company. The legislator will improve merely the minimum regulations which are effective in the case of the breakdown of the negotiations. We have listed the most important points below.

- [The Handelsblatt article in the wording](#) (in German)

Information and consultation is defined better

The concept "information" is used repeatedly but not defined in the old EWC Directive. The new Directive names features which must be fulfilled in order to speak about a proper information. The consultation procedure is also described more exactly than before. In future European works councils shall be entitled to handle cross-border measures if a decision of central management has consequences in another country (as the SE legislation already provides for).

The role of the steering committee is strengthened

For the first time it gets the right to independent meetings and is increased personally.

Closer cooperation with national works councils

Since the European works council is only responsible for transnational issues, its work must be better linked to the national works councils. This also includes the duty of EWC members to report to the staff of its country of origin.

Right for training

For the first time a legal right is confirmed legally on training measures.

Renegotiation of EWC agreements at mergers

In future there will be the right to terminate and renegotiate older EWC agreements at mergers and extensive restructurings.

Effective and deterrent sanctions

The wording that all countries must provide " effective, dissuasive and proportionate sanctions " in their respective EWC laws if the rights of the European works council are violated is part of the most important points. This can be an injunctive relief as it was already succeeded in the case of the European works council of Gaz de France in front of the court (see [report in EWC News 1/2008](#)). A powerful European works council does not come along as a "present from Brussels" but only by courageous workers' representatives, who if necessary call in their rights also in front of the court. Remarkable: In Germany there isn't any single verdict, which relates to the rights of an EWC. So it remains much to do for works councils.

- [The new EWC Directive in the wording](#)
- [Summary of the most important changes](#) (in German)

Special problems for British European works councils

There isn't any tradition of information and consultation in the United Kingdom, works councils are a cultural alien element both for British trade unions and for the management differently than in the continental EU countries. Till now there is a large number of European works councils on the basis of British law, the quality of these agreements however stays frequently behind the continental standards. Good EWC regulations can only be found in companies with a high degree of trade union membership.



During the revision process British government had benevolently accompanied the employers' lobby campaign against the new Directive (see [report in EWC News 3/2008](#)), although Labour members of the European Parliament supported the trade unions' position. It is up to the national parliaments now as they fill the new regulations with lives. While there is a good chance in many old EU countries (France, Benelux, Germany, Scandinavia) for clear decisions of the legislator, an implementation in conformity with the EU is expected particularly in the United Kingdom with tension. One will have to watch very considerably also in some Eastern European countries how the parliaments handle this topic. Shall the violation of EWC rights remain a peccadillo or draw hard conclusions in front of the court? It will be decisive whether effective and deterrent sanctions of the workers' representatives can be sued for also in front of British or Polish courts.

- [Background: Information and consultation in the UK and Poland](#) (in German)
- [Presentation: European works councils in the UK](#)
- [Case study to the legal personality of British European works councils](#)
- [Interview with the EWC coordinator of the British TUC](#)

3. New collective bargaining law in France

Special role of the five trade union confederations to be removed



A reform of the collective bargaining system which ends the consensus of the post-war period about the representativeness of trade unions becomes effective in France on January 1st, 2009. It orientates itself at the pragmatic rules in Spain. Till now it was usual in France, that the status of the trade union representativeness was awarded by the government. This was carried out last in 1966 as the CFDT as a new confederation joined. The origins of this procedure are located in the Cold War when it was all about to break the supremacy of the communist CGT. The Sarkozy government has terminated this chapter of the French labour legislation with the law of August 20th, 2008.

- [The law of August 20th, 2008 in the wording](#) (in French)

Any trade union which has got the status of representativeness from the government can conclude **in-plant collective agreements** till now even if it has only one single member in the company and doesn't get support in works council elections. In future the representativeness of an organisation will be decided by works council elections -- and so by the workforce itself. Trade unions, which gain less than 10% of the electoral vote in the company can conclude no more in-plant agreements and cannot appoint any trade union delegates. For an in-plant agreement to be valid the signing trade unions must unite at least 30% of the electoral vote. The number of members is not important.

For valid **regional or industry-wide collective agreements** in future 8% of the votes in elections to all works councils of the area are required. In order to measure the representativeness French employers must therefore notify the Department of Employment of the results on a special form within two weeks after completion of the works council elections.

Similar regulations are already valid in Spain for many years and led to a constructive cooperation of Spanish trade unions in the bargaining policy. In Spain all collective agreements are actually signed by CC.OO. and UGT together. While trade unions are bundling their strength in many parts of Europe by mergers, French organisations split themselves always further up and even fight

themselves. It is expected this trend is turning now, because small unions lose their prerogatives with the new law.

No changes to the freedom to strike

The right to strike remains an individual human right also in future, which cannot be controlled by any trade union and cannot be limited by any employer. In the opinion of French courts, three participants are enough to carry out a legal strike. France knows neither strike ballots nor strike pay. Employers must therefore prove a high sensibility to guarantee industrial peace. The following contributions light the role of shop floor representation and the trade union landscape (only available in German):

- [The French system of the workers' representation](#)
- [Background: Works council elections in France](#)
- [The Spanish system of workers' representation](#)

4. Mergers keep the EWC busy

Staff cuts after merger of tobacco groups



Workers' representatives of Imperial Tobacco met in Brussels on October 10th, 2008 to develop a common strategy against the announced reduction of 2,600 jobs. The restructuring was published by central management in Bristol in July 2008, it is a result of the merger with Altadis. The Spanish tobacco company had been bought up by Imperial Tobacco in February 2008. The announcement of staff reductions led already to strikes in France and Spain.

At present, there are two European works councils in the group. Imperial Tobacco had founded an EWC according to British law in 1996 and Altadis in 2002 an EWC according to Spanish law. Both now shall be brought together to one single council. In the opinion of the trade unions it is required that the EWC of Imperial Tobacco takes part in all EWC meetings of the steering committee of Altadis as of now to ensure a coordinated strategy.

- [Press release about the planned restructurings](#)

European-wide action day at HP and EDS

Workers' representatives of the two IT firms Hewlett-Packard (HP) and Electronic Data System (EDS) met in Brussels on October 15th, 2008 to analyse the joined EWC meeting of September 25th, 2008 (see [report in EWC News 3/2008](#)). HP had taken over the competitor EDS in August 2008. Workers' representatives criticize that central management violates the EWC Directive because it confronts the two European works councils with perfected facts and doesn't carry out any consultation. The aim of consultation for the two works councils is to take on negotiations about the restructuring.



As a reaction to the cut of almost 10,000 jobs due to the merger, the highest reduction in the history of both companies, workers' representatives of HP and EDS organized a European-wide action day on November 13th, 2008. After that central management agreed to the legally specified consultation procedure, but refused to mention exact numbers about dismissals or to specify the plans per country more exactly. Workers' representatives of both enterprises discussed the further procedure on December 8th, 2008 in Brussels. The behaviour of HP central management reminds strongly of the electronics company Alcatel-Lucent where the EWC had obtained a judgement in April 2007 (see [report in EWC News 2/2007](#)).

- [The demands of October 15th, 2008](#)
 - [Photos and reports of the action day in France](#) (in French)
 - [Further country reports on the action day](#)
 - [Press release after the meeting of December 8th, 2008](#)
-

Bank works councils discuss merger

Representatives of the European works councils of BNP Paribas and Fortis met in Paris for the first time on October 20th, 2008 to discuss the forthcoming merger. The largest French commercial bank BNP Paribas wants to take on all activities of the Belgian Luxembourg finance group of Fortis outside the Netherlands as a result of the financial crisis. The Dutch part of Fortis had been nationalized on October 3rd, 2008.



From an economic point of view the merger would make sense as both banks complete each other geographically, so the workers' representatives. They demanded however the development of a social chapter in the context of the merger contract. The European works council of Fortis which had been founded according to Belgian law in 1996 was officially informed about the merger in a plenary session on November 20th, 2008. Presumably it will soon be combined with the EWC of BNP Paribas also founded in 1996 according to French law. Shortly before Christmas the merger plan led to a governmental crisis in Belgium. The following documents are available only in French:

- [Press release of the two European works councils](#)
- [Further information about the EWC of BNP Paribas](#)

5. Foundation of European works councils

New EWC of Frauenthal Holding with its own Internet Blog



The European works council of the Austrian motorcar supplier and sanitary wholesaler Frauenthal constituted itself in Vienna on October 29th/30th, 2008. The EWC agreement dates of July 3rd, 2008.

The EWC already has an internet page of its own with a Blog. All information is available in seven languages, there is also a portrait of all EWC members and the steering committee. The training and consultancy network "euro-works council.net" was prior to the EWC foundation involved in the drafting of corner points (see [report in EWC News 4/2007](#)).

- [The web page of the Frauenthal Holding EWC](#)
- [The EWC agreement in the wording](#) (in German)
- [The standing orders the EWC in the wording](#) (in German)

Weak EWC regulations at ball bearing manufacturer

The U.S. company Timken has established an European works council according to British law, the "Timken European Communication Council". The negotiations were completed on May 30th, 2008 and on September 1st, 2008 the EWC agreement signed. In the European comparison however it includes regulations only below average.



The EWC is a mixed committee which meets once a year and to which representatives of the management also belong. The employees' side consists of twelve delegates from 9 countries among this two each from France, Poland and Romania. The steering committee consists of two employers and two workers' representatives. There are strict rules on confidentiality, only one single training day is scheduled every four years. A clause provides that the agreement is checked as soon as the new EWC Directive has been transposed into British law.

IT service provider in the tourism sector founds EWC



An EWC agreement was signed for Amadeus according to Spanish law on September 19th, 2008. The company from Madrid delivers IT service for the tourist industry (e.g. booking platforms) and belongs to a finance investor. Atypical is the fact for Spain that the EWC is a mixed body and the chairmanship is with the employer. The half-yearly meetings are carried out in English without interpreters. The steering committee consists of five workers' representatives from France, Germany, Spain and another two countries. All EWC members get 50 hours time-off per annum, the members of the steering committee 70, supplementary to the customs in their home countries and the time of EWC meetings. Furthermore training is provided for the EWC.

Energy group sets standards for EWC agreements

An EWC agreement was signed on December 5th, 2008 for the Italian electricity provider Enel in Rome whose daughters are mainly in Spain and Eastern Europe. At the take-over of the Spanish energy group of Endesa Enel could in 2006 assert itself against its German competitor E.ON. Endesa hadn't formed an EWC yet but signed an international framework agreement about social standards.



The European works council of Enel consists of twenty members and meets twice every year. It chooses a steering committee from five members who meet four times per annum. The definition of information and consultation already orientates itself at the new EWC Directive, four training days are scheduled per annum. With that Enel has one of the best EWC agreements according to Italian law and can compete with the standard of the bank group of UniCredit (see [report in EWC News 1/2007](#)).

- [Report about the contents of the EWC agreement](#)
- [The framework agreement of Endesa in the wording](#)

Texts of numerous EWC agreements are available on a [download page](#).

6. Europe-wide EWC contract policy

Luxury goods group strengthens social responsibility



The European works council of the French group PPR signed two transnational collective agreements with the central management in Paris on October 14th, 2008. They define principles about the equal treatment of handicapped persons and about the personnel policy towards older employees. PPR is the holding company of the luxury goods group Gucci (thus also Yves Saint Laurent), the sports equipment manufacturer Puma, the media and bookshop chain Fnac and the furniture dealer Conforama. PPR has an European works council according to French law since 1999 with delegates from 15 countries.

- [Press release for the signing of the agreements](#)
- [The company ethic of PPR](#)

Charter on sustainable development

During a meeting in Brussels the European works council of the French chemistry and pharmaceutical group Solvay signed a charter on sustainable development and social responsibility with central management on November 27th, 2008. Component of the agreement is not only a regular



dialog with the EWC about the aims of the company in this area but also the definition of a common vision.

- [Press release for the signing of the charter](#)

7. Worldwide framework agreements

Norwegian companies take on social responsibility

The central management of the Norwegian conglomerate Aker signed an international framework agreement with the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) in Oslo on October 28th, 2008. The worldwide compliance with social minimum standards and the development of good work relations is aim in all parts of the group which is working in the offshore, fishing, shipyard and construction area in 35 countries with 27,000 employees. Already since 1996 an European works council exists at Aker.

- [Report of the signing of the agreement](#)
- [The agreement in the wording](#)



An international framework agreement was signed in Geneva between the Norwegian oil and gas group StatoilHydro and the International Federation of Chemical Workers' Unions (ICEM) on November 13th, 2008. It replaces the agreement for Statoil of 1998 which was regarded as a milestone for trade union rights, health and safety at work and internal further education. After the merger with Norsk Hydro in October 2007 almost all 30,000 employees in 40 countries are now included. Statoil was also part of the pioneers at the foundation of an

European works council in the year 1996.

- [Report of the signing of the agreement](#)
- [The agreement in the wording](#)

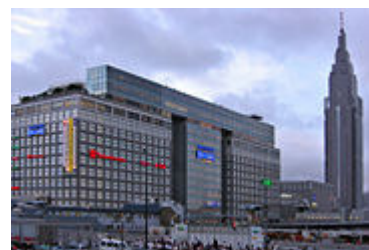
Trade union rights in the Freudenberg consortium

On November 3rd, 2008 central management of the German chemical enterprise Freudenberg signed an amendment to the framework agreement from the year 2000 with the International Federation of Chemical Workers' Unions (ICEM). With this the company respects the decision of all employees to join a trade union of one's choice. ICEM will worldwide support a constructive dialog between workers and management in all branch offices. A meeting of the management with trade union representatives in Canada and the USA had gone ahead in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on October 1st, 2008. The European works council of Freudenberg founded in 1996 is engaged strongly in the protection of health (see [report in EWC News 4/2007](#)).

- [Report of the signing of the agreement](#)
- [The agreement from the year 2000 in the wording](#)

Japanese department store chain with framework agreement

A Japanese company signed for the first time an international framework agreement on November 11th, 2008. The central management of the department store chain Takashimaya (on the photo the branch office in Tokyo) commits itself to a worldwide social dialog with trade unions. In Europe the company has till now only one single branch office in the city centre of Paris and therefore doesn't fall under the EWC Directive yet.



- [Report of the signing of the agreement](#)
-

For the first time agreement in a British service industry



A worldwide valid agreement on ethical standards and trade union rights was signed between the international trade union confederation UNI and the safety company G4S on December 16th, 2008. With 570,000 employees in 110 countries, of this two thirds in developing countries, the group is the second biggest employer of the world. It is the first international framework agreement which was ever obtained in a British service provider. G4S also has a European works council since 1996.

- [Press release for the signing of the agreement](#)
- [Report of the signing of the agreement](#)
- [Reports about trade union activities at G4S](#)

8. The world of SE works councils

tesa with an excellent SE agreement

On December 3rd, 2008 at its meeting in Berlin, the special negotiation body (SNB) of the adhesive manufacturer tesa voted for the acceptance of a SE agreement which had been negotiated under a considerable pressure of time within the weeks before (see [report in EWC News 2/2008](#)). At the transformation of a company into a European Company (SE), the SNB has only six months to settle all issues, which is different as compared to the foundation of an European works council. The tesa agreement is regarded as one of the best, which has till now been negotiated for a German company with only just under 2,000 employees and thus with a third participation in the supervisory board. In the interview with EWC News Frank Ganschow (photo), chairman of the SNB, explained the course of negotiations and the most important points of the new agreement.



- [The interview in the wording](#)
- [Background: Participation in the European Company \(SE\)](#) (in German)

Workers' representatives of tesa were supported by Prof Dr Ulrich Zachert and Dr Werner Altmeyer of the training and consultancy network "euro-works council.net" during their negotiations. But experts cannot prevent what the legislator has failed to see: Companies of the range of tesa can "freeze" the participation in the supervisory board namely at the time of the SE transformation. This problem was now recognized by a group of experts engaged by the European Commission and they suggest a customization of the SE Directive which lies ahead in the year 2009 (see [report in EWC News 3/2008](#)).

- [Report from the employer view in the Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung](#) (in German)

New SE foundations without employees in the supervisory board



Since October 1st, 2008 Hawe Hydraulik from Munich is operating as an European Company (SE). A SE agreement which provides the formation of a so-called "group works council" (a SE works council of the group) had been concluded on July 28th, 2008. It meets twice every year and chooses a steering committee from three (later five) members. This can carry out another two annual meetings. An arbitration board is scheduled for disputes with central management.

There isn't employee participation in the supervisory board although the family company has 1,500 employees alone in Germany.

- [Press release for the SE transformation](#)

Since December 2nd, 2008 the solar equipment manufacturer Solon from Berlin also has registered as SE. The agreement signed at the beginning of November 2008 doesn't provide any participation for the 850 employees in the supervisory board. There are European subsidiaries in

Austria, Italy and Switzerland.

- [Press release for the SE transformation](#)

Volkswagen gains chairmanship in the SE works council of Porsche

On December 15th, 2008, the SE works council of Porsche Automobil Holding SE constituted itself on the basis of a SE participation agreement in which the works councils of Volkswagen had not been involved. The SE works council consists of 40 members: the 20 representatives of Porsche, amongst this 15 from Germany, represent the 12,000 Porsche employees. 20 representatives of Volkswagens, amongst this seven from Germany, represent the 360,000 VW employees. This numerical ratio had been regarded as undemocratic by the Volkswagen works councils, which led to a public exchange of blows and several legal proceedings (see [report in EWC News 3/2007](#)).

The chairmanship of the SE works council went now completely surprising to Volkswagen. Bernd Osterloh (on the photo on the right), the president of the European and the world works council of Volkswagens was unanimously elected as chairman of the SE works council and Uwe Hück of Porsche (on the photo on the left) as deputy. A date of a court trial set for December 19th, 2008 was cancelled at short notice after that. Until January 2009 a solution without a court trial shall be reached under mediation of IG Metall trade union. There are talks about a new version of the Porsche SE agreement which is terminable officially only in 2017. In the Porsche general meeting on January 30th, 2009 workers' representatives of Volkswagen could then be nominated for the SE supervisory board.



9. Newsletter for workers' representatives

The EWC bulletin of UniCredit



The European works council of the Italian bank UniCredit founded in 2007 (see [report in EWC News 1/2007](#)) came together on October 16th, 2008 for its second plenary meeting in Milan. Topics of the agenda were the finance market crisis (see [report in EWC News 3/2008](#)), a new model of Corporate Governance and the payment for the top management, the system of employee share ownership in five countries and the development of a Europe-wide IT platform for the back office. An own agenda item was the situation in

Polish branch offices. The contents of the meeting are published in a newsletter.

- [Report of the course of the EWC meeting](#)
- [The EWC agreement in the wording](#)

The EWC of Ikea with an own newsletter



The EWC of the furniture house Ikea met in Copenhagen on October 28th, 2008. It is part of the particularly active councils in Scandinavia and has formed several committees. A main emphasis of its activity is health and safety at work. It presents the current developments in a newsletter. The third version has been published in November 2008. The "Ikea European Consultative Council" was founded according to Danish law in 1999.

- [The newsletter of the Ikea EWC](#)

Another version of the German Austrian EWC newsletter of ver.di and GPA trade unions has been published on October 29th, 2008. Main emphasis of this version is the political process for the revision of the EWC Directive. Broader topics are: the financial crisis, the establishment of European works councils, a background report on Romania, literature tips and event notes. The EWC newsletter is co-formed by the training and consultancy network " euro-works council.net " and is only available in German.

- [The EWC newsletter 2/2008 of ver.di+GPA](#)
- [Signing up to the EWC newsletter of ver.di+GPA](#)

Newsletter to the Corporate Governance

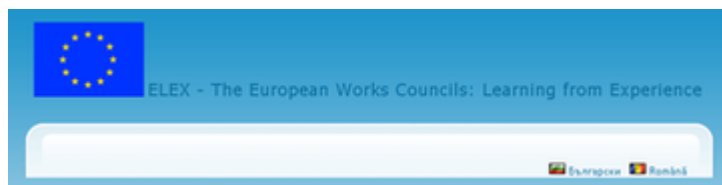


At the end of November 2008 the current newsletter on Corporate Governance of the European trade union institute has been published on the web page "Worker-Participation.eu". Since July 2006 it has informed about questions of the employee participation in the administrative and supervisory boards of companies and the latest European (law-) developments. As a central theme the current version picks the legal form of the European Private Company, which in addition to the European Company (SE) shall make possible a kind of European plc. Another topic is the EU merger Directive.

- [The newsletter on Company Law](#)

10. Interesting web pages

The European works council in Romania and Bulgaria



Learn from experiences, this is the motto of the EU financed project ELEX which particularly addresses workers' representatives in the new EU member countries Romania and Bulgaria. Seminars are documented and numerous

documents offered for the download on the web page of the project.

- [The web page of the ELEX project](#)

Worldwide alliance of Coca-Cola employees



The global trade union alliance of Coca-Cola employees has set up a web page of its own delivering current reports from the group in 15 languages. The workers' representatives of the drink group met for the second world conference in Germany in May 2008 (see [report in EWC News 3/2008](#)).

- [The web page of the Coca-Cola alliance](#)

Observation of finance investors

The international association of food and hotel employees IUL operates a web page with current reports about the activity of Private Equity firms. The last deals of the "grasshoppers" in the hotel and food industry can be investigated there. So for example the finance investor Blackstone distinguished itself at the buying up of the Hilton hotels in October 2007 (see [report in EWC News 3/2007](#)).



- [The IUL web page on finance investors](#)

The location Germany under globalisation pressure

EXPORT IT The project export-IT examines changes of companies in the service sector in the worldwide division of labour through information and communication techniques. With support of German trade unions ver.di and IG Metall "best practice" examples shall be worked out also for the workers' representation in this line of business.

- [The web page of the project export-IT](#)

We have arranged numerous further interesting links in a [link collection](#).

11. New publications

EWC agreements in the focus

The Social Development Agency (SDA) in Brussels presented a new evaluation from 102 EWC agreements of its database in October 2008 which examines qualitative and quantitative developments in the time period of the last four years. From the 102 EWC agreements which were signed since 2004, 19 are from Germany and France, 16 from the UK and ten from Belgium each. Italy recorded the strongest increase with eight new EWC agreements. The country has 39 European works councils now, however is still located in the delay. Although training measures aren't regulated obligatorily in the old EWC Directive, this was confirmed Europe-wide in 76% of all cases in the EWC agreement since 2004.



- [Download of the study](#)
- [The EWC database of the SDA](#)



Works councils in Germany, France and Poland

How can the staff of international large companies work out a common action perspective? Dr Stefanie Hürtgen, employee at the institute for social research of University of Frankfurt am Main, follows this question in her PhD thesis, which was published in November 2008. It documents the work of French workers' representatives of the trade unions CGT, CFDT and FO, of German works councils of IG Metall in the west and east as well as Polish EWC members of the trade unions Solidarność and OPZZ. The interviews don't only show how operational problems are handled concretely in single countries, but also examines the respective integration into the European works council. The book is only available in German.

Stefanie Hürtgen

Transnationales Co-Management
Betriebliche Politik in der globalen Konkurrenz

Münster 2008, 313 pages, € 29,90

- [Information about the author](#)
- [Online order](#)

Current comparison of industrial relations in Western and Eastern Europe

This anthology of a project which was carried out by the University of Tübingen with partners in several countries has been published in December 2008. The aim was a survey of labour law, employer employee relations and social dialog in three old EU countries and three joining countries. Germany, France, Italy, Czechia, Slovakia and Croatia are treated respectively in separated chapters. For every country the role of works councils and trade unions is examined, current trends in collective bargaining and in state politics, but features of vocational training is also represented. The book therefore isn't only worthwhile for a recessed look to Eastern Europe but also for the enquiry of current developments in the three Western European countries. The book is only available in German.



Josef Schmid/Harald Kohler (ed.)

Arbeitsbeziehungen und Sozialer Dialog im alten und neuen Europa

Unterschiede - Gemeinsamkeiten - Kooperationen
Baden-Baden 2008, 331 pages, € 22,-

- [Further information](#)
- [Online order](#)

Effectively presenting - in English?



An excellent Powerpoint presentation is today often part of the standard repertoire for works councils. But what if one must present in front of colleagues of the EWC in English? This bilingual book from the series "Training International" helps to do it. The author turns his attention particularly towards how to prepare presentations for a foreign audience and provides intercultural tips. This book is particularly recommendable, because it is written generally in German and English. Explanations, tips and examples are found in German on the left book page, the same text can be found in English on the right book page. So the book doesn't only help at the preparations for a presentation but the linguistic competence is also fortifying. Similar adviser -- also bilingual -- have been published on subjects as conflict management, meetings and moderation, small talk and team development.

Matt Beadle

Präsentieren - wirkungsvoll und strukturiert

Berlin 2008, 192 pages, € 16,95

- [Further information about the book](#) (in German)
- [The German-English table of contents](#)
- [Online order](#)
- [Further titles from this German-English adviser series](#) (in German)

We have compiled additional technical literature on a [special page](#).

12. Training and consultancy network " euro-workscouncil.net " : Examples of our work

The European works council optimizes its working conditions

A workshop in the context of the project IN.CON.PAR_able took place in Hamburg in the DGB training centre on October 14th and 15th, 2008. The aim of the project, which was initiated by the Spanish trade union confederation CC.OO. is the improvement of cooperation in European works councils by coordination of the activities and the communication among each other. Dr Reingard Zimmer of the training and consultancy network " euro-works council.net " participated in the preparations for and execution of the workshop, which similarly takes place also in Spain, Portugal, Italy and Bulgaria. A project report in German is in preparation.



- [The project description in the wording](#) (in Spanish)
- [Report about the workshop in Madrid](#) (in Spanish)
- [European works councils in Spain](#) (in German)

ver.di-federal office: survey of EWC work



An inventory of EWC work separated by sectors was carried out at the headquarters of ver.di trade union in Berlin (photo) on November 24th, 2008. Bernhard Stelzl and Dr Werner Altmeyer of the training and consultancy network " euro-works council.net " also took part in the meeting under management of Martin Lemcke of the co-determination department. The discussion showed a high need of support particularly in the wholesale and retail sector, financial services and special services. The EWC newsletter of ver.di shall be more narrowly interlocked with the sector departments and EWC bodies.

- [The archives of the previous issues of the EWC newsletter of ver.di](#)

Conference on participation

On November 25th, 2008 the study group Labour – Company – Politics of the Friedrich-Ebert foundation conducted a meeting on works council constitution in Berlin. About 170 works council members, scientists and politicians discussed a reform agenda to participation with a number of experts (photo). Werner Altmeyer of the "euro-works council.net" explained the European level. The following documents are only available in German:



- [Information about the study group Labour – Company – Politics](#)
- [Accompanying text on international works council work](#)
- [Download further meeting contributions](#)
- [Audio file with interviews of some speakers](#)

EWC project at Lüneburg University



In the current term a series of lectures on human resource management and European works councils takes place at the institute for economic law of Lüneburg University. As part of a

lectureship Dr. Werner Altmeyer from the training and consultancy network " euro-workscouncil.net " is also involved.

Contributions in professional journals

In November 2008 the magazine **der betriebsrat** (the works council) published a country report on Spanish works' constitution of Dr Werner Altmeyer and Prof Dr Holm-Detlev Köhler. The contribution also contains an interview with a German EWC member of the Spanish big bank Santander. Dr Werner Altmeyer examined the legislation process and the possible consequences of the new EWC Directive in a contribution for the journal **Personalführung** (personnel management) in December 2008. Both articles are only available in German.

- [The contribution on the Spanish works constitution](#)
- [The contribution to the new EWC Directive](#)

You find additional English language publications at our [publication page](#).

13. Details of seminars planned

Registrations are possible for the following seminars and workshops co-made by us (in German):

The new EWC Directive -- What comes towards us there?

Specialist conferences for European works councils

26-1-2009 in Hamburg

07. -- 8-5-2009 in Rome

Summer 2009 in Liège (an exact appointment is still to be fixed)

- [Further information about these specialist conferences](#)

Europe for trade union officers of IG Metall

Institutions, politics, European works councils

25. -- 27-3-2009 in Bad Orb

14. -- 16-10-2009 in Bad Orb



- [Further information about these workshops](#)

Seminars of the institute for further education of works councils (ifb)

ifb

Institut zur
Fortbildung von
Betriebsräten KG

Since 1998 ifb offers seminars for European works councils whose contents were worked out by the training and consultancy network " euro-workscouncil.net ".

Basic seminar: The way to the European works council

31.03 -- 3-4-2009 in Cologne

20.10 -- 23-10-2009 in Würzburg

Advanced seminar: Practice knowledge, EWC special

02. -- 5-6-2009 in Cologne

17. -- 20-11-2009 in Nuremberg

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

Workshops of ver.di-federal office

In the year 2004 a cross-sectoral workshop of the ver.di federal office for European works councils took place for the first time. In view of the new EWC Directive there are two appointments in 2009:

The revision of the EWC Directive

17. -- 19-6-2009 in Berlin

Basis knowledge and practice of the EWC work

02. -- 4-9-2009 in Berlin



- [Further information about the basis seminar](#)
- [Download of the programme for the two seminars](#)



Further education at Ruhr university

As part of a further education series for trade union officers and works council members the academy of Ruhr university Bochum offers the following:

Training for Europe, the European works council

Concepts, distribution, practice experiences, development prospects
30. -- 31-10-2009 in Bochum

- [Further information about this constituent](#)

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-workscouncil.net (English)
www.euro-ce.org (French)

Authors collaborating on this issue:
Werner Altmeyer, Carmen Bauer, Ulrich Zachert, Reingard Zimmer

Distributor of the German version: 11,508 readers
Distributor of the English version: 1,378 readers
Distributor of the French version: 1.119 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-workscouncil.net