



Welcome to issue no. 3 / 2009 of EWC News.

31st October 2009

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.
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[Dieser Newsletter auf Deutsch](#)



[Cette newsletter en français](#)

Contents:

- [1. EWC busy with Restructuring](#)
- [2. Country highlights](#)
- [3. Improved working conditions for European Work Councils](#)
- [4. Current court decisions](#)
- [5. Newly created European Work Councils](#)
- [6. Safeguarding minimum social standards](#)
- [7. Disputed new SE agreements](#)
- [8. Overcoming the EWC language barrier](#)
- [9. Aid for EWC work](#)
- [10. Interesting web pages](#)
- [11. New publications](#)
- [12. Training and Consulting Network "euro-workscouncil.net": further examples from our work](#)
- [13. Current seminar schedule](#)
- [14. Imprint](#)

1. EWC busy with Restructuring

Opel sale: Speculation over strikes in Germany



Since Opel's mother company, General Motors, filed for bankruptcy on 1st June 2009, its future seems uncertain. Although the German Federal Government secured the planned sale of Opel to the Canadian-Austrian automobile supplier Magna and the Russian Sberbank with a bridging loan, the sale is up to now still in the balance. The European Commission has also expressed doubts. According to press reports trade unions want to increase the pressure for the completion of the sale by taking industrial action if necessary. The IG Metall union has denied this - at least officially.

- [Overview of the Opel sites in Europe](#) (in German)
- [Chart with the future Opel sites](#)

Since 20th September 2009 the select committee of the General Motors' European Work Council has been in negotiations with Magna on the extent of the planned layoffs. Under discussion is a workforce reduction of 10,500 jobs, of which 4,500 in Germany. Since 2005 the local work councils of General Motors have given a negotiation mandate to the EWC, with a view to guaranteeing a common position. It can therefore act on a European level like a real company-wide central works council, although the European Union guideline does not provide for this.

- [EWC Press statement from 8th September 2009](#)

Protest day in Antwerp

A one day protest demonstration which was organized by the European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF) together with the European Work Council took place on 23rd September 2009 at the Antwerp Opel site. Around 3,000 participants with many from Germany demanded a halt to all redundancies and plant closures.



- [The announcement for the protest day](#) (in German)
- [Video from the protest day in Antwerp](#)

Agreement in the UK

A deal signed on 13th October 2009 between the British trade union Unite and Magna provides a guarantee for the 5,500 employees at the Vauxhall sites of Ellesmere Port and Luton until 2013.

- [Report on the agreement for Vauxhall](#)

Spanish government procures guarantees



A strike planned for the 27th October 2009 at the Opel site in Figueruelas, Aragon was called off a few days after an agreement was reached between the CC.OO. and UGT trade unions and Magna after mediation by the Spanish government. The number of layoffs is to be reduced from 1,350 to 900 of the 7,200 employees. Both production lines will remain in operation with a ten year non-closure guarantee for the plant. Without this promise the Spanish government would not have contributed to the rescue package for Opel.

There had previously been mass protests also in Spain (photo).

Magna avoids European Work Council

Neither Magna nor the Sberbank have so far established their European Work Councils. In 2007, Magna employee representatives from France, Belgium and Czech Republic officially requested the creation of the EWC. Central management however allowed the legal period for the convening of the special negotiation body to pass by. Legally speaking therefore a default EWC has been in place in Magna, since February 2008, which has never been convened for a meeting. Instead of a European Work Council Magna has however put in place an "Employee Relations Advisory Board" for the monitoring of an employee charter defined unilaterally by the company. Its members are selected by the company and not by employees.

- [Full text of the Magna Employee Charter](#)

Action day against Areva break up

In the French nuclear company Areva, coordinated actions took place on 15th September 2009 throughout eight European countries against the planned sale of their energy transmission and distribution division. The European work council together with trade unions also organized a central demonstration with foreign participants in Paris (photo).



- [EWC Press statement](#)
- [Profile of the transmission and distribution division](#)
- [Report on the action day](#)



Mobile operator merger in Britain

France Télécom and Deutsche Telekom plan to merge their mobile network daughter companies in the UK (Orange and T-Mobile) with 20,000 employees in a joint venture, in order to become market leader. British trade unions fear the closure of call centers and offices. On 11th September 2009 they met in Dublin on the occasion of a conference organized by UNI, the umbrella organization of service sector trade unions, with representatives from Germany and France, in order to discuss next steps.

Possible consequences were also discussed on 18th September 2009 in the European works council of France Télécom. Unlike DeutscheTelekom, the central management of the formerly nationalized French company committed in December 2006 to an agreement for social responsibility (see [report in EWC News 1/2007](#)). Both telecommunications companies created a EWC in April 2004.

- [Background report from trade union perspective](#)
- [UNI communication to France Télécom](#)
- [UNI communication to Deutsche Telekom](#)
- [Orange UK employee Web page](#)

Belgian Beer Company sells entire Eastern Europe business

On 15th October 2009 the Anheuser-Busch InBev beer company announced the sale of all of its subsidiaries in nine Eastern European countries to a financial investor. The central management of the world's largest group of breweries with its headquarters in Leuven came to this decision, without informing the European works council created in 1996. The European trade union federation for the food industry, EFFAT, is therefore examining the possibility to take legal action. InBev has taken over numerous German breweries in the past years such as Beck's or Löwenbräu.



- [Company Press statement](#)
- [Press statement of the trade union organization EFFAT](#)
- [Food industry trade unions' Web page on financial investors](#)

2. Country highlights

New Works Council legislation in Poland



Since 8th July 2009 a newly revised works council legislation has come into force in Poland. It eliminates the privileges that trade unions had for the nomination of work council members, which was still foreseen by the 2006 legislation. In the future Polish work council members will be elected by a secret ballot of the entire workforce, as in German work council elections. In the case where no work council exists, it can be created on the request of at least 10% of the workforce.

Employers must bear works council costs

The new legislation brings another innovation. In the future all the costs for the election and the on-going activities of work councils are to be borne by the employers. For the first time in Poland this applies also to the costs for experts. According to the previous 2006 legislation all costs had still to be borne by the trade unions. The change in legislation was made necessary since the Polish constitutional court had removed the trade unions privileges for the nomination process of work councils in July 2008 (see [report in EWC News 2/2008](#)). In addition to the work councils in Poland there still remain company trade unions, which represent all employees of the company (including non-members) according to the trade union legislation of 1991.

New time-off rules in Britain

On 14th August 2009 the independent arbitration board ACAS in London submitted a new code of practice for time-off of employee representatives. This will have a great practical impact since no precise legal rules exist in the United Kingdom. The code was established by the ACAS Council, made up of both trade union and employer representatives as well as independent experts. Acceptance by British employers is therefore guaranteed. The code is due to enter into force at the beginning of 2010 after having recently obtained approval by the Department for Business and the Parliament.



There are separate rules for union and for non-unionized employee representatives. The code not only regulates time-off, but also covers the right to training, resources as well as confidentiality issues. It applies also to members of health and safety committees, special negotiation bodies and European work councils.

- [Full text of the ACAS code of practice](#)
- [Guidelines for Union representatives](#)
- [Guidelines for non-unionized representatives](#)

Financial market crisis urges Iceland into the European Union



The volcanic island with 320,000 inhabitants and a unionization level of 90% officially applied to enter the European Union on 17th July 2009. Iceland has been particularly affected by the financial market crisis and the state is on the verge of bankruptcy. The admission of this polar circle republic to the European Union is considered to be unproblematic, because it has been a member of the European Economic Area since 1994 and therefore has already transposed many of the European Union Directives such as the EWC Directive into national legislation. There will be therefore no changes for European works councils. The entry could probably take place in 2013 along with Croatia.

Further countries waiting to enter

Negotiations for the accession of Turkey are currently at a standstill, due to amongst other things their parliament blocking new trade union legislation. Turkey must first comply with the standards for industrial relations within the European Union before negotiations can be resumed (see [country report for Turkey in EWC News 2/2007](#)). Negotiations have not yet begun for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which has been an official EU applicant since December 2005, nor for Albania, which officially applied for membership on 28th April 2009.

Conference on industrial relations à la française



January 2010.

France is one of the most important member states of the European Union. There is hardly a EWC without representatives from France; more than 11% of all European work councils have their central management situated there. However employee representation is organized in a completely differently manner to Germany. The employer is the chairperson of the work council, strikes are considered as a basic human right and co-determination is unheard of. The French industrial relations model was used as the legal "blueprint" for the EWC Directive. These are all good reasons why German works council members should also familiarize themselves with the subtleties of information and consultation "à la française". A one day conference is being held in Hamburg on this subject on 26th

- [The program of the EWC conference](#) (in German)
- [Registration Form for EWC conference](#) (in German)

3. Improved working conditions for European Work Councils

Dutch postal service renews EWC agreement

In February 2009 the EWC agreement for TNT was renewed. The logistics company, which is a spin-off from the national postal service, has had a EWC in place under Dutch legislation since 2000 with rights extending far beyond the minimum standards of the EWC Directive.



It is characteristic for a logistics company to have its dealings spread over a wide geographical area. The new EWC agreement therefore has been particularly extended to cover Eastern Europe. The EWC now has 35 members, of which only five come from the Netherlands. In the future, the steering committee can meet up to four times per year. Each EWC member has a personal annual training right of one day. The EWC receives its own budget according to the French model.

- [Report on contents of the new EWC agreement](#)
- [Report on an employee questionnaire within TNT](#)

US Company accepts better consultation procedure



Well before the new EWC Directive came into force, a new EWC agreement was signed on 25th March 2009 under British legislation for the UTC Fire & Security company, and which already completely integrated the provisions of the new Directive. In future, the manufacturer of fire alarms and fire extinguishers will conform to the new definition of information and consultation. The EWC, which was established in 2005, represents 13 European countries and meets under the presidency of the employer. It consists of 16 employee and five

employer representatives. The employee representatives select a steering committee of five members.

Cosmetics Company: Three stage consultation process

The L'Oréal EWC agreement dating from 1996 was updated on 17th April 2009 at the headquarters in Clichy near Paris. Although there is still a right to only one annual plenary meeting of the EWC, the consultation procedure has been defined more precisely in accordance with the new EWC Directive and divided into three separate steps. The steering committee consisting of three members from three different countries will take responsibility for the process.



The EWC of the world's largest cosmetics manufacturer is made up of 30 members of which eight come from France and four from the UK. According to French custom the employer chairs the meetings. Each EWC member has a right to two days time-off in addition to those for participating in meetings, and the steering committee members an additional twenty. An exceptional three day time-off is given for every consultation procedure.



Household and Cosmetics Company anticipate new Directive

The EWC agreement from Colgate-Palmolive signed in 1996 under Belgian law was renewed on 8th July 2009. The definition for information and consultation complies with the new EWC Directive. A new steering committee is to be put in place with four members coming from four different countries who must not all belong to the same sex. It will meet once per quarter with central management. The employer still chairs the EWC and experts may be provided by the trade unions free of charge. The US company will therefore benefit from long-lasting subsidies originating from union membership fees.

4. Current court decisions

Communication rights on Confidential Information

On 14th May 2009 the High Court of Justice in Denmark decided that workers' directors may inform their trade union about a forthcoming merger. In 2000, an employee representative on the board of Directors of a bank had informed the chairman of his trade union, Allan Bang, about a planned merger with another bank. Criminal proceedings were taken against both for illegal passing-on of insider information. In 2005 the European Court of Justice then judged that passing-on of information pertaining to the accomplishment of a professional activity to be legally permissible.



- [The full text of the ECJ judgment](#)
- [Summary of the ECJ judgment](#)
- [Background report to the law case](#) (in German)
- [The Danish High Court decision](#)



The judgment is of great political-trade union importance, since Allan Bang (photo) is not only the chairman of Finansforbundet, the Danish trade union for bank employees, but also president of UNI Finance, the European and world-wide federation of financial services trade unions. The issue of confidentiality obligations is not only present in supervisory boards. European Work Council members, particularly in Anglo-American companies, are also often obliged to comply with restrictive confidentiality clauses in their EWC agreements. This judgment provides good arguments for the employee representatives to counter them.

- [Report from UNI Finance](#)

No individual opposition rights against social compensation plan

On 16th July 2009 the European Court of Justice decided in Luxembourg that individual employees cannot contest an incorrectly completed consultation procedure for mass redundancies. The violation of consultation rights may be challenged only by work councils and trade unions. In 2006 the labor court in Liège had awarded higher compensation to several employees made redundant at the automobile supplier Mono Car Styling, than that given by the agreed social compensation plan. The Belgian judges argued that employers had not carried out correctly the consultation procedure with the employee representatives. The judges in Luxembourg decided differently: and in their view the higher compensation is illegal.

- [Full text of the ECJ judgement](#)

Precisely defined Consultation procedure

Based on the Fujitsu Siemens Computers case in Finland, the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg (photo) ruled on 10th September 2009 on mass redundancy information and consultation obligations for employers. According to the opinion of the court the consultation procedure must be completely finalized before any layoffs can be notified. The judges assume the following sequence of events: firstly the parent company makes a fundamental strategic decision, followed by the information and consultation process carried out in the subsidiary and only thereafter can the final decision of the parent company be taken. Any dismissals made in disrespect of this flow are invalid.



- [Full text of the ECJ judgment](#)

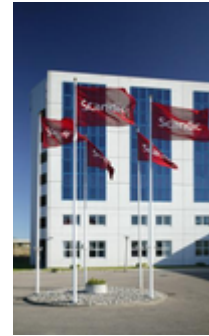
This judgment is also of great importance for European work councils, since it emphasizes the formal operational sequence of the consultation process. The employer can act only if the consultation with the EWC has been correctly completed. The consultation procedure is considered finalized once the EWC has expressed an opinion resolution. Such a resolution is only possible if the employer has fulfilled its obligation to provide necessary information. This was defined exactly for the first time in the Alcatel-Lucent case in 2007 by a French court (see [report in EWC News 2/2007](#)). An incompletely terminated consultation procedure can lead to invalidation proceedings, illustrated well by the example of Gaz de France (see [report in EWC News 1/2008](#)).

- [Further court decisions in EWC matters](#) (in German)

5. Newly created European Work Councils

Swedish hotel chain establishes EWC

In March 2007 Hilton sold the 132 Scandic hotels to the financial investor EQT (see [report in EWC News 3/2007](#)). With the separation from the Hilton EWC, there were no longer any transnational representation structure for Scandic. An EWC agreement was therefore signed on 26th December 2008 under Swedish legislation and the new EWC held its constitutional meeting in Stockholm on 6-8th October 2009. The 18 members represent ten countries and meet once annually. Since the main focus lies in the four Scandinavian countries, the steering committee is made up entirely of one member from each of these countries. Sweden provides the EWC coordinator. It is remarkable that all European countries from outside the European Union are represented with one observer in the EWC.



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

Group from Singapore soon with European-wide Representation



On 26th March 2009 the Flextronics electronics group from Singapore signed an EWC agreement under British legislation. The EWC is composed of representatives from 15 European Union countries. The employer is chairman and the employees select a "EWC leader". The steering committee consists of four employee representatives from three countries and three employer representatives, and meets four times annually. Although the definition for information and consultation still follow the old EWC Directive and there is only one annual plenary meeting, there is provision for up to two annual plant visits.

US Printing Company sets benchmark for British EWC agreements

On 16th October 2009 after nearly three years of negotiations a EWC agreement was signed for RR Donnelley. This US company will create a European Work Council with representatives from twelve countries, and already largely based on the improved rules of the new European Union Directive. The largest printing company of the world has therefore taken on a leading role for British EWC agreements. There has also been a world-wide union coordination within RR Donnelley since March 2007.



- [Unite union Press release](#)
- [Report on the signing of the EWC agreement](#)

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

6. Safeguarding minimum social standards

Tourism group strengthens social responsibility



A new agreement on compliance to minimum social standards was signed on 23rd July 2009 between central management of the French tourist company Club Méditerranée and the respective international branch trade-unions. The secretary of the European Works Council was also heavily involved in the negotiations. The agreement initially signed in 2004 for Europe and Africa is now to cover all 80 holiday clubs in 30 countries world-wide. It is monitored by a parity commission and has recently already brought concrete improvements for Italian holiday clubs, where union rights were being violated.

The second part of the agreement safeguards the working conditions of seasonal workers in Europe and Africa, which must not be worse than the local native employees. This concerns in particular employees from Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey, who work temporarily within the European Union. In addition, it concerns holiday clubs all around the Mediterranean, in Senegal, on the Ivory Coast and in Mauritius. In the future each of these sites will be visited for three days every season by union representatives for an inspection of local working conditions. Following texts are available only in French:

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

International Framework Agreement for Spanish Clothing Company

A world-wide framework agreement was signed on 2nd October 2009 in Dublin between the international federation of service trade unions (UNI) and the Spanish textile group Inditex (see photo). It strengthens social responsibility on working time, health and safety protection and guarantees union rights for the 90,000 employees in over 4,400 branches and 73 countries. The world's third largest clothing company operates for example the retail chain Zara. Discussions had already taken place in 2007 between trade unions and suppliers (see [report in EWC News 1/2007](#)).



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

European trade union Charter for tourism



Several international trade unions presented a Charter for tourism on 9th October 2009 in Brussels. The charter analyzes challenges for employees in hotels, catering and transport companies as well as for tour operators and politicians. An appeal is made for consumers to take into consideration the social and ecological consequences with a view to breaking the vicious circle of low-cost tourism.

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

7. Disputed new SE agreements

French real-estate company as SE

On 15th May 2009 for the first time a company quoted on the CAC 40, the French stock exchange index, was converted into a Societas Europaea (SE). The Unibail Rodamco real estate group from Paris operates shopping centers and office-blocks in eight EU countries, including in La Défence (photo). Two thirds of its' 1,600 employees work in France. As there was no European work council yet established, the meeting of the special negotiation body (SNB) was the very first opportunity for an international meeting of employee representatives.



During the three-day long constitutional meeting of the SNB, central management pressed without much room for discussion to have its own pre-prepared text signed as the SE agreement. The SNB was not able however to agree to the text and requested the intervention of the French labour authorities. Finally an SE agreement was signed on 27th February 2009 with provisions to establish a 14 member EWC. The company has decided for a somewhat unconventional top-management structure. Whereas many French companies put in place a board of directors, Unibail Rodamco has chosen to have a separate executive committee and supervisory board. There is however not a single employee representative on the new SE supervisory board.

- [Company Press release](#)
 - [Report on the SNB negotiations](#) (see page 6, in French)
-

Bavarian Family business escapes co-determination

The Huber machine manufacturer from Berching has been operating since 17th July 2009 as a Societas Europaea (SE). The conversion was completed just in time before they exceeded the threshold of 500 employees in Germany. Hereby, the three-member supervisory board is able to remain employee-free also in the future. The company manufactures water purification equipment and is present in 16 countries of the European domestic market with a total worldwide workforce of 800. Strangely enough no reference to its escape from co-determination can be found in the press release.

- [Company press release](#)
-



Opposition prevents mini supervisory board

SCA Hygiene Products in Munich has been operating since 18th September 2009 as a Societas Europaea (SE). The company produces among other things Tempo handkerchiefs and Zewa paper rolls and employs over 6,500 persons in six European Union countries. During the conversion to SE status, the subsidiary of the Swedish SCA group wanted to halve the number of seats on the supervisory board.

The group had previously a parity-based supervisory board with twelve members, since nearly 2,900 employees work in Germany - approximately 44% of the European workforce. Since this figure is far greater than the threshold value of 25%, specified by the SE Directive to ensure co-determination rights, central management could not legally avoid a parity-based SE supervisory board. They still wanted however to reduce the supervisory board from twelve to six members.

For the 13 members of the special negotiation body (SNB) including five from Germany, this was unacceptable. They proceeded by informing the press at the headquarters of the parent company in Sweden. The legally allowed six month's negotiation period was consequently extended and a co-determination agreement was finally concluded on 2nd June 2009. It provides for a parity-based supervisory board with six employee representatives who have to be elected in the meantime: two German work council members, one representative each from Britain, Austria and the Netherlands as well as a full-time trade union officer of the German chemical industrial union IG BCE.

Initially no SE Work Council established

Since a European works council for the SCA group has been in place for many years as well as four divisional European works councils, it was decided to do without the creation of a SE works council for the subsidiary SCA Hygiene Products SE. In the meantime, the existing divisional European works councils are to remain in operation.

- [Company Press statement](#) (in German)
 - [Full text of the conversion plan](#) (in German)
 - [Background report on the SNB negotiations](#)
 - [Digression: Country Report Sweden and interview with a SCA work council](#) (in German)
-

European Parliament pushes for SE Review

The European Parliament is of the opinion that the Directive on Worker Participation in the Societas Europaea (SE) must be urgently reviewed. The subject was up for discussion in its plenary meeting on 7th October 2009 in Brussels. One of the points criticized in the SE Directive is its lack of adaptability to any increase in the workforce, which in Germany can be particularly misused to "freeze" co-determination rights (see [report in EWC News 3/2008](#)).

- [Text of Parliamentary debate](#)
- [Background: Workers' Participation in the Societas Europaea \(SE\)](#) (in German)

New review on the Allianz SE

In May 2009 the IMU-Institute from Munich presented a review of employee participation practice within Allianz after its conversion to SE. What has changed in the German subsidiary since October 2006, when the insurance company was one of the first companies in Europe to be converted into a SE?

- [Full text of the review](#) (in German)

8. Overcoming the EWC language barrier

How many EWC members master foreign languages?

On 24th September 2009 the European Union statistics office (Eurostat) presented data on the development of education in foreign languages. According to the report there exists a north-south divide between the language-talented Scandinavians and the mumbling attempts of the British and Mediterraneans. These practical findings give us guidance as to which languages require the urgent assistance of interpreters during EWC meetings.



English is, by far, the most common foreign language in the European Union. Russian is only more common in Bulgaria, Poland and the three Baltic states. In Ireland and Britain French is considered as the most important foreign language. Nowadays, 100% of all pupils in secondary education in Czechia, Luxembourg, Finland and the Netherlands already study two or more foreign languages. On the other hand more than half of all pupils in the United Kingdom learn no foreign language at all and as much as 19% in Ireland.

The biggest language difficulties are experienced in southern EU-countries, where 40 to 50% of the population cannot speak any foreign language at all. In Hungary the figure reaches 75%. Approximately 29% of the adult population in Germany does not understand any foreign language, and in France 41%. The other extreme is Norway, where merely 2.9% of all adults understand exclusively their native language. In the Scandinavian countries, Belgium and Slovenia more than half of the population actually master two foreign languages.

- [Eurostat press release on Education in Foreign Languages](#)

Business English for German work councils

The July 2009 issue of the AiBplus magazine reports on the problems that German work council members have, when their school English is not good enough to be able to negotiate with English spoken managers or to communicate with their EWC colleagues before and after meetings. The article presents language courses which are particularly useful in such circumstances.

- [Text of the article on works council language courses](#) (in German)

Below is some material that we have put together which is used in works council language courses (see photo):

- [Sound sample 1: Expressions for meetings](#)
- [Sound sample 2: Expressions for meetings](#)
- [Learning flyer for redundancies](#)
- [Learning flyer for presentations in English](#)
- [Vocabulary for making appointments](#)



Such a language course is being organized by the "euro-workscouncil.net" training and consulting network together with Euro-Team Institut 26-29th January 2010 in Hamburg. The training will concentrate on typical expressions used in work councils, small talk for the coffee breaks during EWC meetings and office communication for the EWC office. The language teachers for these courses have had over 18 years working experience with work councils and trade unions. The training can be combined with the EWC conference, which will take place in the same hotel.

- [Further information on the language course](#) (in German)
- [Registration Form for the language course](#) (in German)



On the job on-line courses

A further possibility for improving knowledge of languages is provided in an e-Learning project from the ver.di union training center. A choice of English, French, Spanish, Italian and German as a foreign language is available, with additional modules on business culture in different European countries. The language project is operated by partners from several countries and sponsored by the European Union. It is however not specifically addressed to work council members, and is also open to all employees.

- [Further information on the language project](#)
- [Registration for German participants](#) (in German)

French dictionary in second edition

In March 2009 the DGB Saar presented the second edition of its German to French dictionary for the trade union work. There is also a comparable German to English dictionary (see [report in EWC News 2/2008](#)).



- [Further information on DGB Saar dictionaries](#)
- [Further translation assistance for employee representatives](#) (in German)

9. Aid for EWC work

New EWC Directive leaflet



On 30th September 2009 the European Commission published a two-page leaflet, clearly outlining the rules of the new EWC Directive. It is available in three languages: German, English and French.

- [Further information](#)
- [Leaflet Download](#)

New statistics on European Works Councils

In July 2009 the European Trade Union Institute in Brussels published new figures which indicate that there are now 908 European works councils, of which more than one third in the metal and electrical industries. In the European Union Germany is listed with the highest number of companies with a EWC in operation.

- [New EWC statistics download](#)

Standing rules avoid legal risks

Not only European works councils, but also special negotiation bodies can establish their own set of standing rules. These are particularly important to document the correct execution of resolutions e.g. for forthcoming legal proceedings. Such standing rules have recently been adopted by the special negotiation body (SNB) of the Japanese Pharma group Takeda (see [report in EWC News 1/2009](#)) and may be useful as a template.

- [Takeda SNB standing rules](#) (in German)
- [Magazine article: Are standing rules meaningful?](#) (in German)
- [Draft EWC standing rules](#) (in German)



- [Frauenthal EWC standing rules](#) (in French)
-

Country Trade-Union Profile reference guide

Any EWC member concerned with for example a site delocalization to Tunisia or planning discussions with employee representatives from Mexico is able to find a concise description of the most important basic conditions in the respective country. The trade-union activity of the whole world is covered in over 200 pages. All countries have their own profile and are listed in alphabetical order.

- [Country profiles of the world](#)

10. Interesting web pages

Campaign for socially responsible restructuring in DHL



On 8th September 2009 a union web page was put in place for DHL employees. The German post office operates its world-wide logistics business under the brand name DHL. Following protests against DHL redundancy plans which took place in Brussels airport already in summer of 2009, the trade unions want to strengthen the coordination of their activities. A week of action is planned for November 2009.

- [DHL employee web page](#)
 - [Union demands on DHL restructuring](#)
 - [Press release on demonstration in Brussels](#)
 - [Outline of world-wide campaign](#)
-

Nestlé also under pressure

The Swiss food group likes to maintain its image as a socially responsible company. The international union of the food workers documents on a new web page, where Nestlé goes against its own requirements and which actions were taken throughout the world.



- [Union Web page on Nestlé](#)
-

Turkey and the European Union get closer



Turkey's entry to the European Union has been under negotiation since 2005, but there still remains mutual prejudice, making the entry more difficult (see [country report in EWC News 2/2007](#)). A project sponsored by the European Union aims at bringing employee representatives together and at promoting dialogue as close as possible to social reality. A series of conferences and seminars are taking place on the subject, and contents can be found on a special web page.

- [Turkey-EU Dialogue webpage](#)
-

Wage and social standards in the farming industry

agri-info.eu

The wage information system "agri info.eu" supplies data on work and wage conditions in European agricultural industry. Background information is available in seven languages on the social systems, employment health and safety and on the trade unions for 31 countries.

- [The agri-info web page](#)

We have put together a collection of additional useful [links](#).

11. New publications

Country reports on Brazil and India published

The DGB training department in co-operation with IG Metall trade union has presented two new brochures in German language on the developing countries, Brazil and India. The publication on **Brazil** examines the social situation and the situation of trade unions under Lula a former trade union secretary and governing president since 2002. One chapter highlights the impact of international framework agreements through several examples from the metal industry.

- [Further information](#)
- [Brochure Download](#)



India torn between its economic boom, aspiration for power and social misery – is the title of the second country brochure. It examines the economic development and the social change in this developing country, which has been on the road to economic prosperity since 1991. Apart from the particularities of the Indian economy, one chapter is devoted to union activities as well as employment and social rights. Although India plays an increasing role in the outsourcing of IT jobs, there are no signs of any German-Indian trade union cooperation.



- [Further information](#)
- [Brochure Download](#)



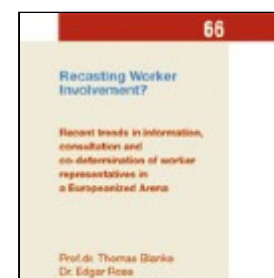
How far is internationalization within IG Metall?

The EWC researcher, Dr. Stefan Rüb, analyzes this question in his thesis published end of August 2009 and based on numerous interviews. In his opinion, apart from collective bargaining trade union company policy play a central role, including international framework agreements for the penetration of world-wide social standards and European works councils. The author illustrates in a clear historical review, the tensions and points of friction that can exist within a trade union organization, when it has to position itself in a transnational perspective, in order to continue to act effectively. Rüb concludes with the criticism that the union organization of IG Metall only implements a real European working logic in exceptional cases.

- [Further information](#)
- [On-line order](#)

Current trends in European employee Participation

This collection, which was published in September 2009, describes a German-Dutch conference on employee participation (see [report in EWC News 2/2008](#)). Topics covered are industrial relations in Germany and the Netherlands, European works councils and workers' representation in the Societas Europaea (SE). Dr. Werner Altmeyer of the training and consulting network "euro-works council.net" describes EWC intercultural problems and gives positive examples of EWC contractual policies. The



book is available only in English.

Thomas Blanke/Edgar Rose/Herman Voogsgeerd/Wijnand Zondag (editors)

Recasting Worker Involvement?

Recent trends in information, consultation and co-determination of worker representatives in a Europeanized Arena

Deventer 2009, 220 pages, ISBN 978-90-13-06329-5, € 45,-

- [Further information and table of contents](#)
- [On-line order](#)



Legal viewpoint on SE negotiations

A second edition of this legal guidebook have been available since September 2009 and is highly recommendable for work councils which are affected by SE conversions. Co-determination issues within the SE are covered in detail. Apart from the background history to the creation of the SE Directive, the rules of the merger Directive are explained, which applies to transnational mergers of public companies. While there are already numerous cases of SE transformation particularly in Germany, the merger directive has only been put into practice once, i.e. in the Münchner Rück insurance company (see [report in EWC News 2/2009](#)).

- [Further information on the book](#)
- [On-line order](#)

Our [web-page of further special literature](#).

12. Training and Consulting Network " euro-workscouncil.net " : Further examples from our work

Preparation for international framework agreement

On 6-7th July 2009, Bank Austria and HypoVereinsbank EWC members met in Bad Hofgastein (Austria), in preparation for the next EWC meeting of the parent company UniCredit. The focal point of the meeting was a course given by Dr. Reingard Zimmer, from the training and consulting network "euro-workscouncil.net", on the development of international social and ethic standards in banking. The Danske Bank agreement signed in September 2008 (see [report in EWC News 3/2008](#)) served as a model. A global trade union network for UniCredit was subsequently set up on 21st September 2009.



- [Report on the creation of the global network](#)



EWC Workshop in Romania

A workshop for members of European works councils from the services and metal industries took place on 14-15th September 2009 in the Sinaia spa-resort in the Carpathians (the photo shows the former royal summer residence). Around 25 employee representatives from seven countries exchanged their experiences with restructuring. Dr. Werner Altmeyer from the "euro-workscouncil.net" also presented the new EWC Directive.

- [Presentation on the new EWC Directive](#) (in englischer Sprache)

During 2010 several comparable EWC Workshops are to take place. Dates are planned in Paris, London, Madrid, Berlin, Bucharest and Warsaw. More detailed information will follow in the next edition of EWC News.

Workshop in Montabaur Castle

Renegotiation of EWC agreements based on the new Directive was the topic of a workshop held from 12-14th October 2009 in the medieval atmosphere of the Montabaur Castle conference center. 13 EWC members from twelve companies discussed legal issues with Prof Dr Wolfgang Däubler and exchanged experiences on their EWC work. Below are some comments given at the end of the workshop:



- Our agreement is not so bad; we just have to make it work.
- I have prepared an action plan for the next half year.
- I will now feel more confident in my EWC activity.
- The workshop was a good preparation for our negotiations.
- All councils have to tackle the same problems.
- Much clearer now. Does our agreement really reflect our practice?

The workshop will be held again in October 2010 at the same venue.

13. Current seminar schedule

Registration is open for the following seminars and workshops:

Hamburg Conference for European Work Councils

Legal and practical issues in EWC work

25-01-2010 in Hamburg

Workers' participation à la française?

26-01-2010 in Hamburg

(both dates can be booked separately)

- [Contents of the EWC conference](#)
- [EWC conference registration form](#)
- [Report on the last EWC conference in January 2009](#)



English language course for EWC members

26 -- 29-01-2010 in Hamburg

- [Further information on the language course](#)
- [Language course registration form](#)

French-German EWC conference

05 -- 07-07-2010 in Paris

Workshop for European Work Councils

October 2010 in Montabaur

- [Further information on these events](#)

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



Institut zur
Fortbildung von
Betriebsräten KG

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

Basic seminar: The path to the European Works Council

07 -- 11-06-2010 in Fulda

08 -- 12-11-2010 in Hannover

Advanced seminar: Practical knowledge, EWC special

16 -- 20-11-2009 in Nuremberg

14 -- 18-06-2010 in Erfurt

15 -- 19-11-2010 in Hamburg

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

Europe for IG Metall trade union officers

Institutions, political background, European works councils
14 -- 16-10-2009 in Bad Orb

- [Further information about this workshop](#)



Exchange of experience for European Works Councils Workshop of IG BCE trade union

24 -- 26-03-2010 in Bad Münde
(further information will follow soon)

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

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