

# Dedalus and Arianna



Developing Dynamic Analyses for good Levels  
of Union Standards and Articulation  
of International And National Networking Actions –

**Information**  
Consultation  
Participation

# FINAL REPORT



With financial support from the European Union



# **Dedalus & Arianna**

*Developing Dynamic Analyses for good Levels of Union Standards and  
Articulation of International And National Networking Actions - Information  
Consultation Participation*

# **Final Report**

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## Introduction

The twentieth anniversary of the first directive on the establishment and functioning of European Works Councils (EWC) offers a perfect opportunity to summarize pros and cons of the initiative. However, it is equally interesting to analyse the scope in which EWCs represent an organized European workers' movement and EWC's potential for the development of the European union movement. In this respect, EWCs may act both as tools and as factors which facilitate European unions' activity in international companies operating in EU member states and in states where trade unions belong to the European Trade Union Confederation.

The informative and consultative function of EWCs often goes unappreciated, which is a consequence of specific insufficient practical forms of relationships between employees and the management.

Appropriate information and effective consultations carried out in the search for common solutions (in line with the spirit of laws establishing EWC) should be considered key elements enabling the development of constructive relationships between parties. A good example of such practices are German rules on co-determination.

In the context of supporting negotiation processes, obtaining relevant information, especially on the general situation of the multinational at the international level, may turn out to be very helpful. Using this knowledge on the company's general situation, employees are better equipped to protect their own interests at the local level.

In consequence, EWCs should not be perceived as a goal for international employee representation, but as a useful instrument enabling organization and activity. EWCs will never replace the union movement, but may support its functioning with respect to its rights, on condition that their potential continues to be developed.

We are unlikely to have laws that facilitate reinforcement of the international union movement in international companies, but the existing EU laws (the only case worldwide) giving employees the right to coordinate at the international level, to receive information and to be consulted without bearing any economic costs, are of fundamental importance.

These benefits cannot be overstated, while the tasks of active union members is to work on the ongoing development, day by day, of the resources that allow trade unions to take advantage of EWCs in a more efficient way.

### **Key challenges facing EWC in the globalisation era**

In the era of globalization, we all experience the lack of economic and political stability. This environment boosts the role of big business players: companies or company groups of huge dimensions, with businesses scattered all over the continent or even worldwide, running their operations by the agency of various entities, often in different, unrelated sectors.

Employee coordination across state borders is of priority, strategic importance for the international workers movement and for trade unions associating employees. For this purpose, we need to reinforce the culture of coordination and cooperation, engaging union structures, especially worker representatives – including local ones, in specific companies. International cooperation must gain a new, more functional dimension, necessary to face the challenge of combining efforts by various unions and various states in order to act together, jointly represent workers and protect their rights, taking into account of different bargaining practices and conditions applicable to all employees, across different states.

In this context, EWC are an extremely important tool for the union movement. This is a consequence of the effectiveness of the role they perform, rooted in the rights awarded to them by the directive.

As the only body ensuring international representation of workers interests worldwide, EWCs, functioning in multinational corporations offer – though in a limited scope – rights that allow workers and unionists from various countries coordinate their actions and perform certain tasks the costs of which (like the costs of international meetings, translation, training, and in some cases also other tools and resources) are covered by the employer.

### **Employees of multinationals and their representatives are the key players.**

Over 20 years of their existence, EWCs have collected vast experience, supporting a perspective which is both practical and necessary to understand the context in which workers' representatives operate.

The distance between the place where strategic decisions concerning the company are made and the employees affected by the decisions is one of the issues that best illustrate the fundamental importance of common activity in multinationals and the significance of tools that enable international operations. EWC members are well aware of the distance between local work places and the environment where the key management decisions are made. They emphasize the need to face local problems assuming the entirety of the multinational structure as a reference point.

The practice and analyses confirm that the existence of EWC reduces the sense of employee isolation, and so it is important to promote knowledge on EWC among all employees at the local level and encourage them to get involved in EWC activity. EWC brings workers from different states together allowing them to understand their needs and difficulties by establishing networks and friendships.

However, this dynamics is strongly dependent on the correct and democratic appointment of EWC members. One of the open questions is: how do we ensure that an EWC member truly represents workers' interests?

Trade unions, or rather the rate of union membership, is yet another key problem for the reinforcement of effectiveness and usefulness of EWCs and for the support of the union movement in companies concerned. For instance, the role of Italian trade union delegates to EWCs who are also active in their organisation offers a strategic added value. Unionists who are EWC members actively participate in the representation of workers, thereby strengthening the motivation to increase the percentage of union members sitting on EWCs. The elements supporting such actions include a network of contacts that facilitates experience sharing and an appropriate training offer targeted at people who wish to perform the highly important function of an EWC member.

Trade Union Alliances operating outside EWCs are the forms of union coordination which may turn out to be helpful if the percentage of union members among EWC members is low, which is the case in many EWCs.

Thanks to analyses, which provide additional information on multinationals, it is possible to overcome the Leviathan complex and the sense of hopelessness in confrontation with a huge structure of a multinational corporation. Understanding the company and its complex international hierarchy helps us understand that the management (both locally and internationally) is a factor that can be managed. It may be the case that the same job positions in various countries will come with different levels of authority—it is important to identify possible contradictions and conflicting interests and use them to the benefit of protecting employee interests.

A thorough analysis of one's own EWC contract is of fundamental importance. Having reviewed the contract, it is important to determine the exact procedures applicable to information and consultation and to appoint thematic teams within EWC. Such teams are useful tools to study specific important issues and get prepared for plenary meetings.

Employees who are union members always put bargaining first. In the case of EWCs, this area is a huge gap, as councils have no authority to carry out collective bargaining at the international level. Collective bargaining combining interests of workers from various states is seen as necessary to overcome threats inherent to globalisation.

The phenomenon of international collective bargaining does not end with Europe – there are numerous examples of union alliances at the global level and agreements signed with global management of international groups, applicable to all employees worldwide.

It is important to think how bargaining and coordination strategies could be developed internationally, so that we could obtain valid commitment from companies in the field of foreseen changes, responsible governance and bargaining in the case of possible restructuring and lay-offs.

These general agreements of international relevance can be also relied upon to protect bargaining rights and collective agreements locally. This is yet another dimension of EWC operations: acting globally, to ensure local protection.

In the context of EWC activity, apart from experiences concerning international collective bargaining, we cannot forget about “soft” forms of negotiations which do not end with a collective agreement, but allow for reaching an agreement concerning a specific issue and can influence not only the EWC activity, but also work conditions. The results of such negotiations take the form of common declarations or a document of another type. They may concern topics EWCs deal with, such as access to information or internal training. From employees' perspective, it is important to maintain contacts between local and European union representatives (European Trade Union Confederation), since they may turn out to be useful should any conflict between the parties arise. It is instrumental that we ensure high involvement of trade unions in EWCs so that such cases are not used to exclude trade unions from industrial relations within a company. To the contrary, the launch of procedures aimed at signing relevant agreements between the unions and the company often improves strategic efficiency of the company, apart from the basic goal of protecting employees' interests and improvement of work conditions.

## 1. Project title and meaning

The Dedalus & Arianna project owes its title to a complex acronym that aims to illustrate the challenges that the project aspires to find a response to by extending participants' knowledge and skills:

*Developing Dynamic Analyses for good Levels of Union Standards and Articulation of International And National Networking Actions - Information Consultation Participation.* The project refers to a strategy involving the acquisition of knowledge based on the analysis relying on the exchange of information and network-enabled work.

The Dedalus&Arianna project was developed to go beyond national borders and reinforce partnership between European trade unions. It is addressed to a broad and complex group of participants. The project involves a network of contacts established to consolidate existing relationships in the field of international cooperation, and extending them to other organizations acting in non-EU states who have been granted the candidate status. The network developed by reinforcing and extending contacts enabled the development of a partnership comprising 10 unions from 8 states.

The first organisations involved in the project came from Lombardy, Italy (CGIL, CISL), Catalonia (CCOO, UGT), Niedersachsen (DGB) and East Anglia (SERTUC), which already have a tradition of cooperation. Additionally, project participants included OPZZ (Poland) and CSDR (Romania). Finally, the group was extended to include two non-EU unions from Montenegro (USSCG) and Serbia (Nezavisnost).

The international coordination of trade union activity is an issue of fundamental strategic importance for the international workers movement. For this purpose, we need to reinforce the culture of coordination and cooperation, engaging union structures, especially worker representatives – including local ones, in specific companies. The coordination of international activities must become more hands-on to:

- Face challenges and the need to combine union activities in various states in order to gain the capacity to run common actions,
- Ensure collective representation and protection,
- Reconcile bargaining conditions and practices, even if they come from different states.

## **2. The role of TU activity in EWC - value added for employee representation bodies**

From political perspective, reflection on EWCs should focus on the following aspects:

- Integration of this form of international representation of employee interests (unique globally and recognized by EU law - a fact that needs to be reiterated) with TU activity and local representation
- Development of an operating vision ensuring that EWCs will play the role of hubs and networks for unions at the European level.

These political assumptions are the cornerstone of the working programme aimed to reinforce the EWC network thanks to supporting, coordinating and training activity.

### **Common vision of CGIL and Dedalus&Arianna project partners**

The issue of EWC and multinationals is of priority importance for the supranational representation of employees in international corporations in the context of national trade union strategies.

Taking into account the Universal Charter of Labour Rights and the common platform on the reform of the collective bargaining system, it is important to pay sufficient attention to informing and consulting employees, as these factors support high quality collective bargaining. What is more, the platform dedicated to collective bargaining not only refers to the specific role of EWC and the capacity of improving its strategic potential, but also to the necessity to develop a framework for international union coordination between the representatives of employees and unions active in various national plants that belong to the same international corporation.

### **Collective bargaining**

The topic of European bargaining space has had its place in the CGIL strategic vision for a long time. The development of a subsequent level of negotiations, aimed at uniting the workers' movement at the European scale, is a logical move in the comprehensive development aimed at supporting collective bargaining both locally and nationally.

European-scale collective agreements signed with multinationals are a novelty under progress. Such agreements are of general nature and contain basic rules, quite unlike detailed national agreements.

On the other hand, new good practices are emerging, showing us the potential inherent to negotiating in the areas of professional training, gender equality, career path, socially responsible restructuring management and other topics. In consequence, they are agreements which –operating in different plants belonging to the company – can provide support also in the context of improving the quality of collective bargaining at the second level.

To lead and promote such processes is an issue of fundamental importance for the European union movement, yet we need to make a reservation that European and national trade unions must be involved in the drafting and signing of such agreements, to avoid a situation where they become instruments aimed to exclude trade unions from companies.

In fact, EWCs play an important role if they are engaged in the process, but this role can be both positive and negative at the same time. EWCs themselves have no rights to bargain, they are merely consultative bodies and as such cannot sign an agreement at the European level.

Yet, on the other hand, EWCs can form an element of the system of industrial relationships and involve employee representatives in the bargaining process, hand in hand with representatives of the local trade unions, national and European union structures.

Recently ETUC started working with the European Commission on the development of a draft document laying down minimum voluntary frame of reference for similar supranational negotiating techniques.

From this perspective, supranational bargaining makes part of a larger debate on bargaining as a whole, with work organization being its key topic. Especially in this context the role of a body aimed to obtain information, prepare opinions and proposals is even more important; it is a strength that can provide us with substantial support in planning platforms for the purposes of negotiating work organisation in specific units.

### **Inclusiveness**

How to include workers currently excluded from the negotiation process? This is one of the main challenges faced by trade unions today. The idea of inclusiveness requires the assumption of a strategic goal involving the unification of the labour market, which is currently severely divided, and assumes the capacity to gather together and represent all the employees whose work conditions and grounds for employment, as well as professional aspirations and career path, are very diverse. In consequence, it is not so much about including, but about including oneself in the process that requires engagement on the part of all parties. Let's examine the relationships between workers on typical and atypical contracts, between permanent and fixed-time employees.

This challenge is much bigger than understanding and correct interpretation of various aspirations and needs of those employees whose situation is stable and identification with company strong. Taking into account this aspect of employees' issues and including it into the bargaining process allows us to gain new, interesting experiences within EWC, where we encounter the problems of differences in career paths, professional training, occupational health and safety, internal mobility, equal opportunities and have the possibility – in a more general context – to acquire information on company's operations internationally. In the context of work organisation, the contribution of EWCs could be very valuable.

However, their role does not end here: EWC is a space of work on inclusiveness at the third level, which leads us back to the issue of trade union strategy Europe-wide and the need to continuously work on the unification of the supranational union movement. In EWCs we need to act together, develop plans and set common goals. To overcome obstacles stemming from differences, if not from the lack of trust, it is necessary to get to know each other and build trust, the understanding of how other people act and organise their work, of bargaining practices in other countries, methods of obtaining and exchanging information – not only between the unions and the management, but also between workers and unionists in specific states.

These practices may serve as a starting point to determine common needs, postulates and platforms. Therefore it is inclusiveness which is strongly rooted in the idea of mutual exchange and the search for synthesis. Aspirations concerning inclusiveness enrich us offering not only value added, but also ensuring fruitful integration in the environments where the strategy is being implemented.

### **Participation**

Workers' participation in the process of decision making in companies, enshrined in Article 46 of the Italian constitution and repeated in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, is the rule on which the

definition of EWCs, as consultative bodies, is based. Employee participation has its roots in industrial relations in certain states, such as Scandinavian countries, France or Germany. However, participation is also a strong element of the ethos of CGIL and other Italian union organizations, which have continued to promote it since late seventies, and is well known from the works by Bruno Trentino on the “central” role of employees in companies. Participation re-emphasizes the issues of appropriate impact on work organisation and strategic choices made by the company. This role is embedded in the EWC’s function, but it also operates at the level of national workers’ representation which has rights to information and consultation. EWCs teach us that these rights exist and can be used, if we trust the other party when it comes to the development of relevant processes, from the initial structure planning to appropriate policies. EWC delegates have experience in this respect—both positive and negative – and they know these issues. Their knowledge is then useful not only in the context of action carried out in Europe, but also possible contribution to the debate on the organization and implementation of the participation strategy in practice. Here another important factor comes into play – EWC delegates, within their activity – face and confront representatives from other countries, which is a value added in itself, given the enriching potential that comes from the contact with otherness.

### **Trade union training**

The topic of training in the context of EWC is very urgent. The number of people actively involved, in various ways, in trade union operations within EWC and in multinationals who undergo effective training is still very low. For instance, many EWC delegates have never had a chance to participate in any training and express a clear need for training. Appropriately designed and implemented training programme on trade union activity in multinationals is of priority importance.

What is more, given the provisions of the directive, training must be considered a right. An EWC delegate has the right to receive training that enables him or her to perform their tasks without engaging their own private times or funds, which means that relevant costs should be covered by the company. It is a major opportunity, but it must be used and promoted with the support of trade unions, as we cannot let employers decide how, for whom and by whom training will be held.

However, it is not sufficient – a training must become a part of trade union policy. Unionists must be trained on running trade union activity at the supranational level and - in the specific context of EWC - must get used to using opportunities and tools obtained thanks to EWC and to employ EWCs for tactic purposes to reinforce international trade union alliances.

### **Communication**

In the era of 2.0 web the importance of communication continues to grow – both as a tool to disseminate content, experiences and values, and to collect information, stimulate discussions, participation and receive feedback on one’s own work. In practice, if in the past communication was one-sided and typically came in print, today it is relational and involves multiple channels: it is a process of ongoing exchange between an unspecified number of participants communicating with the use of a broad range of tools and languages.

In this context, the development of a trade union communication strategy is of fundamental importance and must include multiple channels, instruments and languages, including the experimental perspective, in order to take advantage of all the possibilities offered by the web. Keeping up the pace with technology is an important challenge for trade unions, especially in the supranational context, where network building and good practice sharing is of utmost priority.

### 3. EWC stories



Teresa del Burgo, MERCK, UGT Catalunya

I have been a member of the European Council since its beginning and until 2014. Throughout all those years, we have obtained significant changes inside the company thanks to our work.

I could say that during the first two or three years

our task in the annual meetings of the EWC was that of listening to the different reports that the company was presenting. Some time had to go by where all the members attending the meeting had to acquire more knowledge and get used to the situation in order to start taking initiatives.

We members of the main countries by number of workers have always been represented in the select committee. It was from this organ that we started to pressure the management for more information and participation in decision-making processes, especially when those decisions influenced one or several community centers.

All the members of the select committee were convinced that if we acted jointly, our actions would be more powerful and have more repercussion.

We obtained that the ECTP be granted a budget in order to carry out its competencies.

Members of the ECTP could visit the centers with difficulties and support workers there trying to minimize the measures that the company was trying to impose.

A "communication committee" was created (two annual meetings) in order to produce all the propaganda about the ECTP.

In the field of communication, we edited a magazine that we sent to all the countries represented in order to envision and inform about our work. This magazine was published in several languages. We also obtained an intranet for the EWC, which is translated into several languages.

From the EWC we worked so that the investments that the company management was suggesting would be equally destined to all the different plants.

The EWC became an element of pressure for the Multinational.

At the peak of the crisis, when there were mass dismissals of workers, we negotiated that severance pays always needed to be higher than the ones legally established by each country involved. From within the EWC we also monitored the situation to make sure that the agreements be respected in all facilities and in all countries.

From the moment we obtained a direct channel of communication with the general management of the multinational, there were no more of those excuses the local managers would usually give us in order not to implement improvements in workers' rights.



**Goffredo Molteni - EWC Unicredit,  
Fisac Cgil Milan**

The Unicredit EWC was established a few years ago, but it already has a clear history and identity. With its eighteen nations and thirty-nine delegates, it is one of the most representative European councils. The echo of social and political wounds afflicting our country found a way to their healing in the works council. «**As member of the**

**EWC, I am fully experiencing the current situation of an evocative yet tangible context: the Europe of workers.** In this view, the EWC stands out as a tool for bridging the gap between people coming from different contexts. In this regard, the protection and improvement of working conditions inside the Group are part of a wider plan aimed at building a future of rights, progress, and wealth» says Goffredo Molteni, looking at things from a privileged viewpoint.

As a member of the “Secretariat”, Molteni participates in the meetings of the select committee, the body that directs, develops strategies, and interacts with the company’s management. A sort of periscope capable of broadening the horizons and of finding solutions to every problem. Among those recently tackled is the disposal of business bank assets in the Baltic States. Preventing this from happening was not possible but **the pressure exerted by the EWC in the involved areas made it possible to achieve better discharge conditions than those specified in the corresponding national legislations.** Dealing with diversity also means facing heterogeneous cultural situations.

«I never regarded it as a limit, nor a danger. And I don’t think that countries with a stronger history in human rights defense – such as Italy – should necessarily export their vision. What we need to do is develop new approaches that make the Groups’ employees feel united by a common destiny.»

**Take the case of a delocalization.** Obviously for some workers it is a real tragedy, while for others, it is an opportunity. «The difference between us and the company is that they seek to drastically cut their costs, while we want to gain rights. And the fight for rights can only be a common fight». On this issue, the Unicredit EWC achieved important results. **From 2008 to today three joint statements have been signed to direct corporate policy towards the achievement of specific goals.** The issues tackled are training, learning, and professional development, equal opportunities, non-discrimination, and sales accountability.

«I consider them extremely important – states Molteni. They include vision, modernity, strategy. Only a common and inclusive approach can envision the boundless field of battles that await us».



Jaume Olive Plaza, EWC Alliance  
Healthcare, CCOO Catalunya

My first meeting was a bit intimidating. In addition to the natural jitters you get whenever you come into contact with a group of people who speak different languages than you do and whom you don't know, I was surprised to find people who were so formally dressed. Though this may seem banal, it was a "shock" for me not to be able to tell, at first sight, who were the delegates and who

were the managers. This was something I wasn't used to. Naturally, I soon understood that EWCs are at times governed by different "codes", and that the comrades dressed in suits were, in some cases, committed trade unionists like myself. Leaving some of your prejudices aside is a necessary requirement in the process of generating mutual trust, and with perseverance, we can find a common language with the other delegates and identify the people with whom we can build common values and motivations. Once we obtain that, everything is easier.

Felipe Trigueros Gil, EWC coordinator  
Roca Sanitarios S.A, CCOO  
Catalunya



Personalmente il momento più importante della  
To me, the most important moment of my experience as a member of the European Works Council of Roca was when we constituted the special negotiation Group. To reach this goal, we had to open a specific space in our collective bargaining and fight for many months until we obtained that the Management of the multinational agreed to constitute the Roca European Communication Forum. Now we know that the effort was worth it. The experience has allowed me to become familiar with other different trade union situations and to work with comrades who share our same concerns regarding working conditions, production pace, salaries, etc. Contrary to what some may think, the language is not really an obstacle to working in a coordinated way and to set goals based on a common consensus and on permanent dialogue.

Now we know that the effort was worth it. The experience has allowed me to become familiar with other different trade union situations and to work with comrades who share our same concerns regarding working conditions, production pace, salaries, etc. Contrary to what some may think, the language is not really an obstacle to working in a coordinated way and to set goals based on a common consensus and on permanent dialogue.



## Elena Fanelli – EWC Ricoh, Filcams Cgil di Vimodrone

Elena Fanelli answers the telephone while she is going back home from work. The story of her experience in the EWC paves its way through the urban chaos. It is as if her story contained the **same pace, the same energy**.

«Where there is a **problem**, I see an **opportunity**. Facing difficult situations without fear can lead to

great results.», she declares. When she was appointed as a member of the works council of Ricoh some months ago, she was already familiar with the subject matter, since she had often accompanied the former delegate.

In the European scene that she moves in today, she likes the **informal environment**. «The approach of the parent company towards us is much **less hierarchical** than in Italy. In the meetings, they invite us to ask our questions, frankly and without qualms.»

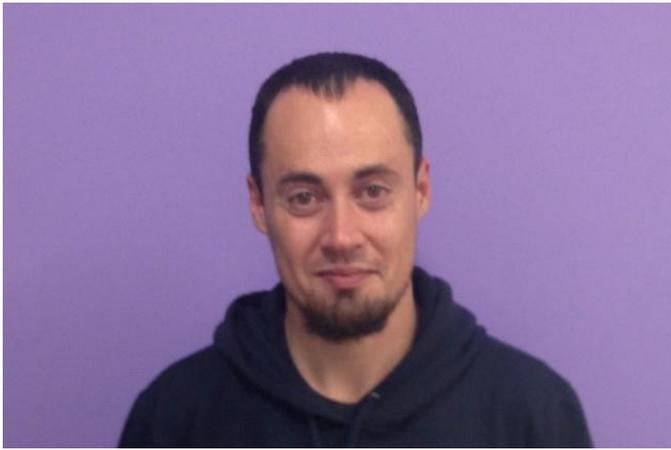
The company boasts an open and liberal attitude, especially in matters of **information and consultation**. Recently, it asked us to reconsider the methods that govern these two important processes, but until we reach a new agreement, the old rules will apply.

The members of the EWC have created their own platform – a kind of **internal social network** – to communicate with each other. Fanelli considers this to be an excellent tool, useful, above all, to create **unity among delegates** with different geographic origins.

«I use it to launch new discussions. I have a lot of questions, and I would like to investigate some mechanisms further. Whenever I intervene, someone always says “Well done! Great comment.” This seems banal, but **encouraging each other** like this, this human dimension, makes it easier to keep spirits high, as well as increase awareness about the processes we experience. »

Ricoh needs to be constantly pressured. The results obtained so far concern practical issues: renewal of obsolete equipment, some attempts to influence the organization of schedules. But **the whole political game is missing**. For this, we need time, Fanelli claims. The EWC needs to be **unionized**, be granted **bargaining power**, and be supported by appropriate **training**.

«It is clear that we are part of an international dimension, but affirming this is not so easy», the delegate comments. The employees of the multinational mostly try to **survive their working days**. To them, Europe is very far away. Not even the management in the various countries can escape this backwardness. «There is a gap to fill, and sometimes I don't even know how. **I need tools and more knowledge**. I think we need to go more into depth with the **legislative situation** of the various countries that are part of the EWC. Building solid foundations is the only way to go far.»



Jaume Agustín, EWC TNT, UGT Catalunya

Alternate member of the European Works Council of his company since 2008. Since the meetings take place every two years in Amsterdam, he has not yet replaced the comrade from Madrid who holds the membership. He attends the meetings any time the true member cannot attend, takes a leave, or leaves her post.

What he is most surprised by is that almost everything is restricted information, but that nonetheless it is shared with the other comrades by means of a notice.



**Carlo Quaini – Cae BoschRexroth, Filcams Cgil di Milano**

«They explained how to plan a trade union struggle based on the American model. We got a better idea of the way a multinational corporation thinks and acts, we increased our political aspirations. I think we should try the road to international negotiation. **Nothing actually prevents us from bringing the trade union experience into the EWC**». Last January Carlo Quaini participated in a training course in Rome organized by the national Filcams with European

funds. He left full of ideas and expectations.

«The directive should be updated to **make the role of delegate eligible**» he says. Bold ideas partially deriving from the limitations faced during his experience in the council. Quaini belongs to the so-called European Trade Union Working Group (EC), a sort of sub-EWC of Rexroth, a company acquired by Bosch in 2000, which, in its turn, has its own EWC, which should represent all the companies by which the corporation is composed by. Inside this Group there is therefore **a double track** where, sometimes, information stops flowing. Not because the company doesn't provide clear and detailed documentation with prior notice. It is the very delegates who don't invest enough on a unified and transnational type of **communication**.

«If we were appointed, the role of representatives would gain a binding and more complex meaning. This would place the EWC at the core of trade union activity. Delegates would feel more involved and employees would benefit from that. It would be a quality leap turning the councils into a stable loop in the gear of a **European trade union movement** and in the system of industrial relations.»

To Quaini, this change should go along with a change in the mentality that only **proper training** could grant. «Looking at Italy, I notice that trade unions are making huge investments in this direction». However, training also means on-the-job training. Maybe on the occasion of the EWC annual meetings, taking advantage of

informal moments. It is here, through the **human touch**, that a certain idea of Europe and trade union representation can be born. «**Networking** is essential – concludes Quaini – we need to cultivate relationships, exchange views, be always present, let information spread around. We need to be ready to keep up with the world's continuous changes, understand reasons and contradictions, and find common solutions»).



**Cristina Farran Huguet, EWC Eurest / Compass Group, CCOO Catalunya**

After several years in the Works Council, I found out about the new directive during a course held at my organization. It was clear to all us delegates that it implied benefits in terms of information and consultation and we therefore got to work. After a while and many discussions, we were able to form a special group for negotiation that geographically represented all the member

countries. One of the novelties was the participation of Eastern European countries. Suddenly, I had a meeting scheduled in my agenda where all of them would be represented. The doubts started to come to my mind: what did I know about Poland and Hungary? What differences were there between Romania and Bulgaria? Between the Czech Republic and Slovakia? So, I picked up the map of Europe and revised my notes from the EWC courses I had attended. On the day of the meeting, everything was much easier than I had imagined. Those of us who were not newcomers each sat next to a new member and explained what the process meant. The opportunity we had to improve information and consultation in our countries, to be informed about the problems of our company and to work together by setting common goals. In the end, the comrade from Romania got most votes and together with her and everyone else we are all about to conclude the negotiation and sign a new agreement.

**Daniel García Molina, EWC secretary Alstom Transporte, CCOO Catalunya**



I think that a key aspect of my experience in the EWC was, above all, the training phase before I was designated as a member. I was able to accompany the previous delegate for a long period before becoming a member and that gave me a chance to meet many of the comrades. At the same time, I was attending various courses held by my organization that allowed me to become familiar with the norms and functioning of this representative organism. In addition, international training allowed me to share my experience with delegates from other countries. I think it is key that the person who is appointed by the workers and finally approved by the federation receive appropriate training and consultancy. The biggest barrier I encountered was the language. During all the years I have been had this responsibility, also the alliance and friendship with the other delegates representing top trade unions in Europe has been crucial. This has granted us that complicity, which is necessary to manage this organ in a way that is useful for the interests of workers. In my concrete

case, my complicity with the two previous secretaries was essential for me to participate in many meetings and negotiations that have been truly valuable to develop my current responsibility in the Alstom EWC.



**Giorgio Vasconi, EWC Renault Italia,  
FISASCAT CISL di Lodi**

I participated in the EWC for Renault, which took place in Paris from June 26th to July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015. The most significant experience was meeting the company's European and non-European EWC delegates and directly perceiving the situations in different places in all professional spheres, production, commercial, and financial.

I was able to directly compare the various types of negotiation and the differences in trade union membership. We were informed about the developments, strategies, and goals of the company. I saw that despite the EWC's coordination, there are still difficulties in exchanging communication between different countries, even if the potential is still huge.

There is restructuring everywhere, with reductions in staff, more stress and higher work loads, and there are wage claims due to new contracts that have been revised downwards, especially concerning aspects of the welfare state (Sunday openings).

One of the strengths of the EWC should be solidarity, understanding the differences in the culture and habits of different countries, to provide moments to exchange experiences and information, to improve the quality of life and workers' rights everywhere.

**PAOLO VENTURA, RLSA – SAIPEM –  
GRUPPO ENI, FEMCA CISL**



I absolutely believe that an experience in an EWC can only be positive. Both due to the fact that you become familiar with analyses and situations that lie outside your national reach, and due to the fact that you can assess and learn about the different realities of our companies in different countries, and finally because you get a chance to exchange ideas with delegates who, like us, operate in different contexts and production sites both in Italy and in other European countries.

This does not mean that everything is positive, but learning even about negative situations or less known facts concerning our companies is, in my view, an important experience which allows us to better carry out our task as RSU and RLSA.

It is certainly about increasing the capacity for an overall view of complex companies like ours and looking beyond your small garden where we tend to focus on actions that are exclusively directed at our production site without being able to grasp the complexity of a system that needs to consider a series of situations from an economic and strategic point of view and from the point of view of employment.

The cultural, social and economic differences of European countries create a series of difficulties in trying to harmonize the professional world, and they later lead to unreasonable competition in a constant race for fiscally appealing countries or countries where the cost of labor is lower.

Not to mention the labor activities in non-European countries which are even poorer and where interests are much higher.

I think that the next step needs to consider an EWC which needs to look even further in the case of those companies whose operations to a great extent take place in non-European countries. If gaining more knowledge allows us to transfer and use it on the different occasions of dialogue with the company and to better relate to our colleagues, we have taken one small step forward and then we can say that we have carried out our role a little better.



**Montserrat Expósito Gómez, Henkel Ibérica, UGT Catalunya**

Henkel Ibérica has its headquarters in Germany, but it also has offices in France, Italy, Netherlands, UK, Ireland, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Spain, Belgium, and Greece. These 15 countries are the ones represented in the European Works Council since they have plants with more than 150 employees.

It should be pointed out that in Spain, following an extremely harsh restructuring process, we have gone from 7 to 2 plants. The plants have been moved to countries like Slovenia and Slovakia, since the company noticed that they were economically more viable there. The debates concerning this issue in the works council were very tough, due to the lack of solidarity between comrades.

I have been a delegate since 2008, and the most important thing I have obtained was the transferal of all the information resulting from the biannual EWC meetings in a clear and concise way to all the workers of the two plants in Spain.



**Carlo Carelli – EWC Unilever, Filctem Cgil di Casalpusterlengo**

In 2014, during a meeting between European works councils, the Unilever EWC was awarded a prize. It was a prize acknowledging its innovative skill, because it had launched a new tool to increase the effectiveness of the consultation mechanisms: the so-called Barcelona agenda.

“We were feeling the need to tackle important matters in a more continuous way, so as to **really influence business decisions**. In fact, Unilever

was not listening to us. Even though we were adequately informed about what was happening in the numerous branches of the multinational corporation, we were not able to influence its decisions”, said Carlo Carelli, member of the plenary and of the coordination committee.

The Agenda, effective since 2010, is made up of various workgroups, whose task it is to carefully analyse specific issues to then be discuss them with the company, with the aim of reaching a **common vision**.

During the next plenary meeting, planned for March, **the EWC wants to add four points to the Agenda:** health of the employees, respect of gender diversity, youth unemployment and work organization. “We do not want to focus only on fighting some intentions, such as the wish to review wages, as announced by the company. **We want Unilever to become a more and more stable company**, and it can do so by paying more attention to changes and to the needs of its employees. It is important, not only in view its European dimension, which we are discussing right now, but also in view of the local dimension, to which we all belong.”

Carelli is used to combine these two aspects. He is proud that some suggestions in the Barcelona Agenda are already the subject of local negotiation. **A pilot project was launched right here in Italy** with the aim of increasing gender equality in the Group branches, as a consequence of the discussions started in view of the plenary.

Carelli goes even further. According to him, **the EWC can contribute to the development of a European trade union movement**. “We have connections, we know the production processes, we have access to information. But also the trade unions of other countries, which are part of our works council, should open up more towards the international dimension. I think of my situation, in CGIL. We need to be able to better understand the **practical link that ties Italy to Europe, and even, I would say, to the world**. For this reason, I feel that the meetings between different members of the EWC, organized by CGIL Lombardia, have been extremely positive. We need to broaden the trail of past good practices to turn it into a main road”.



**Marisa Menolotto - EWC Credit Suisse, Fisac Cgil di Milano**

Marisa Menolotto is about to retire. She takes a look back and analyses her experience in the EWC: “There have been highs and lows”, she says. She is a bit disheartened –times have been difficult, but in spite of everything she has not lost her enthusiasm. On 15th January, she and other delegates and a group of trade union officials, took part in a **meeting on European works councils**, held on CGIL Lombardia’s premises

upon the initiative of the Department of International Policies.

“I have noticed how much more interested people are in the EWC, and it has been very reassuring. Until recently, the situation was very different. We were only a few people, sometimes discouraged. Now it is quite the opposite. **I have heard stories full of planning potential**. The EWC represents the future for employees of multinationals. We cannot give up on this tool.”

A **training** day hence became an opportunity to share our experiences and the best practices experienced so far. The motivation never to give up when faced with difficulties can arise precisely from a **debate with others**. The EWC of Credit Suisse has a fairly discontinuous story. Frequent management changes have hindered a coherent and progressive development of the works council. For every step forward there was a step back with repercussions on the operation and the usefulness of the council. Moreover, due to the **lacking**

**or non-existing union involvement of some delegates** – English delegates, in particular - it was not clear whose interests had to be defended: those of the workers or those of the corporation.

“I represent the workers, and honestly I find it difficult to understand those who support pro-corporation actions. Perhaps, **fear of retaliation** plays a role in this lack of vision. Unfortunately, this has caused an impasse. During these long years, I have often been on the verge of quitting. But I have never done so. I am too passionate about the EWC. I look at the success of other works councils and I think that it really is possible to **influence the Group’s policies**. So ultimately, I have not lost hope.”

Marisa Menolotto has shared her experience in front of the colleague who is going to succeed her. It was a conscious choice, imposed by the need to **create bonds and dialogue**. “I wish my colleague, who is going to replace me in a few months, only one thing, the most precious of all: to feel the same impulse to act that I felt when I took my first steps in the EWC.”

David Escrig Faure, EWC Deutsche Telekom, UGT Catalunya



I have been the representative of the European works council of my company for several years. The council often resembles the European Parliament, since we have comrades from basically all over Europe. We find many of the different views on trade unionism reflected in the works council, as well as the different views on trade unions.

The first thing I was surprised by was the difference in the position of the representatives from different countries. Something which is a right in one country at times doesn’t even exist in the laws of a neighboring country, and you can perceive this in the meetings and when we conceive resolutions and agreements. For instance, the stand of a German trade unionist, a country in which laws are strong and where any severance needs to be negotiated with the company, has nothing to do with that of a British trade unionist, where the law limits their powers and severance is practically free. A “midway” agreement represents an epic victory for a British representative, but a huge loss of rights for the German colleague.

It is very fashionable today to speak of the Euro and of the fact that the economic and monetary union still needs a fiscal union, but not many people talk about a workers’ union to defend their right, which, nonetheless, truly is an urgent and necessary issue.



Antonio Muñoz, EWC Pepsico, UGT Catalunya

He prefers to speak of a forum more than a works council. The most relevant problems he has to face concern the fact that each company has managers and each country has laws. To this, you have to add a new obstacle, which is that in Eastern countries like Romania and Poland workers are represented by plant managers and human resource managers.

Consultations should be proposed before the meeting, otherwise they are not effective.

My company is London-based, but they regularly change their location in order to benefit from different legislations according to need.

The big issue is that lawfulness and trade union reality are two different things.

**Fouad Wabonlsi Rondani, Johson Controls, UGT Catalunya**

I work in an American multinational company based in Germany. The European Works Council has 32 members. Apart from Germany, it is also present in Spain, Switzerland, France, Greece, Italy, and Austria.

I have been a part of the European Works Council for a long time and the biggest achievement for workers until now has been gaining more access to information, for instance obtaining that the information we were provided with in meetings be anticipated beforehand, furthering training in English to be able to work better on an international scene, and obtaining prior meetings for workers' representatives in



order to determine common positions for the later meeting with the company management.



**Stefano Villani – EWC Ericsson, Slc Cgil di Milano**

To Stefano Villani, there are two elements that would allow the EWC to gain a more important role in the system of industrial relations. The first concerns the aspect of negotiation. If faced with a works council able to elevate negotiation to an international sphere, multinational companies would stop looking like giants in the eyes of single nations. As far as Ericsson's EWC is concerned, the **effects of information and consultation** can be

perceived mainly in the local sphere. Knowing the real facts on which the company's tactics rely can help to improve union action within the single production sites, but it does not in any way undermine the decisions that the Group makes on a global scale. This, therefore, is the limitation.

The second issue concerns the **protection of delegates**.

«As of today, it is practically inexistent. Each representative of the EWC enjoys the freedom and safety that derive directly from national legislation. But one thing is coming from a context where trade union rights are respected, another is knowing that you can **risk your job** because you acted according to your conscience. », Villani explains.

Talking to colleagues of different origin does not only mean treasuring multiculturalism. It also means observing the various faces of Europe, its light and dark areas. **Contemplating international support for EWC delegates** means building spaces of democracy and true representation.

«We would almost need a third directive, to introduce all these changes», says Villani, who doesn't lose sight of some **bad tendencies**. More and more often, Ericsson appeals to the **obligation of transnationality** and

does not inform the EWC if its choices officially concern only one nation. We are dealing with a situation in which the company closes one establishment in one country, then in another, and then maybe in yet another, making it look like they are **separate actions**, when in reality they are different traces of **one single design**.

«We need to contrast this **artificial reading of the directive** and set clearer rules that cannot be interpreted in so many different ways. We need more combative EWCs, composed by members who are protected by the law and involved in unions.» Can **training** help? «Yes, as long as it is aimed at the role we have. – Villani concludes – Our task is to effectively represent the workers, by means of appropriate training and preparation.»

### Julián Santos, Magna Internacional, UGT Catalunya

This is company that produces rearview mirrors. It was founded in Austria, but it already has 3 companies there and about 50 in Germany. In Spain it has 3 companies in two different groups. It is a company with a very developed code of conduct, they do not save any expenses on issues concerning the wellbeing of their workers.



On the week of January 20<sup>th</sup>, there is a meeting of the potential members who will be part of the constitution of the European Works Council. On January 21<sup>st</sup> we will write the regulations and on the 22<sup>nd</sup> there will be a meeting with the management.

Magna Internacional is located in 15 countries and will have 13 members in the European Works Council. And from there they will constitute the select committee. The process was initiated by the Germans and Austrians 14 months ago.



### Fabio Tedoldi - EWC Basf, Filctem Cgil Monza e Brianza

«“So? What’s the news from Germany?” my colleagues would ask me. I knew everything, but I couldn’t say anything because of the confidentiality clause to which the EWC is bound. **Keeping the secret made me sleepless at night**. I called as soon as I got the authorization. Just in time! At the Basf of Burago they were about to inform workers of the closure of the factory...Imagine how happy everyone was when I said that all the jobs were

safe» recalls Fabio Tedoldi.

That evening, five years ago, picking up the phone to call Italy after a meeting with all the personnel managers of the Group was truly liberating.

**However, confidentiality** was not an obstacle to the proper functioning of the EWC. The time frame that needs to be respected before sending information from the parent company to its national subsidiaries is reasonable. But the adrenaline rising, the tension, the countdown, are something you can never forget. Especially when what is at stake is the survival of a factory. The plant of Burago, where the chemical

multinational corporation concentrated the production of varnishes, was **at risk of closure**. Thanks to the pressure exerted by the EWC, though, the factory was sold.

But it's not always like that. There can be no victories without defeats, and Fabio Tedoldi likes to have his feet firmly on the ground.

He identifies needs and goals to achieve. Having to deal with the trade unions of the many countries that make up the EWC is thought-provoking. «Following the example of countries like Germany and France, I think we **should create a national coordination body for all the r.s.u. (unified union representatives) existing on our territory**. Only unity will grant us full control of what happens inside the Basf plants. This would strengthen the position held by Italy within the EWC, probably second-level negotiation would also benefit from it. Like the Romans used to say, “**divide et impera**”. I insist: we must aim for a greater cohesion.»

This is also true on an international level. According to Tedoldi, **we must develop a common vision** capable of treating the councils of different companies as part of a common project aimed at securing rights and protecting them. We have many tools at our disposal, from training to the many opportunities to meet that the EWC members have. As for the content, we don't need any new ones. «A **nitty-gritty trade union** able to identify with workers and fight by their side is all we need.»



**XAVIER PÉREZ, CAE ALSTOM, UGT Catalunya**

Alstom is represented in 10 countries (France, Italy, Germany, Spain, UK, Belgium, Poland, Romania, Switzerland, and Holland). It is also based in other countries, but these are working centers where there are less than 150 workers.

I have been in the European Works Council of my company since December 2012.

Due to the restructuring we have undergone, we have gone from having a council with 38 people to one of only 18. The positive experience in this council has been that we were able to stop the closure of factories in the winds division. The negative part would basically be when we were not able to stop the restructuring, which meant selling an important part of the turnover to General Electrics.

In terms of figures, we can say that in the transportation branch in Barcelona we saved 50% of the workforce, and on a European scale an entire plant, located in Switzerland, was also saved.

**Adelio Donini – RSU CARGILL SRL, FAI CISL Asse del PO**

*In Europe the only thing we have in common, even today, is the currency, since contracts (some don't even have a national contract), protections, and the way of practicing trade unionism are very different from country to country.*

I have been a delegate since 2002. I have witnessed many development stages of my company on a European scale and then, from



2008 to 2012 I experienced a degrowth scenario with sites closing down and entire production branches being sold, and acquisitions, even during the crisis, of new activities and even entire groups.

Our annual meetings in the EWC last 4 days: the first 2 are dedicated to training and preparing questions, while during the remaining days we have presentations of the company's activities (which has 62 business units), including the financial report. At the end of the presentations, we have a debate with questions and answers.

In these years we have always had a lot of information, what has been missing is consultation, which we are still fighting for with the management. There have been cases where extraordinary meetings were supposed to be held, but they weren't. The Select Committee is very active, with at least 4 meetings a year with the European management.

The true potential of the EWC is the exchange of technical and cultural information during the meeting to see how the company operates in the different countries, as well as spreading this information on a local level. This is not an easy issue in a context characterized by 5 production sites plus offices.

In Europe the only thing we have in common, even today, is the currency, since contracts (some don't even have a national contract), protections and the way of practicing trade unionism are very different from country to country.

As far as Directive 38/2009 is concerned, even if it has been greatly improved, it doesn't include obligations or sanctions like national contracts: therefore it is ineffective in many ways.



**NILS ULF, SELLYBEL, UGT Catalunya**

I work in a telemarketing company located in Barcelona, but with offices in Germany, Ireland, Italy, UK, and Hungary, among other countries.

We are fighting to create a European Works Council because mine is an industry with a lot of precariousness, and also a lot of labor mobility.

There are many offices in Europe, but we have not yet succeeded in convincing the company to provide

us with information to get in touch with our colleagues from other countries in order to constitute a European Works Council.

**SERGIO MARIANI – CAE  
STMicroelectronics, FIM CISL Brianza  
Lecco**

*The future challenge is unifying workers' goals and interests by sharing legitimate local interests and also launching common trade union initiatives to this purpose.*

For many years now I have been experiencing the EWC of ST Microelectronics, and it is not easy to briefly sum up this experience in a few lines. But I'll try.



The most precious and enriching element is, and has been, the possibility of meeting people and therefore cultures, even trade union cultures, that are different from my own: the possibility of analyzing the French trade union system (ST is an Italian-French multinational company) has been the most significant experience. Another point is how delegates experience or react in front of the problems, which the corporate management poses: for smaller countries, the EWC is a crucial moment to get information about the company. The limitation is that sometimes you lose sight of the trade union approach in favor of a more technicist drift.

Often the information the company provides is very broad, and identifying which issues impact or will impact workers is not easy. The company has never considered these appointments as a resource, but rather as an obligation deriving from European and national laws.

One limitation I found in this experience is that the EWC only has a consultative function, and therefore cannot negotiate with the management. Our EWC is composed only by delegates from the company's sites; in our agreement, which has been renewed twice, there is no provision for a European trade union member.

While in phases of expansion or stability we could consult each other within our ST world, now, in a phase of downsizing, the need to get connected with European institutions/trade unions becomes more urgent.

The future challenge is unifying workers' goals and interests by sharing legitimate local interests, and also launching common trade union initiatives to this purpose.



## POSITION OF UNIONS IN FCA SERBIA

Încă de la înființarea sa, acum 4 ani, fabrica FCA (fosta Fiat The FCA Serbia d.o.o. Kragujevac factory was established in 2008, on the foundations of an earlier Yugoslav car factory called *Crvena zastava*, and started the manufacture 4 years ago.

Although renowned as one of the best factories in the country and the largest Serbian exporter, its workers' wages are in fact below the national average. The factory follows all the European and world trends, except in two categories, which are wages and workers' rights.

Within the factory, 4 trade union organizations operate, of which only one is representative, meaning it has the right to bargain over any matters relevant to the factory's operation with the employer. The remaining three unions are under a watchful eye of the factory's management and their operation is being aggravated in every possible way in order to discourage the workers from joining these unions.

The youngest of these, called *Sindikata Nezavisnost* (Independence Union), receives the strongest backlash. It was established less than a year ago and its priorities are the following:

- Improving the working conditions for the workers;
- Increasing the wages; and
- Encouraging the workers to socialize inside and outside the factory.

*Sindikata Nezavisnost* is also a part of a representative central union organization UGS NEZAVISNOST which actively participates in three-party negotiations at the national and local levels, but within FCA Serbia remains subject of discrimination and numerous pressures from the employer.

The members of this union are not allowed to purchase products by deferred payment in monthly instalments via administrative deductions, which is a common purchasing method in Serbia due to low wages.

Contrary to this, the largest union, which inherited most of its membership from the earlier factory (and along with the members it also inherited multiple items of real property and tangible assets), has done little for the workers. Everybody agrees that its biggest success was having won the fight for the workers to have two types of salad available at the factory canteen instead of one.

When the first collective agreement was signed, the factory's management was more than generous to the union's management. Instead of granting 50 paid working hours for one representative's work in the union, which he/she was entitled to by the applicable law and the collective agreement, it granted three paid positions (which is 10 times more than necessary), offices, stationery, computers, paid phones and other things required.

The final result is that the workers' wages have not been increased in the last three years despite the fact that production has grown exponentially and the factory operates successfully.

## 4. Dedalus&Arianna project activities and outcomes

The assumption behind the project was to analyse training processes and communication from trade union members' perspective. Communication should not be construed as a one-way flow of information, but rather a process of sharing, exchange and participation that engages all the members of the union network. The same applies to training, understood as a dynamic process targeted at problem solving and learning by doing. In practice, training focuses on the exchange between participants and on direct experience, instead of being limited to the one-way provision of data.

All experimental tools employed in the Dedalus&Arianna project were designed to be usable in other initiatives undertaken by various partners of the network. The idea to publish methodology and materials is a response to the existing demand and the willingness to share our work for the purposes of further development, and to stimulate discussion and actions in this field.

What is typical of the spirit of projects similar to Dedalus&Arianna is the willingness to share and disseminate knowledge contributing to the improvement of industrial relations at national and international levels.

Also from the perspective of single participants, the training is a factor which determines effectiveness of EWC operations.

It is clear that EWC delegates must exercise their right to training. It is also a priority that they not only participate, but even manage the process of selecting the content and experts involved in EWC member training, as the ultimate goal of these activities is to improve EWC members' skills in terms of managing the dynamics of work and acquiring necessary knowledge. It is also necessary to ensure relevant trade union training which should focus on skills concerning using the network and cooperation between trade union members and unions from different states, as well as technical issues concerning information and problems which come up during meetings (such as analysis of economic data).

Sharing good practices and experiences is very useful in knowledge exchange, helping us to get to know other EWC members better and improving the quality of delegates' work in local units of multinationals. What is more, it is helpful to trade union activists in charge of monitoring multinationals.

This is why it is useful to discuss the topic of training about EWC, and not only the training of EWC members. Training about EWC should be also offered to trade union members engaged in union activities in companies that run international operations.

In this context we deal with developing operational capacities of unions taking advantage of EWCs. In consequence, training should cover such elements as the ability to take steps, act and not only obtain information, and in this respect it must be similar to training offered to delegates in various structures of employee representation.

In consequence, when developing a training strategy, we must answer two key questions:

- Who needs to be trained about EWC? Answer: not only EWC members.
- Should the training be limited to EWC operations? EWC operations must be closely related to the training on competences and skills concerning trade union activity in multinationals.

If EWCs are to become a part of a systemic game – a very complex, multi-layered system involving all our activists engaged in union work in multinationals – the strategic impact of the training must be broader.

On their part, trade unions which participated in the project as partners or co-applicants have gathered knowledge and experience on trade union training for EWC. They have contributed their knowledge to the analysis prepared during the project presenting measures applied in their national environments to run training concerning EWC.

## CCOO - Catalonia

### **What is the ideal profile of a European Works Council delegate?**

It's fair to assume that the most desirable profile should match a typical employee representative, what means that such person should be fairly well educated, experienced, able to offer advice, act in good faith, but will it suffice? A person with intermediate level in English, a good insight into EU directives or willing to travel on weekends... Would such person make a good **EWC** member? Nothing of that kind.

For instance, if we dwell deeper into some issues indicated by the **EWC**, we will often come across major issues related to coordination on different levels of representation (international - national - local) and trade unions. Engagement in works councils is basically non-existent because no one has ever told workers what this tool is used for or what may be achieved with it; while operations of the **EWC** itself play a rather marginal role because its actual potential has not been fully leveraged. And this is all happening at **EWCs** that feature people who are fluent in English, ready to travel on weekends and demonstrate vast expertise.

So what is the root cause of the problem? When we pinpoint existing issues, it transpires that it was the profile of individuals who come into the making of **EWCs** that was ill-defined because you need to keep in mind that:

- Such people must take interest in international developments, not only those that tie directly to workers, but also to economy, politics, the society or social studies.
- You need to be well-versed in **EWC** matters and cultural diversity.
- You need to be used to handle collective bargaining.
- You also need to be a person who wants to be 'accepted' within the works council because trust and empathy for people who live in a different cultural reality is simply a must.
- Moreover, you need to be sufficiently independent from your company, be a trade union member and ensure sufficient coordination of your activities with the union.
- You also need to have plenty of patience, cope with your own ego and egos of other **EWC** members.
- You also need to demonstrate the specific skill of sharing information.
- You must be ready not only to travel, but also to engage in team work (because we travel to work).

This, however, should not hide the key issue - that if we are not aware of the transnational aspect of **EWC** efforts, it's better not to get involved in them. The work schedule and all **EWC** activities are now centred around the transnational mindset. The mindset that will enable us to operate within the union membership-coordination-communication triangle.

Trade union membership does not only mean that someone 'becomes a trade union member;' it's also the awareness that efforts of EWC are a trade union's tool. And this is exactly why trade unions should undertake **EWC**-related initiatives, abstain from silencing cases, discuss urgent trade union issues while making sure that procedures concerning the right to information and consultation is followed through. And one more question that needs to be considered: How many multinational organisations were brought to European courts during two decades of **EWC** operations? Only ten. This low figure reflects lack of initiative on part of trade unions.

Obviously, we must first exhaust all available negotiation paths and, whenever possible, avoid conflicts that are triggered by litigation (especially when reaching an agreement with the entire **EWC** is hardly possible; long waiting time for court rulings, etc.). But avoiding courts is a different thing than avoiding conflicts, as the latter one may be considered as a sign of the ultimate passiveness...

#### Coordination

Interactions between all three levels (local, national and international) and trade unions are absolutely essential. We should focus on bolstering relations within **EWCs**, instead of convening new meetings and taking interest in nothing at all until the next meeting as if it was some bureaucratic obstacle we must overcome. We must seek agreement and speak out loud, what means that we need to coordinate our activities with other trade unions, sometimes competing with us on the local level, but we need to speak in one voice on the international level. Equally important is the knowledge of effective agreements to tap into all opportunities they open up before us. Other essential elements of our work include mutual trust within **EWCs** and mutual support we must provide, considering various roles played at **EWCs** (we fulfil a different role on smaller committees - putting forward proposals and decision-making - and different ones than during plenary session where support and coherent activities come to the fore).

#### Communication

Put simply, we must explain everything we, not worrying about the confidentiality clauses (which have nothing to do with limiting the freedom to impart information from meetings. It is important to explain to employees why we were absent for several days and tie this fact to the all-important trade union activities on the international scene which are undertaken with the interest of all local workers in mind. Communicating everything we do across all levels of trade union coordination, what includes both the proper union and workers.

To recap, if we maintain this 'triangle' and the specific profile we have mentioned, we will get a better delegate profile and as a result our common goal - or transforming **EWCs** into an effective trade union tool - will be achievable.

### **Establishing EWCs**

The substantial role of European Works Councils (known as **EWCs**) involves development of trade union activities on the transnational level within the framework of modern, globalised economy.

Given such circumstances, we must have tools that will enable us to face changes taking place at enterprises or even anticipate traumatic situations that have a direct impact on the employment level and rights of workers employed at multinational organisations.

What we are talking here are changes that have a direct impact on employment and working conditions which may take various guises, ranging from downturn in a sector to restructuring, relocation, merger or downsizing at companies of a larger group, etc.

In this sense, we believe that **EWC** is well-poised to play the pivotal role as a body that represents workers and is able to put forward proposals to prevent such developments from unfolding.

Teamed up with other federations and the International Secretariat, our Secretariat for Trade Union Training designs a training curriculum which is useful in establishing new **EWCs** everywhere they have not been founded yet but may be appointed or to expand the range of **EWC** activities at organisations where they are already present.

In the modern globalised world it is essential to build the awareness of trade unions of the importance of powerful **EWCs**.

We must come forward with an integrated proposal for trade union representatives sitting at **EWCs** that will enable us to challenge various situations we have previously described with more confidence.

Which is why the Secretariat for Trade Union Training, Research and the Council Culture of Catalonia has designed two types of training programmes?

We have courses focused on various topics that facilitate representation and more detailed seminars that are delivered across **EWCs**.

The current training curriculum addressed to **EWCs** covers two training courses, depending on the level of the council's development:

- A basic course in **EWCs** - this is a course geared for representatives who have the possibility to establish a **EWC** but have not done it yet, or are just embarking on negotiations, or have just established the council and are struggling with its development. We tackle such issues like the procedure that needs to be followed to establish a works council, requirements, contracts, etc.
- A more intermediate course in **EWCs** - this seminar is particularly practical for those **EWC** members who have been operating within works council structures for some time and wish to expand their knowledge of specific areas related to making more specific contractual arrangements, increasing the participation of trade unions, reinforcing the role and the ability to act beyond the framework of consulting and informing (the issue of relocation, restructuring, etc.).

Both courses put the spotlight on two substantial elements that determine the effectiveness of **EWC's** actions. These are:

- Coordination and communication between **EWC** members and a federation or a sector you are a part of;
- Coordination and communication between **EWC** members and other colleagues who represent workers within an organisation.

In order to highlight the prominence of both elements and experience, courses are joined by a member of a respective **EWC** for a given sector who will help us identify the strategy that fits different scenarios that take place within **EWCs**.

The point is that all these courses should be practical and useful. These courses also enable us to identify actions to be taken within a network that will bolster measures undertaken by trade unions.

I wish to stress the importance of cooperation which is the key element not only in terms of effective operations of **EWCs** but also in cases when it is essential to confront possible changes or restructuring within a capital group with entities located in different countries whose business profile may vary. Such circumstances call for coordination between different sectors.

Meanwhile, we are also aware of the complexity of issues addressed by **EWCs** and alongside detailed training courses we must have absolutely essential complementary training seminars:

- Languages
- Communication and negotiation skills
- An economic analysis related to processes specific for mergers, capital groups, and absorption of a company.
- Information and communication technologies which may prove extremely helpful in maintaining regular liaisons with other **EWC** members.

In order to deliver such integrated training agenda, we need sound coordination between various stakeholders - the person accountable on behalf of **EWC** from a given organisation who acting in agreement with the person responsible for the trade union training agenda in a given sector should contact the Secretariat for Trade Union Training to declare specific training needs.

There is a growing need for cooperation and coordination of trade union activities on the European level because Europe must become more social and in this sense, **EWCs** are key drivers of development of joint trade union activities on our continent.

To-date, when works councils in Catalonia are collaborating closely with each other and we are celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a trade union, I would like to remind you that our motto is “50 years of creating the present and the future” and point out to a parallel; when we were talking about **EWCs** several years ago, we failed to perceive works councils as a proposal for the future and long-term growth, while today **EWCs** are an element that is essential for our existence in the present day.

## **General Union of Workers (UGT) - Catalonia**

### **Trade union training as a tool of European Works Councils (EWCs)**

Being a trade union organisation that associates the biggest number of members, the Catalan UGT embraces goals that include improvement of protection and promotion of social, political, economic, welfare and cultural interests of workers as well as representing their interests in collective bargaining, industrial relations, employment relations, etc.

Training seminars for trade unions are an essential tool which enables the Catalan UGT to provide its representatives at **EWCs** with skills and capabilities essential to implement tasks related to employee representation, whilst providing them with a guaranteed quality of actions and practical knowledge of effective legal regulations.

This is why our organisation is designing and rolling out a training programme for trade unions which comes as a response to the needs of works councils that are in dire need of a tool that would provide them with an insight into real life operations of European trade unions, help them identify common goals that bring together employees of giant corporations employing thousands of people of different nationalities and on different terms and conditions.

To execute specific activities, training courses for trade unions must embrace the following issues:

1. Improvement of the ability of workers' representatives to analyse information obtained at **EWCs** through language training.
2. Fostering the atmosphere of trust among all employees' representatives by regular exchange of information, designing codes of conduct within the framework of **EWC** operations, if production is relocated, and bolstering the dynamics of councils themselves.
3. Executing the right to consultation, especially when working conditions change significantly.
4. **EWCs** must be entrenched in trade union operations on the national level.

Despite challenges of work on the transnational scene, the Catalan UGT calls for follow up on these activities in order to support our representatives at European Works Councils by developing their trade union capabilities and enable them to achieve more for all workers they represent.

## **Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori (CISL) - Lombardy**

For many years CISL Lombardy, with its Department of European and International Policy, Cooperation and Migration, has been involved in European actions, campaigns and projects aimed at improving the preparation of employee representatives in multinational companies, analyzing connections between exercising the right to information and consultation, the awareness of these rights and their actual practical use, which is necessary to ensure active participation. It is highly important to disseminate knowledge on the strategic importance of the European culture of social dialogue to use information acquired by employees more effectively. Such information can be acquired during consultations with the company, carried out in the "constructive spirit", which should be the foundation of the relationship between EWC and the management. CISL Lombardy focuses its efforts on these goals. For many years, the union has been actively working to reinforce international cooperation with unions from other European countries to take up coordinated joint actions on the issues related to the right to information and consultation.

Today, the processes combining the acquisition of knowledge and competence with the everyday work of people representing employees are sophisticated and complex. EWCs are one of the representation bodies which, due to their complexity and development requirements, must be at the centre of attention of all local, national and European union organisations. This is also why CISL Lombardy is convinced that the training for EWC members is of fundamental importance. In the course of the DEDALUS&ARIANNA project we carried out training courses during which we attempted to provide EWC members with necessary information. It is indispensable that all new EWC members are provided with basic training on the nature, purpose and goals of EWC, starting from the general historical outline, placing this instrument in the relevant context of the 1994/45/EC directive, discussing its evolution and modification introduced by the directive 2009/38/EC and its implementation in the Italian law. Subsequently, it is necessary to develop knowledge on the conditions for the establishment of an EWC, its competences, and try to present, as precisely as possible, the definition of the right to information and consultation to help employees understand what EWC is and what its members' duties involve.

On the other hand, in the case of people who already possess vast experience of working in EWC it is necessary to develop a different model of training, enabling them to share and confront their experiences - both negative and positive - gained when serving on EWC and provide them with an opportunity to present potential proposals. We are convinced that occasions like this one, when delegates from various companies can meet and share with their experiences are of fundamental importance and are necessary to build an effective union network for better procurement of necessary information. These are also the people who need to be directly involved in discussions on the role of EWCs and its evolution in the future.

Consequently, we support representatives of European workers, being the avant-garde of modern trade union internationalism, in performing their work at EWCs.

**South Eastern Region Trade Union Congress – the United Kingdom, a project partner with a shorter tradition of training EWC members.** A small scope of experience became a starting point for interesting experiments extending in an innovative way the definition of project outcomes.

During the international seminar of Dedalus&Arianna project held in November 2015, the British organisation obliged the delegates participating in the event to prepare their own assessment of this experience, which was a novelty to them all.

## Report of the Dedalus & Arianna seminar - Monday 9 to Thursday 12 November 2015, Ispra, Italy

### Description of the seminar given by the group of participants

The focus of the Dedalus & Arianna project is Information, Consultation and Participation within European Works Councils (EWCs) and Multi-National Companies.

The aim of the seminar was to support trade unionists to build trustworthy relationships, to build meaning by looking on sense-making rather than decision-making, and to support communicating through behaviour, working effectively within many contexts and cultures.

The seminar was constructed around six sessions (each containing a mix of presentations and exercises conducted by delegates in national or mixed groups) and was in the context of a reduction of social dialogue at national and transnational levels following the 2008 financial crisis and consequent government policy changes on investment in our public sectors and a distribution of finance, power and content from the workforce to business.

Plus, the current attacks on trade union rights regarding industrial action and the right to strike across the continent.

The seminar considered the changing nature of agreements with EWCs and MNCs, the lack of coherence and harmonisation often seen amongst trade unions involved and varying procedures in different nation states.

Effective communication was seen as a vital ingredient to any actions in this context and there was a major focus on methods and styles of communication rather than on tools. Thus generating hope, story telling and making the story of the EWC “personalised then spectacular” and above all authentic.

Having said that, there were structured presentations on the rights and purpose of EWCs, clarifying the legislative twin tracks that they are governed by and suggesting trade union responses to strengthen and improve workers’ terms and conditions by increased information sharing across national borders.

We also looked at project management within EWCs and MNCs, ensuring innovation to raise the quality of collective bargaining at local level on any topic from parental leave to investment in Research and Development.

### Individual evaluation



#### Burcin Bayazit, Unite

Craftsman/Technician Delphi Diesel Systems

Relevant issues of the seminar:

- Improve communication between workers’ representatives and EWC members within the multinational companies
- Create specific tools from a trade union perspective for training and communication in MNCs’ representation bodies
- Strengthen and expand the EWC members’ skills on the effective flow

- of information within the company
- Improve internal networks and communication between the EWC and trade unions and employee representatives at company level
- Explore new pathways to improve the communication system of an EWC through the use of new technologies
- Improve skills in active learning methodology.

This seminar intended to provide some guidance on this new challenge by inviting speakers that could share their thoughts and experiences and discuss the issues with seminar participants.

A seminar translation service facilitated communication with speakers and participants presenting in German, Serbian, Spanish, Romanian, Italian, Polish and English. The social programme included a good opportunity to get to know each other better in a more casual environment.

The participants represented a broad range of organisations in the private sector and brought to the conference a valuable mix of experiences and perspectives. The speakers came also from different backgrounds and presented the audience with different practical experiences, insights, and views, both at an organisational and national level. It gave a good impression and understanding of the many perspectives that can and should be taken into account when defining and implementing preservation policies.

The feedback of the participants confirmed that the seminar was very much appreciated as well as that there is a pressing need for more practical approaches and for other opportunities to discuss the many issues.

The seminar was structured in a way that helped participants to walk through the issues, starting from the relevance of the context, along the issues that have to be addressed, the intended or assumed impact of policies on organisations, and finally to the actual implementation of policies. As such it went from outside of the context to the internal aspects and vice versa. The objectives of the seminar were to provide insight in the issues, to identify the contextual influences, and to discuss the possible approaches for formulating and implementing policies.

In order to encourage discussion and a more focused exchange of information practical sessions were scheduled regularly each day. During these sessions participants could discuss issues in smaller groups based on some questions and share thoughts with each other.



**Barry Hare, ASLEF**

Freight Train Driver, GB Railfreight

I found the course educational and it has broadened my knowledge and understanding of my role within the EWC for the company I work for. It's the role of all on the EWC to positively influence the process of building a European identity within the company and strengthen solidarity between the workers and all the countries involved, in my case Euro Port.

The course has shown me how to develop different strategies and how to find common goals among the different trade unions, in the case of Euro Port, six French trade unions and two UK trade unions and one staff elected rep (not a trade union member which in itself does cause problems).

We were set into different groups to work on developing our communication skills showing the importance of communicating goals or even failures in a positive and proactive manner to all the members involved within the EWC.

We discussed in length the ways of communicating information to our membership, the positive and the negatives of the different ways we can give our members the information they require, we discussed the need to embrace technology but being mindful of social media and companies' social networking policies.

The language barriers show how difficult it can be to communicate with the other trade unions within the EWC and how easily translation can become lost. It's important for the EWC to work with local level trade union reps within their trade union, understanding their problems and communicating this within the EWC.

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### **Tracey Wainwright, Unison**

Customer Services Advisor, EDF

Having been a EWC delegate for EDF energy for the last five years I thought I was doing a pretty good job in the role. With little training or guidance I have plodded along to the best of my ability. After attending the November 2015 seminar I realised there were still areas of the role that I could improve on.

The group attending the seminar all had different levels of experience and some were just starting to become involved in their EWCs.

This was a good learning curve for all involved.

I was particularly interested in communications and got a lot out of these sessions. It helped me to understand how to tailor the content of the information to my colleagues as well as the different methods of communications that could be used. These courses are extremely useful to understand the importance of an EWC and helped me to understand how to use my position and the information to their full advantage.

For those who are a long standing member of an EWC, just starting or interested in standing for their company's EWC I would recommend that you attend these courses. The knowledge, information and advice are invaluable and can only make your position stronger and more rewarding.

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## 5. Communicative strategy developed within the project

In the era of 2.0 web the importance of communication continues to grow – both as a tool to disseminate content, experiences and values, and to collect information, stimulate discussions, participation and receive feedback on one's own work. In practice, if in the past communication was one-sided and typically came in print, today it is relational and involves multiple channels: it is a process of ongoing exchange between an unspecified number of participants communicating using a broad range of tools and languages.

A communicative strategy has the following goals:

- to make available and disseminate good practices;
- to develop a narrative about EWC and the potential of international trade union activities
- to free EWCs from the stereotype of a technical bureaucratic representation and focus on the human factor, by way of using an appropriate narrative. This is a basis for increasing the number of union members in EWCs, active participation of EWC members in its works and the use of processes contributed by representatives of employees from various states in joint, coherent operative work.

This operations strategy is focused on the [www.unionsnetworksindacale.eu](http://www.unionsnetworksindacale.eu) platform, and the Unions Network News facebook page. These two tools have been developed to combine history, experiences and materials enabling visitors to get acquainted with and develop their knowledge on EWCs, European trade union experiences, and to inform broader public on our activities. Information published on the website vary in terms of content and form. First of all, they include technical materials supporting our activity, such as directives, training textbooks developed by CIGL Lombardy and its international partners. Secondly, we publish information from the world, developed and disseminated to provide data and broaden knowledge on our union's interest in everything that concerns employees around the world.

Finally, a lot of space has been dedicated to interviews with EWC delegates and trade union members engaged in European operations. A collection of such stories and good practices is a way of developing a narrative on trade union activities in Europe, which starts with experiences and stories of particular individuals. It is a way of making this topic more humane and approachable, presenting it in a new perspective of interpersonal relations. These topics are often perceived by citizens as remote. As a result, stories told by union members, apart from the function of disseminating good practices, enable us to build the rhetoric of international union activity which focuses on the efforts, enthusiasm and passion, contributing to the development of the European dimension of our everyday life.

### TRADE UNION SOCIAL NETWORKS

The communication strategy employs various channels, instruments and languages, including certain experimental measures, aiming to explore all possibilities offered by the web. From this perspective, we can speak of a communication strategy which follows four basic guidelines. Starting with these assumptions, the communication strategy has become one of tangible outcomes of the Dedalus&Arianna project. Keeping up the pace with technology is an important challenge for trade unions, especially in the supranational context, where network building and good practice sharing is of utmost priority.

## **Engagement**

This is one of the fundamental rules. On the one hand, the development of content using various languages and tools is necessary, and equally important as direct involvement of actors engaged in the trade union work at the European scale. From this perspective, social networks in particular offer an opportunity to disseminate content to a broad public, due to the reinforcement by actions undertaken by activists, who share posts and other content and interact with other users, thereby contributing to the dissemination of information and intensifying its circulation over the web. This is why one of the key elements of the communication strategy is to develop personalities and maintain the willingness to be involved among specific members of EWC, providing them with relevant stimuli and tools. This involvement is also the effect of understanding of the Web 2.0 dynamics and the ability to effectively use these new communication channels. In other words, if engagement is a key value to us, it must be built on the foundation of training.

## **Narrative**

A collection of stories and good practices obtained from EWC delegates and trade union members active at the international level is a good way of developing a narrative on trade union activities in Europe, which starts with experiences and stories of particular individuals. It is a way of making this topic more humane and approachable, presenting it in a new perspective of interpersonal relations. These topics are often perceived by citizens as remote. As a result, stories told by union members, apart from the function of disseminating good practices, enable us to build the rhetoric of international union activity which focuses on the efforts, enthusiasm and passion. In this way, it also familiarizes and emphasizes the European dimension of our daily life.

Within the initiatives undertaken during the project we have presented cases of unique potential resulting from the narrative about acquired experiences and practices.

In these cases EWC played a role which was not limited to the function of a consultative and non-union body. These cases concerned the introduction of trade unions and the leveraging of an international conflict at the initiative of the EWC restricted committee and with the support of the European Trade Union Confederation.

These two success stories have also show that the international representation bodies may show initiative if there is a sufficient number of trade union members among EWC delegates. This issue should be our priority, and it perfectly fits our broader strategy of extending the trade union membership base.

## **Life pace and style**

If modernity has imposed on us fast lifestyle and spasmodic use of the web, communication must adjust to these changes. Only in Italy as many as 40 million people use the Internet. Each of them spends 44 hours and 43 minutes online every month, 70% of which using their smartphone. In this context social networks stand out when it comes to the time spent browsing.

To capture this huge flow of users without abandoning the traditional means of communication, means to develop communication channels appropriate for the requirements of specific people. All these circumstances point out to the importance of presence in social networks and the need to develop a mobile version of a traditional website.

## **Target group diversity**

The engagement of users who have different interests and personal experiences is of priority importance to us. Dedalus&Arianna aims to ensure information and tools for support addressed to the EWC delegates and, more generally, members involved in European activities, paying due attention to the requirements concerning social networks and the world of the web. As such, the communication strategy must clearly distinguish between content offering detailed knowledge and basic information on the role of EWC and employees' rights around the globe generally.

## Conclusions

A brief conclusion of this report starts with a comment on the experiences related to the work on the project by representatives of USSCG, a trade union from Montenegro.

The approach and analysis presented by an European organisation originating from a state which is not an EU member state is a very enriching experience, as it offers a unique perspective that takes account of the specificity of reality of a state where multinationals are active investors, where cooperation with EU entities is taking place, but workers cannot take full advantage of rights offered by EU law as the state where they live is not a member state.

### Assessment of the project by the USSCG union from Montenegro:



### Future courses of action following the Dedalus & Arianna project

After a national seminar held as part of this project, the future directions in the development of the idea of the European Works Council (EWC) in Montenegro became clearly outlined. It is evident that trade unions and their representatives are still not entirely ready for this idea, and even more interestingly, neither are the employers. In this context, neither this nor any similar institution will come into focus of the Labor Law (LL) expected to enter into force in 2017, whose draft version has already been proposed to the social partners. This is precisely what we believe to be an extraordinary opportunity

for most unions and union representatives to familiarize themselves more closely with the practical details of this institution and for us to develop a framework in which the inevitable implementation of these institutions will work optimally with our legislation, as well as with our trade union tradition, through the exchange of opinion with those representatives who have experience with the EWC and constructive dialogue. This is also a necessary path to pursue, since the works councils and European works councils in our trade union settings have been recognized as unfair competition and one of employers' mechanisms to reduce the unions' rights and consequently the workers' rights (we may observe here that, in our circumstances, a union is treated as the only mechanism to safeguard workers' rights). Unfortunately, considerable insistence on the secrecy of work in the Works Council and, to a certain point in the European Works Council as well, prevents one from perceiving this institution otherwise.

On the other hand, a number of rights have been recognized in our legislation that include both informing and consulting the workers. Of course, traditionally, this would mean informing and consulting union representatives. The challenges we face here and the opportunities we seek fall in the domain of a stricter implementation of existing rights as well as their extension to the rights in the domain of co-deciding. Furthermore, the selection of workers' and union representatives has not been formulated in any law or by-

law dealing with workers' rights and is therefore subject to interpretation. One of the subject areas of the working group's action is to ensure this is included in the new Labor Law. In this context, projects such as this one are highly important to us because we are becoming familiar with potential ideas and ways of reaching the desired level. During the project in question we learned that we can also do a number of things through an alternative, but far more efficient approach using social networks. In the Montenegrin settings, where we face a considerable challenge in terms of resources which would deal with the union movement professionally, and where social networks are very prominent, especially among younger people, this type of approach can have great import, primarily owing to its efficiency.

Nevertheless, the main course of action in our further work regarding this subject is to launch an initiative to find and connect the EWC representatives in multinational companies with subsidiaries in Montenegro with the union representatives therein and to attempt to initiate their dialogue. We believe that by doing so, we will ensure in the best possible way a proper understanding of this institution as well as its merits and demerits.

The combination of various experiences to develop a capacity to undertake common actions is a value that can be brought about both by EWC and international coordination of union activity. Setting new borders in relationships between employers and employees has gained a European dimension, which produces new challenges for the unions that need to join their efforts to protect workers also by activating contacts across borders, creating joint representation bodies and putting forward common claims. Also in this context, given the European directives and the right to information and consultation vested in EWC, trade unions and their members must continue to raise the bar and extend their legitimacy and the scope of activity in the field of the practice of representation and protection of European workers' rights.

We must constantly pay attention to what is happening in other countries and analyse these facts in the context of challenges we will be facing in our own states. Meetings, building common foundations, looking for common ways to intervene, helps us build a European culture in our work places.

Starting with good practices presented by delegates, it is necessary to develop trade union members' skills in terms of designing innovative actions and providing necessary support to our activists involved in such tasks.

These measures must have one goal: learning how to take advantage of EWC and boost its benefits in the trade union environment, to obtain positive results and outcomes locally.

From the strategic perspective, it is a priority to increase the number of EWC and develop union activity by coordination with union organizations from other states who are active in the same corporation. The EWC perspective must reflect the broadest range of companies possible and contribute to the development of a common vision of the European union movement.

Our starting point should be building up knowledge on the structure of our corporations, simultaneously working on the ongoing development of our network of contacts, including EWC members, delegates from local plants belonging to corporations where EWC has been established or could be established, union activists dealing with matters concerning international cooperation.

The network must be supranational in nature, and EWC members play an important role in establishing connections between employees from various states. However, regional organisations cannot be forgotten, as their structures must participate in these processes, ensuring support in the strategic political activity. It is necessary to increase the coherence between workers from various states, but also between various trade union organizations. In particular, it is important to pay close attention to the relationships with other organizations, and show solidarity with smaller and weaker ones. Solidarity must be operational and targeted at cooperation and coordination under the common „umbrella” of European trade union

organisations. This process starts with mutual understanding, finding a common language and content that allow us to determine common reference points and face differences in a constructive way enabling us to build a common trade union culture.

In this sense, we need to take up efforts to develop stable practices or even techniques enabling us to attain these goals.

Supranational and local activity are both sides of the same coin, which, in the case of multinationals, cannot be analysed separately. This is why the first step is to reinforce the bonds and interaction between the activity of trade union delegates on the company floor and EWC members. On the one hand, this process requires a reflection, but on the other a small cultural revolution, resulting in the inclusion of matters discussed by EWC in actions carried out by local representatives. It is important to focus on actions and avoid being stuck with plans and priorities. This requires knowledge and know-how, and sharing these resources to find an answer to the question “how” such activity should look in practice.

Workers’ organisations have a rich legacy of experiences in this scope – the challenge is to place them in a new context. People leaving EWCs or the companies because of losing their job, changing profession or retiring, cannot give up their trade union activity, as they form an important point of reference and a valuable element of human resources.

It seems that the atmosphere around EWC has significantly improved. Delegates are more aware of the potential stemming from this form of representation, its usefulness in developing the industrial relations system internationally, but also nationally.

It is a very positive Signac, also due to the fact that it is accompanied by the constant awareness of the need to acquire new knowledge, tools, update the political and trade union strategy to account for the European trade union perspective. Many union members actively involved in EWCs also prove that the European trade union movement is already a reality, also from the perspective of employee organizations. What is more, a mere possibility to talk with representatives and activists from other states enriches us and offers a possibility to share with our experiences.

To put the postulate of the European trade union movement in practice is a priority. The task we are facing is to search for and develop new ways for active presence in various environments.

The European trade union movement has been contributing to improving the cohesion in the European Union and is not one of the options enabling the attainment of this goal - to the contrary, there is no strategic alternative to it.

## Acknowledgements

This final report is an effect of joint work of trade union members from various states, holding various positions. It was a long process consisting of discussions and exchange of experiences that has enriched us both in the context of our trade union work, but also from personal perspective, making us feel even more we are European citizens. In consequence, it is impossible to list everybody who deserves to be acknowledged for their valuable contribution. Instead, we decided to publish this picture, which offers the best illustration of our joint work.

