

EMPLOYERS' PERSPECTIVE ON THE EWC'S ROLE AND EFFECTIVE COOPERATION

The project 'EWC MENTOR: EWC Mentors' Effective Networking and Training Cooperation Reinforcement' aims to promote employee involvement in companies, with a particular focus on the creation and development of European Works Councils (EWCs). This also involves identifying the challenges arising from changes in the world of work, especially in the context of the green and digital transformation. Strengthening employee participation through more effective implementation of the information and consultation right on transnational matters affecting business is important. In the face of the current economic and technological changes, dialogue between employers and employees should be promoted to resolve problems and seek to improve working conditions while maintaining the competitiveness and resilience of multinational corporations. European Works Councils, which are bodies representing employees in Community-scale undertakings or groups of undertakings with at least 1,000 employees in the EU Member States and at least 150 employees in each of at least two of those countries, are the appropriate platform for such dialogue.



From the employers' point of view, EWCs implement the principles of participation and social solidarity, contribute to effective cooperation and serve to conduct a transparent, substantive and periodic dialogue. Acting as information and advisory bodies, they have become an important social partner and can provide increasing support for employer action in the face of general events affecting the decomposition of existing industrial relations in Europe, i.e. globalisation, increasing competition, the transformation to a knowledge-based economy and new technologies, the implementation of environmental restrictions and the desire to maintain social cohesion. The changes taking place in the internal market, involving mergers or acquisitions, cross-border mergers, as well as joint ventures between businesses on an international scale, require harmonious development and social order. It is therefore important to provide the EWC with an appropriate role to ensure that the workforce of community-based companies not only has the right to be informed and consulted, but also to be able to prepare for the changes that will take place in employment. We need to be aware that green and digital transition will lead to organisational change, retraining and adaptation to new expectations. Preventive and responsible action is needed to avoid misunderstandings and loss of mutual trust, which is the foundation for constructive dialogue.



Mentoring, understood as building better relationships, motivating and developing competences to strengthen cooperation between partners, might represent a way to improve EWCs. From the employers' perspective, mentors should increase knowledge and teach EWCs to think ahead and assess the situation so that they can serve as a support body for the development and implementation of the company's international strategies and projects, while creating social acceptance for them. Experience in the restructuring of some concerns confirms that EWCs have become an effective institution for dialogue and reach beyond the legal framework in their activity, which proves the validity of maintaining their potential. However, in many cases, employers consider EWCs as a burden and a delay in decision-making, which is a reason for discouraging activity and building good relations. In many cases, however, employers consider EWCs to be a burden and a delay in decision-making, which discourages activity and the development of good relations. Both parties then focus on protecting their own interests and see each other as opponents rather than allies for the common good. To change this attitude, it is necessary to clarify the essence of creative and pragmatic cooperation, to which the professionalisation of EWCs should contribute, so that they become advisory bodies, but at the same time have tangible influence. The challenge, therefore, is to provide regular further training for partners and to make them aware of the contemporary role of public participation carried out in a transparent, stable, objective manner.

The project's measures to create a mentor network to share knowledge, provide expertise, establish links with the research community, disseminate good practice, organise workshops, and develop a chatbot as a compendium of information on the functioning of EWCs may help to achieve the above objectives.