

ROLE OF TRADE UNION COORDINATORS IN EXISTING EUROPEAN WORKS COUNCILS

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European Works Councils have always been part of the core business of the three federations and this will not change in the new organisation. With 530 EWCs (including SE WC) and thousands of trade union representatives, coordinating and supporting EWCs and SE WCs will be a priority for industriAll European Trade Union. Building on the successful achievements of the past, the new organisation has already developed the main thrusts of its future work with multinational companies and EWCs. EWC coordinators will continue to be a cornerstone of our policy to support EWCs and SE WCs. In the text, 'EWCs' stands for EWCs and SE WCs.

General principles

Experience with about 530 EWCs has confirmed that trade union coordinators can play a decisive role in supporting European worker representation. Trade union coordinators serve as a guide for the development of the EWC and driver of a genuine European approach. Their presence is essential to give EWCs a trade union perspective.

Guiding and advising EWCs is one of industriAll Europe main tasks. The objective is to ensure that all workers enjoy their rights to information and consultation. If properly supported by trade unions, EWCs can serve as a lever to enforce workers' involvement in the decision-making process in companies and foster cooperation between workers' representatives at European level. This goal shall be achieved via a strong trade union presence in the EWC and via trade union coordination.

Roles and tasks of the EWC trade union coordinators

A trade union coordinator will be appointed for each EWC, who will be the point of contact for industriAll Europe and its member organisations. This coordinator will be mandated by the industriAll Europe to support the EWC. He/she is the first point of contact for industriAll Europe affiliates when the company takes transnational measures that can have consequences on the respective national levels. He/she takes a balanced approach defending European workers' interests.

In general, the industriAll Europe coordinator role is recognized in the EWC agreement. If it is not the case, he/she assumes the role of expert paid by the company and assists the EWC as provided by the agreement.

EWCs require the assistance and advice of the coordinators, especially in their initial phase. The coordinators ensure the positive development of the EWC and promote group cohesion. They help the EWCs to develop a truly European profile.

The industriAll Europe coordinators contribute to improving cooperation between trade unions involved in a company. They will utilise internal EWC meetings and policies developed by industriAll Europe for that purpose.

In the event of restructuring, the industriAll Europe coordinators provide EWCs with advice and assistance in developing a joint strategy. It is above all in such cases that European trade union coordination is needed. In particular national and European levels of information and consultation processes should be coordinated as clarified by the new EWC Directive.

IndustriAll Europe coordinators will ensure that the interests of employees from all countries are represented and voiced, and that no single country pursues its own interests at the expense of another. EWCs shall reinforce and complement national worker representation through a joint and coordinated approach.

IndustriAll Europe coordinators are aware of industriAll Europe collective bargaining policy and industrial policy and help to implement them. They take part in the information exchange with the appropriate industriAll Europe sector working groups.

The coordinators will inform the industriAll Europe Secretariat of special EWC developments and activities in order to allow the industriAll Europe to organise supportive measures.

Should it come to transnational negotiation in a company, the coordinator will inform the industriAll Europe Secretariat and they will jointly ensure that the procedure annexed to the Statutes for negotiations at multinational company level is properly implemented. This procedure establishes democratic rules on how to make collective decision at European level with regards to negotiation at company level. The procedure is also intended to ensure that the result of the bargaining is also implemented nationally.

Designation of an industriAll Europe coordinator

Nominations in respect of EWC coordinators will be put forward by the industriAll Europe Company Policy Committee in accordance with national culture, agreements and laws.

Communication with the EWC will also be part of his process. The nomination will be officially confirmed by the industriAll Europe Executive Committee.

In principle, the coordinator will come from the country in which the multinational company headquarters are located. Should the industriAll Europe organisations in this country not be able to provide such assistance, an alternative solution will be found, together with the

organisations involved in the EWC, and a colleague from a different country will then be nominated.

EWC coordinators should preferably be trade union officers and have some knowledge of the particular company or sector whose EWC they are assisting.

Role of the industriAll Europe member organisations and industriAll Europe Secretariat

National trade union organisations will make adequate resources available in order to ensure proper assistance to EWCs.

The national organisations will make sure that the proposed coordinators have the appropriate profile to fulfill this task. They will ensure that they receive proper coaching in respect of industriAll Europe policies and activities and are kept informed of the same.

The industriAll Europe Secretariat will both maintain a coordinators network and keep the EWC database updated. It will provide the industriAll Europe coordinators with information on industriAll Europe activities and policies and special EWC actions.

If, during transnational restructuring, EWC structures prove insufficient as regards efficiently representing workers' interests across Europe and influencing the process in the company, the industriAll Europe Secretariat will create an additional trade union coordination groups. This coordination group will undertake further political and legal measures and assist their implementation.

Should it come to transnational negotiation with the aim to reach an agreement in a company the member organisations shall also ensure that the procedure annexed to the Statutes on mandates for negotiations at multinational company level is implemented.