



## **DRAFT EPSU RESOLUTION on the role of trade union coordinators in existing EWCs and the role of EPSU and its affiliated unions**

*Considered at the EPSU EWC Coordinators Seminar 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022*

*To be adopted at the EPSU Executive Committee 18/19 April 2023*

1.

Due to various processes such as concessions, out-sourcing, public-private partnerships and privatisation, the number of transnational companies in public services has increased.

2.

EPSU does not welcome these developments. They result in public authorities that seek to escape their responsibility for the provision of essential services, stable employment and proper democratic control. It is also clear that EPSU and affiliates have to deal with these developments.

3.

The growth of the number of EWCs in several sectors, such as waste and health & care, means that the EPSU secretariat is no longer able to coordinate all EWCs where EPSU has been designated trade union coordinator. The role of EWC coordinators must be clearly defined to affiliated unions can become more active in nominating EWC coordinators, as is the case in other European Trade Union Federations.

4.

The need for EPSU to relate to these developments is reinforced by:

- The European Company Statute and
- The relation between the sectoral social dialogue (sectoral trade union policy) and the EWCs.

5.

EPSU believes that EWC members play an important role in a European trade union strategy and in building a European trade union movement. EWCs bring together several thousand trade union representatives each year. This is an opportunity that should not be missed by the trade unions. EWCs can provide an additional structure for trade union campaigns in case companies do not respect trade union rights. It is against this background that EPSU decided to bring about a better coordination of the EWC activities of affiliates and EPSU to ensure that EWCs contribute to trade union policy and are instrumental in such a policy.

6.

The objective is to ensure that all workers enjoy their rights to information and consultation. If properly guided, EWCs can serve as a lever to enforce workers involvement in decision-making, and to foster co-operation between workers' representatives at European level. This task can only be achieved with a strong trade union presence in the EWC through the assistance of a trade union representative.



7.

Experience with several EWCs in public service sectors and with several hundreds of EWCs in other sectors has confirmed that a trade union coordinator is necessary to assist these bodies. Trade union presence is essential to draw the EWC together into a cohesive group and to anchor a European trade union perspective. It will ensure that the EWC does not just echo management decisions.

8.

We need to define the role and function of the EWC coordinator on the one hand and the role of trade unions in supporting and implementing this policy on the other hand.

### **Role of the EWC trade union coordinator**

9.

For each EWC, a trade union coordinator will be appointed to be the contact between the EWC and the EPSU. This coordinator should be identified as an EPSU representative. He/she is the first point of contact for the EPSU affiliates when problems arise with an EWC. He/she guarantees that workers' European interests are safeguarded.

10.

The trade union coordinator does not replace the expert an EWC has a right to. This would be for instance an accountant or a legal expert. The right of an EWC to a trade union coordinator should be additional to the right to such an expert.

#### *Tasks of the EWC trade union coordinator*

11.

The role of the coordinator is to ensure a positive development of the EWC by guiding the EWC, especially in its initial stage and fostering the cohesion of the group. He/she will help the EWC to develop a truly European profile.

12.

He/she will support the EWC in promoting cooperation between the trade unions involved in the company. For this purpose, he/she will make the best use of the pre-meeting. As EPSU will often cooperate with other European Industry Federations that organise workers in a particular company, the coordinator will consult with coordinators from other Federations where applicable.

13.

In case of exceptional circumstances such as transfer of production, plant closure, redundancies that are likely to affect workers substantially, he/she will be actively involved and will ensure that the cohesion of the group is maintained. In such cases it is essential that the trade union coordinator embrace a European position.

14.

In cases where a country is dominant in terms of number of employees, the EPSU coordinator will ensure that the interests of employees from other countries are fairly represented and voiced and that the EWC is not just a replica of a domestic works council.

15.

He/she should ensure that the EPSU Secretariat is kept informed of EWC developments and activities on a regular basis. Report back channels should be developed.



16.

Where EWC rights are violated, the coordinator may approach the EPSU secretariat to consider support from the EPSU legal fund.<sup>1</sup>

### **Designation of an EPSU coordinator**

17.

The EWC coordinator will be designated in accordance with national culture and practices.

18.

It is most likely that the coordinator will come from the country where the multinational company headquarters is located. Unions from this country would be granted priority in nominating a trade union coordinator. However, it is also possible that a coordinator can come from another country.

19.

The coordinator nomination should be endorsed by the EPSU EWC coordinators network.

20.

The coordinator should preferably have experience of the company with which he/she is dealing.

### **Role of the EPSU Secretariat and affiliated unions vis-à-vis EWC trade union coordinators**

21.

National trade unions will make sure that the coordinators that are nominated have the appropriate profile to fulfil this task.

22.

EPSU and affiliated unions will share the responsibility to provide training to EWC coordinators. To this end we will cooperate closely with the ETUI.

23.

The EPSU Secretariat will continue to endeavour to bring coordinators together on a regular basis to update them on policy orientations taken by the EPSU. It will provide the EWC coordinators with regular information on EPSU activities and specifically EWC activities.

24.

EPSU also works with Public Services International (PSI) on transnational companies that are active in Europe and other parts of the world to extend TNC networks and in providing assistance when problems are encountered. EPSU coordinators can therefore be asked to raise trade union rights issues.

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<sup>1</sup> See the rules for the EPSU legal fund for EWCs: <https://www.epsu.org/article/epsu-legal-fund-ewcs-rules-its-use>