

European works councils (EWCs)

Legislative-initiative procedure: Revision of European Works Councils Directive
Request for legislative proposal 2019/2183(INL)

SUMMARY, KEY ASPECTS

Information, consultation and participation of employees are all part of EU social policy. Article 28 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights establishes the right to collective bargaining.

European works councils (EWCs) are standing bodies that facilitate the information and consultation of employees with a focus on transnational issues, as regulated by the 1994 European Works Council Directive (Directive 94/45/EC, updated by Directive 2009/38/EC (Recast)). EWCs are the first European-level bodies to represent the interests of workers at company level.

Without the Directive, EWCs would exist only on a voluntary basis, with a significantly lower number of companies and worker representatives involved. In 2016, the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) estimated that the multinational companies with an EWC represent over 17 million employees (last available figures).¹ In 2020, around 1 200 EWCs were in place (compared with 62 in 1994), with 18 000 individual representatives in these EWCs, meeting at least once a year to discuss transnational developments in their companies.²

The European Parliament noted that during the 2009-2010 economic crisis relatively few workers lost their job in EU Member States, with well-developed industrial relations systems in which workers and their representatives had relatively strong rights.

In 2012, in preparation for Parliament's resolution on information and consultation of workers, anticipation and management of restructuring,³ a European added value assessment examined the costs and benefits of possible improvements to the current legislative framework for democracy at work and concluded that it could generate efficiency gains of at least €12 billion a year.⁴

In 2020, in the second quarter in particular, Member States were hit heavily by the coronavirus containment measures. Seasonally adjusted gross domestic product (GDP) decreased by around 12 %. Employment fell [by only 2.8 %](#). [Member States](#) with well-developed industrial relations systems performed even better and far fewer workers (0 - 2 %) lost their jobs. An even better result compared with the 2009-2010 economic crisis (Eurostat).⁵

In the future, more systematic information and consultation of workers could lead to even greater economic benefits – by reducing the rate at which people leave their jobs (known as the 'quit rate'), increasing employability, and/or easing social effects on social welfare systems and the related costs. The European Pillar of Social Rights has further developed this idea in principles 7 and 8: 'Information about employment conditions and protection in case of dismissals' and 'Social dialogue and involvement of workers'.⁶

What are EWCs and what is their mandate?

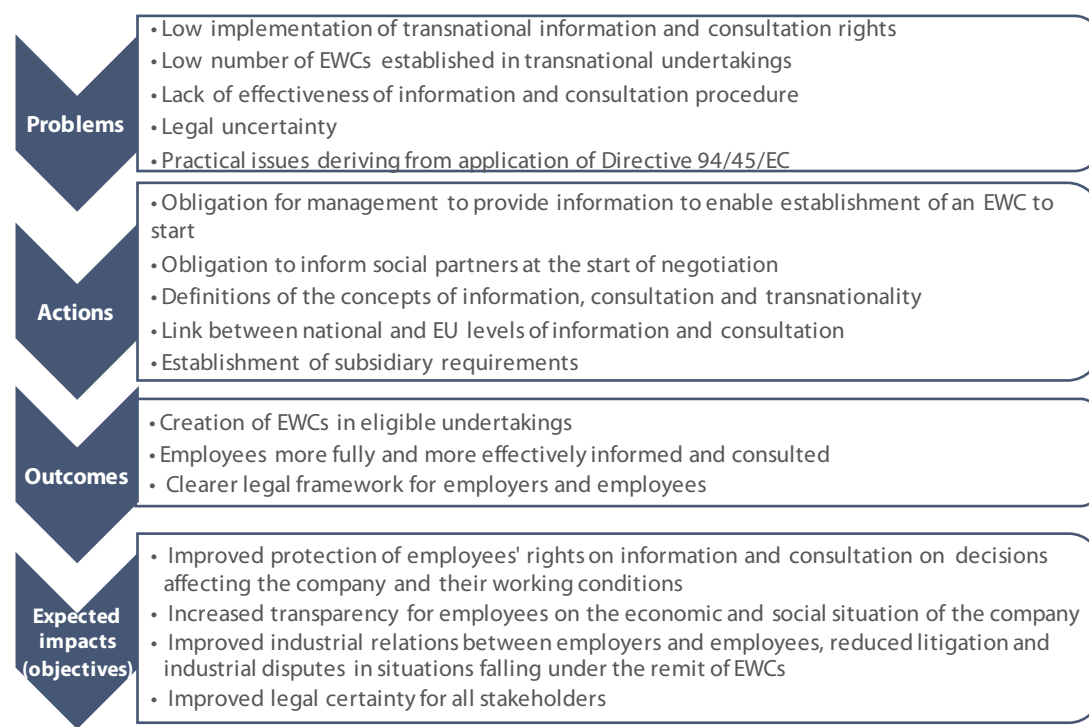
Since 1994, European works councils (EWCs) are standing bodies that facilitate the information and consultation of employees and focus on transnational issues as regulated by the 1994 European Works Council Directive (Directive 94/45/EC, updated by Directive 2009/38/EC (Recast)). EWCs are the first and only European institutions representing workers at company level. They respond to the 'Europeanisation' of business as the result of the single European market, supplementing national worker information and consultation systems. EWCs are only required in bigger companies. The thresholds for a company to be covered by the European Works Council Directive are, for a community-scale undertaking, 'at least 1 000 employees within the Member States and at least 150 employees in each of at least two Member States' (Article 2(1)(a) Directive 2009/38/EC).

European Work Councils Directive 94/45/EC

The possibility to establish EWCs was first introduced in September 1994 by Directive 94/45/EC, which required undertakings and groups of undertakings operating in more than one Member State to inform and consult the representatives of their employees affected by their decisions and aims and therefore to improve the dialogue between management and labour. In April 2000, in the application report concerning Directive 94/45/EC,⁷ the Commission mentioned that the directive was based on the principle of social partners' freedom to negotiate appropriate agreements, which explained why so many agreements had been signed. However, some of the agreements guaranteed only a very low level of transnational consultation and information and it was not sufficiently clear whether information had been provided and consultation had taken place 'within a reasonable time' before a decision was taken by the central management.

The 2009 recast directive

The diagram below summarises the problems, actions, outcomes and expected impacts of the recast.⁸



In May 2009, Recast Directive 2009/38/EC⁹ was passed with a view to modernising and enforcing Community legislation so as to secure the effectiveness of employees' transnational information and consultation rights and increase the proportion of EWCs while enabling the continuous functioning of existing agreements (Recital 7).

Redefined concepts of information, consultation and transnationality:

- Article 2(f) defines 'information' as: '(..) transmission of data by the employer to the employees' representatives ... information shall be given at such time, in such fashion and with such content as are appropriate to enable employees' representatives to undertake an in-depth assessment of the possible impact (..).
- Article 2(g) defines 'consultation' as follows: '(..) establishment of dialogue and exchange of views between employees' representatives and central management or any more appropriate level of management, at such time, in such fashion and with such content as enables employees' representatives to express an opinion (..).
- Under Article 1 (4), 'Matters shall be considered to be transnational where they concern ... at least two undertakings or establishments of the undertaking or group situated in two different Member States.

EWCs and SE councils:¹⁰ Growth, sectors and countries of headquarters

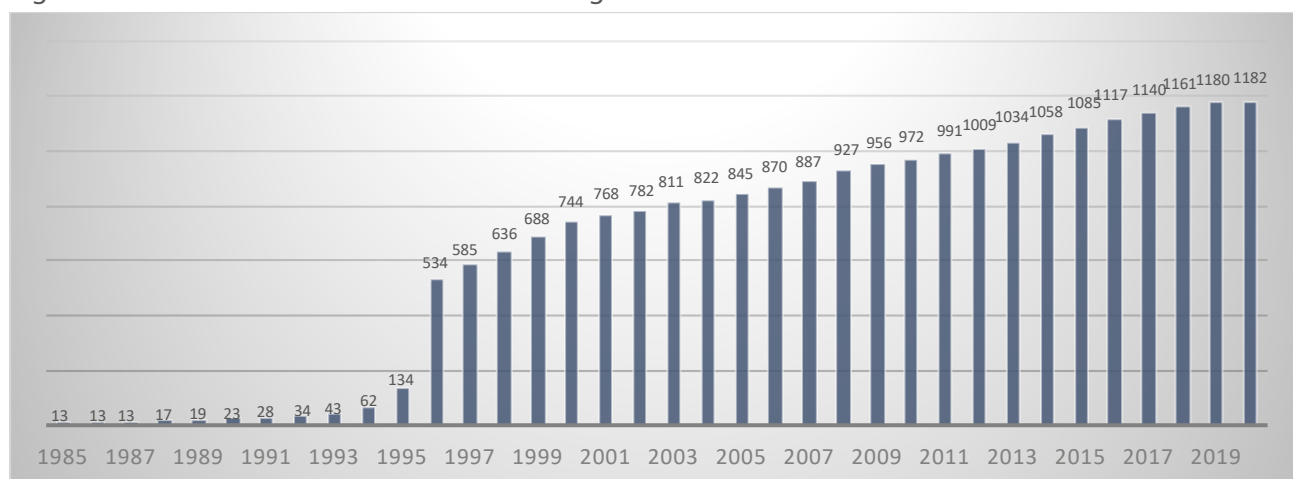
After the implementation of the European Works Council Directive (Directive 94/45/EC), the numbers of active EWCs increased significantly from 62 (1994) to 636 (1998) and, with steady growth after the recast directive, reached approximately 1 200 EWCs and SE councils in 2020, covering over 17 million employees (last available figures); around 50 % of an estimated 2 400 companies where the threshold for establishment of an EWC is met.¹¹ In 1994, before the EWC Directive 94/45/EC¹² was adopted, the share was less than 3 %.

Sectors: 90 % have their activities in the following sectors: metal (36 %); services (22 %); chemicals (17 %); food, agriculture and tourism (9 %); and building and woodwork (7 %).

Country of headquarters: the largest number (around 1 000 headquarters) are located in Germany (271), the United States (188), France (133), the United Kingdom (102), Sweden (74), the Netherlands (60), Switzerland (47), Belgium (43), Finland (40) and Italy (39).

Category of employment: 481 are small companies (1 000 < 5 000 employees in the European Economic Area – EEA), 186 are medium-sized companies (between 5 000 and 10 000 employees in the EEA) and 378 are large companies (more than 10 000 employees in the EEA).

Figure 1 – Active EWCs and SE works councils – growth over time



Data source: [ETUI website](#).

Commission report (2018) on transposition and implementation¹³

In May 2018, the European Commission reported¹⁴ to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee on implementation by Member States of the directive on the 'establishment of European works councils or a procedure in Community-scale undertaking and Community-scale group of undertakings for the purposes of informing and consulting

employees'.¹⁵ This report focused on the changes brought about by the recast directive and their effects on: (i) the creation of more EWCs; (ii) the effectiveness of employees' transnational information and consultation rights; and (iii) the improvement of the legal framework. The evaluation assessed the transposition and the implementation of the recast directive in the Member State.

According to the European Commission, most Member States had transposed the EU legislation properly. Some Member States had included more detailed provisions going beyond the requirements in the directive and generated even higher added value.

The recast directive led to a moderate increase (+20 % until 2017) in the rate of creation of EWCs. The main reasons were, *inter alia*, the lack of awareness of the existence of EWCs, no automatic obligation to establish a EWC even if the undertaking meets the thresholds, the location of headquarters in countries with a less developed tradition of employee information and consultation and the possibility of setting up a *Societas Europaea* (SE)¹⁶ which offers other means of keeping employees informed and consulting with them.

All Member States had implemented the redefined concepts of information, consultation and transnationality in Articles 2(f), 2(g) and 1(4) properly. A large majority of newly established EWCs had adopted the definition of information and consultation set out in the recast directive and included in more EWC agreements.

Member States had properly transposed the provisions on the role, protection and training of EWC representatives. 15 Member States had more detailed provisions than those in the directive.

Legal certainty: half of European social partners confirmed that the recast directive increased clarity and legal certainty.

Enforcement: two new recitals and Article 10(1) of the recast directive obliged EU Member States to amend their national enforcement systems:

- Recital (35): 'The Member States must take appropriate measures in the event of failure to comply with the obligations laid down in this Directive'.
- Recital (36): 'In accordance with the general principles of Community law, administrative or judicial procedures, as well as sanctions that are effective, dissuasive and proportionate in relation to the seriousness of the offence, should be applicable in cases of infringement of the obligations arising from this Directive'.
- Article 10(1): (...) 'the members of the European Works Council shall have the means required to apply the rights arising from this Directive, to represent collectively the interests of the employees of the Community-scale undertaking or Community-scale group of undertakings'.

However, the capacity of EWCs to seek legal redress is limited. EWCs have full legal personality, allowing EWCs' representatives to initiate judicial proceedings on behalf of the EWC, in four Member States only (Austria, France, Romania and Sweden).¹⁷

In most Member States sanctions consist of financial penalties. 'In some Member States, depending on the type of violation, the minimum fines can be as low as €23 (Malta) or €30 (Lithuania) per worker. The maximum fine can be around €15 000 in Germany and €7 500 in France, while in other countries it can theoretically be as high as €100 000 (Slovenia), €115 000 (UK) or €187 515 (Spain)'.¹⁸ Overall, the evaluation noted weaknesses in the means by which European works councils enforce their rights and significant differences in types and levels of sanctions.¹⁹

Evaluation by social partners

According to the evaluation on the practical implementation side, conducted on behalf of the European Commission and the social partners, there is still room for improvement from both the management and the workers' perspective.²⁰

Information: From the management perspective, companies operating under the new rules (60 % of interviewees) did not report any technical difficulties in providing EWC members with information. The majority of employee representatives consulted (76% of cases) concluded that the information had been delivered in a timely manner.

Consultation: For workers' representatives,²¹ the consultation process showed deficiencies in practice. The main reasons cited were: (i) a lack of joint understanding regarding consultation or the absence of consultation; (ii) limited timelines for consultation phases; (iii) no possibility to make use of external expertise; (iv) extensive use of confidentiality clauses. EWCs' experiences in cases of restructuring were diverse. Only 26 % of employee representatives interviewed reported that their EWC had been consulted before a decision was taken by the management. In some cases consultation had had a positive impact on the consequences for the employees impacted by the restructuring.²²

Transnationality: The management representatives indicated that the definition of which information to communicate was not always clear. Thirty per cent of employees' representatives stated that their work was solely focused on transnational issues. This result can be explained by the fact that EWC members also have a role as national representatives, and national concerns often remain more pressing and are introduced into the work of the EWC.

In the 2016 report to the ETUC, EWC coordinators came to the conclusion that the recast directive had facilitated a positive development in the quality of EWC work. 'Other factors such as learning and growing professionalisation, increasing expertise and the clarification of the EWC's role within a company's industrial and labour relations have been highlighted as further important drivers'. Perhaps the most important positive impact has been on training. However, it should also be noted that qualitative achievements are not spread equally. EWCs that were already functioning well before 2009 have made progress, whereas EWCs with constraints regarding competences, acceptance and resources were left behind, facing significant difficulties and challenges.²³

Many EU policies affect restructuring processes, including employment, social dialogue, education and training, competition, innovation and cohesion policies, as well as a number of financial instruments designed to contribute to the objective of adapting to change (the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, (EGF).

Transnational corporate restructuring

Situations of transnational corporate restructuring constitute the principal context in which the recast directive for EWCs makes provision of information and consultation compulsory.²⁴

Company restructuring refers to a wide range of different activities that lead to the reorganisation of an enterprise. In the context of the 2008 'renewed social agenda', the European Commission defined restructuring as a 'modification of a company's workforce that affects both its qualitative (skills and qualifications required) and quantitative features (number of jobs) following adaptations to the company's structure, organisation and production ... necessary for the company to remain competitive... The social management of restructuring is designed to reduce the negative effects of such adaptations.'²⁵

One challenge of corporate restructuring is that companies often restructure in a reactive rather than a proactive way. Companies tend to avoid public discussion about change and restructuring, 'namely, having to manage both workers' and public opinion, as well as the possible impact on competitiveness through revealing plans to competitors'. So an announcement tends to be made, when redundancies are virtually certain. 'As a result, workers do not benefit enough from support measures in advance (training, job guidance, etc.) which would help them find a new job more quickly; workers' representatives intervene too late in the management decision ...'. Case study

research has found that the application of good practice varies widely depending on the size of the company, policy frameworks and the level or intensity of industrial relations.²⁶

In this regard, central and eastern European countries lag behind. 'The development of a joint understanding on an EWC's role as a transnational body of meaningful information, consultation and workers involvement seems to be easier to achieve in countries characterised by cooperative forms of labour relations and workers' participation'.²⁷

Much restructuring is transnational in scope and has effects in more than one country, and indeed can be Europe-wide or worldwide. Transnational restructuring is a situation in which the intensity of information and consultation within EWCs increases.²⁸ The dialogue between European and national levels of the company is a particularly useful and mechanisms to promote bottom-up communication can bring added value.²⁹

The social partners' assessment

Business Europe

In 2015, BusinessEurope gave an endorsement for the University of Leuven to carry out a project financed by the European Commission to explore managers' perspectives on the functioning of their European works councils. The research was based on interviews with 56 large companies (more than 1 000 employees); these were performed in early 2016.

From the management perspective, EWCs are mainly institutions for the exchange of information within the company and to promote the corporate identity. The dialogue between European and national levels is 'considered key to the success of the information and consultation strategies by companies vis-à-vis EWCs'.³⁰ The report shows that managers engage positively in running the EWCs and the majority sees that the EWC can add value to the company. Building on an environment of trust, mutual respect, cooperation, a positive attitude and engagement are mentioned as the most important contributors to the quality of information and consultation processes. In the majority of cases there is evidence of a 'learning curve'.

Only a minority reported that EWC representatives were 'poorly engaged'. Among the others, the main barriers to engagement consisted of a lack of understanding of business issues, poor linguistic skills, thinking locally and differences in industrial relations traditions. Only in a few cases were EWCs involved in the formulation of fundamental decisions. They were more likely to have been engaged in implementation, after the company had made its decision. The earlier information is made available the smaller the 'scope for disagreement between management and EWCs, particularly during restructuring'.³¹

In 2017, BusinessEurope³² recognised that European works councils could improve information flows in a company, support employee engagement, and facilitate the introduction of cross-border initiatives. However, at the beginning of 2017 there was only limited experience with implementation of the recast directive. BusinessEurope saw no need for a change and was therefore opposed to a revision of the recast directive.

BusinessEurope agreed, as far as sanctions within the EWC implementing legislation were concerned, that the Commission could 'take action towards countries to encourage them to modify their legislation' on case by case basis, when national implementation laws did not provide for sanctions that were sufficiently dissuasive or proportionate.

ETUC

In a 2016 report to the ETUC, the EWC coordinators confirmed that the recast directive had, from 2009, had clearly positive effects on the efficient functioning of EWCs and the available resources. Moreover, the recast has been an opportunity to improve agreements, for example, to improve the definition of the information and consultation procedure, including the qualification and training of EWC members. However, fewer improvements were reported regarding EWCs' competences, the

number of EWCs, the role of trade unions, improvements links between different levels and bodies, or dispute resolution. A key finding was that corporate restructuring has been a major trigger in renegotiating EWC agreements and adopting the recast directive provisions.³³

In 2017, the ETUC Executive Committee also adopted an ETUC Commission paper 'For a modern European Works Council (EWC) in the Digital Era'.³⁴ For the ETUC it was disappointing that the overall number of EWCs had not increased much following the EWC recast and that EWCs were often involved too late, especially in cases of transnational company restructuring.

The ETUC mentioned the following conditions and requirements for 'making workers' rights ... effective and solving difficulties in the practical implementation'.

- The rights granted by the directive should be enforced through effective and dissuasive sanctions, including the right to a temporary suspension of company decisions.
- The legal status of EWCs and special negotiating bodies (SNBs) should be specified.
- The role of representatives of competent Community-level trade unions should be reflected.
- The old 'voluntary' (pre-directive, 'Article 13') agreements are no longer justified, all provisions laid out in the directive should apply to all agreements.
- The concept of the 'transnational character of a matter' (Recitals 12 and 16) should be incorporated within the main body of the directive.
- The abuse of confidentiality clauses should be avoided by clarifying on what grounds, under what circumstances and for how long a company may withhold information.
- The subsidiary requirements should be strengthened to improve the functioning of the EWC.

Common and dissenting points between social partners

Social partners recognise that the EWC creates added value for the company. From the employers' perspective, EWCs are mainly institutions for the exchange of information and to promote the corporate identity. For the unions the EU European Works Council Directive is the most important legislative framework in the field of European industrial relations and also a key element of the European 'social model'.³⁵

It is also commonly held that the dialogue between European and national levels is a necessary condition of success in information and consultation strategies between companies and EWCs. BusinessEurope³⁶ recognised that European works councils can improve information flows in a company, support employee engagement, and facilitate the introduction of cross-border initiatives.

The ETUC sees a clear need for more EWCs. BusinessEurope proposes that 'any effort to increase the number of new EWCs should be preceded by an analysis. On that basis, many ways to increase the number of EWCs can be considered. For instance awareness rising among the employee representatives and management throughout the EU role and benefits of creating EWCs'.³⁷

As far as sanctions within the EWC implementing legislation are concerned, social partners see a need for sanctions. It is not a surprise that the unions are here more strict and ask for effective and dissuasive sanctions, including a right to a temporary suspension of a company decision. The employers' side proposes that 'to the extent that national implementation laws do not provide for sanctions that are sufficiently dissuasive or proportionate, the Commission should on case by case basis' take action towards countries to encourage them to modify their legislation'.³⁸

European added value assessment

Without the EWC Directive, EWCs would exist only on a voluntary basis, with a significantly lower number of companies involved. In 1994, only 62 EWCs were established compared with approximately 1 200 EWCs in 2020, with 18 000 individual representatives³⁹ representing over 17 million employees (more recent available figures).⁴⁰ Importantly, these 18 000 representatives do not only speak different languages, they also have different national cultures and traditions and

industrial relations and represent the wide range of workforce diversity in the EU 27. EWCs have an important integration function and bring Europe closer to the workforce.

In 2013, the European Parliament noted that during the 2009-2010 economic crisis, relatively few workers lost their jobs in EU Member States with well-developed industrial relations systems where workers and their representatives have relatively strong rights in the areas of consultation, information and board-level representation on the basis of laws and collective agreements. The use of working time reduction and/or short-time working arrangements to avoid redundancies was widespread in these EU Member States.⁴¹

There is evidence that early consultation has a substantial impact on job security during restructuring processes. There also evidence that this can have a positive impact on job quality. Early consultation appears to be more cost-effective in cases of large-scale restructuring and where the average duration of unemployment is long.⁴² EWCs created according to the conditions of the recast directive (Article 6), seem to have a more significant impact on corporate restructuring decisions than the pre-existing EWCs (Article 13).⁴³

'Companies with 'trusting' forms of social dialogue were able to introduce even difficult restructuring measures with trade union or employee support, especially where there had been consultation at an early stage to allow compromises to be reached and to build commitment to a common goal... Companies in the 'trusting' social dialogue group had the most positive outcomes for both organisations and employees'. Cases analysed by Eurofound show that information and consultation of EWCs do play a significant role at company level, particularly in countries where such practices are less widespread.^{44/45}

However, the European Commission report on the implementation of Directive 2009/38/EC noted weaknesses in the means in place allowing European works councils to enforce their rights.⁴⁶ Even in companies 'where information and consultation works comparatively well, the EWC would not be able to organise proper involvement due to a lack of time and resources.'⁴⁷

In 2012, in preparation for Parliament's resolution on information and consultation of workers, anticipation and management of restructuring,⁴⁸ a European added value assessment examined the costs and benefits of possible improvements to the legislative framework of democracy at work and concluded that it could have generated efficiency gains of at least €12 billion a year (2012).⁴⁹

More systematic information and consultation of workers lead to significantly greater economic benefits – by reducing the rate at which people leave their jobs (known as the 'quit rate'), increasing employability, and/or easing social effects on social welfare systems and the related costs. The European Pillar of Social Rights has further developed this idea in its Principles 7 and 8: 'Information about employment conditions and protection in case of dismissals' and 'Social dialogue and involvement of workers'.⁵⁰

The above-mentioned European added value assessment looked into how a better EU regulatory framework can limit the social costs of structural adjustment and help eliminate distortions of competition within the single market and inequalities in treatment of workers resulting from divergences in national regulations. The main impacts investigated included: the impact on the number of redundancies, especially during a crisis, and on job quality (workers within their current job). The evidence concerning impacts at company level was then combined with information concerning costs, and a simple cost-effectiveness analysis presented. The main conclusions were that, if applied in all EU Member States, early consultation would reduce the number of redundancies by a minimum 20%; in combination with resilient working time arrangements and short time work schemes the performance is even better. Based on a cautious assumption regarding the average labour productivity at EU-27 level of €24 per hour in 2019, the economic added value of the proposed measure was estimated to be around €37 800 per year per unit of labour. The average labour productivity per hour, gives a figure of approximately €16 billion. This estimation is extremely low, especially against the background of recent economic developments.

Table – Potential efficiency gains from informing and consulting workers (2019 up date)

Building blocks – Potential efficiency gains from information and consultation of workers	Cost of non-Europe (€ billion)
Early consultation and reduction of 100 000 redundancies by approximately 22 %	3.8
Helping 35 % of redundant workers find new jobs	6.0
Training to help 36 % of redundant workers find new jobs	6.2
Total:	16.0

Source: EPRS, [Europe's two trillion euro dividend](#); Mapping the Cost of Non-Europe, 2019-24 and updated calculations.

In 2020, especially in the second quarter, Member States were heavily hit by the coronavirus containment measures. Seasonally adjusted GDP decreased by around 12 % compared with the first quarter; the sharpest decline in GDP since Eurostat began the time series in 1995 (including the 2008-2009 economic crisis). In the second quarter of 2020, employment fell by only 2.8 % (-3.9 million employees) compared with the significant loss of employment in the US of 8.7 % (-13.3 million employees) in the same period.⁵¹ EU Member States with well-developed industrial relation systems, working arrangements and short-working schemes (already in place at the beginning of the pandemic) performed even better than the EU average and far fewer workers (0 - 2 %) lost their job. A significantly better result compared with the 2009-2010 economic crisis.⁵²

Another effect becomes visible in the third quarter of 2020: the moderate loss of employment in the second quarter (-2.8 %) is almost offset in the third quarter of 2020 (now only -0.4 %). Well-developed industrial relations combined with flexible work time schemes have had an important stabilisation function: fewer employees lost their jobs and the recovery began from a higher level, no costly recruitment procedures have been necessary. Compared with the first quarter of 2020, loss of employment was slightly negative (-0.4 %), and in 12 Member States even positive (see Annex).

Conclusion

In 2020, loss of GDP and working hours seem to have had a much less negative impact on employment than might have been expected and compared, for example, with the 2008-2009 economic crisis (especially in the south of Europe) and with the current US labour market. This is partially due to the fact that information and early consultation have had a substantial impact on job security/stability, and were the necessary condition for the massive implementation of national short time working schemes complemented by the EU's SURE instrument. How resilient this development is will depend a lot on developments in the coming year. It is also too early to quantify exactly the contribution of democracy at work and/or flexible working schemes – it is most likely a combination of both; in 2020, the added value created has been higher and the cost of non-Europe significantly lower compared with the 2008-2009 economic crisis.

Against this backdrop, some questions for future developments still remain:

- There are currently 1 200 EWCs in operation. The estimation is that a similar number of EWCs could be established. Which legislative and/or non-legislative measures make sense?
- EWCs represent many millions of employees in Europe, but this does not correspond with the 'profile' of the work of EWCs. How can this profile be raised and visibility improved?
- European works councils can improve information flows and consultation within a company. How can employee engagement support and facilitate the introduction of cross-border initiatives in a more systematic way?

Statistical annex

Employment development in the EU 27, 2020 Q1 to 2020 Q3

	2020Q1	2020Q2	2020Q3	2020 Q1 - Q3
European Union - 27 countries	177 387	173 570	176 603	-0.4%
Belgium	4 044	4 025	4 132	2.2%
Bulgaria	2 574	2 547	2 648	2.9%
Czechia	4 646	4 556	4 599	-1.0%
Denmark	2 801	2 762	2 814	0.5%
Germany	40 991	40 633	40 743	-0.6%
Estonia	590	558	560	-5.0%
Ireland	1 962	1 843	1 915	-2.4%
Greece	3 248	3 255	3 308	1.8%
Spain	17 130	16 077	16 777	-2.1%
France	25 389	24 585	24 958	-1.7%
Croatia	1 483	1 453	1 464	-1.3%
Italy	19 182	18 887	19 278	0.5%
Cyprus	382	391	395	3.4%
Latvia	776	741	783	0.8%
Lithuania	1 243	1 202	1 189	-4.3%
Luxembourg	444	443	:	
Hungary	4 304	4 159	4 245	-1.4%
Malta	229	225	222	-2.9%
Netherlands	7 968	7 784	7 919	-0.6%
Austria	3 940	3 807	3 995	1.4%
Poland	13 093	12 894	13 177	0.6%
Portugal	4 241	4 116	4 172	-1.6%
Romania	6 581	6 618	6 683	1.5%
Slovenia	847	832	838	-1.1%
Slovakia	2 088	2 064	2 077	-0.5%
Finland	2 331	2 323	2 361	1.3%
Sweden	4 889	4 798	4 914	0.5%

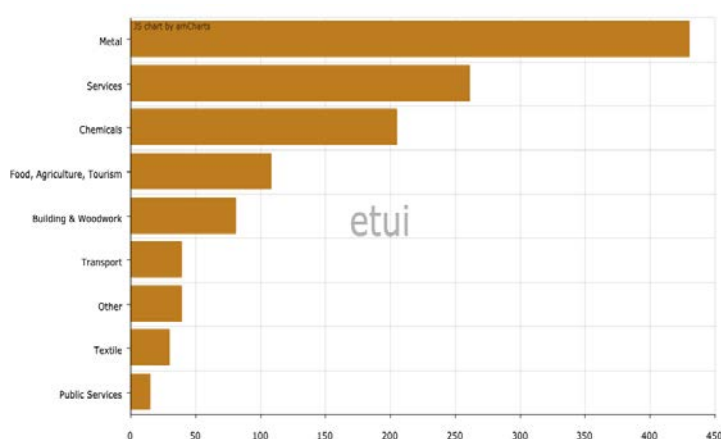
Total – all NACE activities, domestic definition of employee. Unadjusted data.

Data source: Eurostat, December 2020.

Support to mitigate unemployment risks in an emergency (SURE)

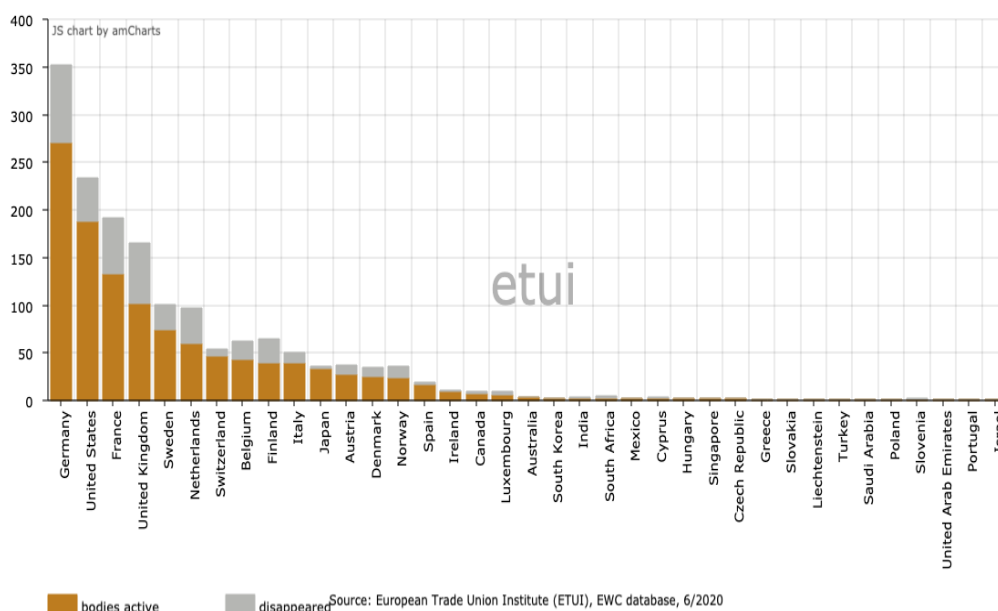
Temporary support to mitigate unemployment risks in an emergency (SURE) is available for Member States that need to mobilise significant financial means to fight the negative economic and social consequences of the coronavirus outbreak on their territory. The Council has already approved a total of €90.3 billion in financial support to 18 Member States. €39.5 billion has already been disbursed to Italy, Spain, Poland, Greece, Croatia, Lithuania, Cyprus, Slovenia, Malta, Latvia, Belgium, Romania, Hungary, Portugal and Slovakia. Member States can still submit requests to receive financial support under SURE which has an overall firepower of up to €100 billion.

ETUI bodies currently active, by sector of activity



Source: European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), EWC database, 6/2020.

EWC bodies, by country of headquarters



Source: European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), EWC database, 6/2020.

ENDNOTES

- 1 European Commission, [Staff Working Document SWD \(2018\) 187, Evaluation](#), May 2018.
- 2 [ETUI, Can anybody hear us? 2019](#).
- 3 European Parliament resolution with recommendations to the Commission on information and consultation of workers, anticipation and management of restructuring ([2012/2061\(INL\)](#)).
- 4 M Del Monte, [European added value of an EU measure on information and consultation of workers, anticipation and management of restructuring processes](#), European Added Value Unit, European Parliament, November 2012.
- 5 [Eurostat press release](#), euro area GDP down by 12.1 % and employment down by 2.8 %, August 2020.
- 6 [Monitoring the Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights](#), SWD(2018) 67.
- 7 European Commission, [Report on the application of Council Directive 94/45/EC](#), April 2000
- 8 [Commission Staff Working Document SWD \(2018\) 187, Evaluation](#), May 2018.
- 9 [Directive 2009/38/EC](#) on the establishment of a European Works Council, May 2009.
- 10 [The regulation on the statute for a European company](#) (Societas Europaea, SE) introduced a European legal form for public limited-liability companies to be set up within the territory of the EU. SE councils are works councils in companies applying this European company statute.
- 11 European Commission, [Staff Working Document SWD \(2018\) 187, Evaluation](#), May 2018, p. 19. This was an estimate as no EU register of companies meeting the thresholds exists.
- 12 Council [Directive 94/45/EC of 22 September 1994](#) on the establishment of a European Works Council for the purposes of informing and consulting employees.
- 13 European Commission, [Staff Working Document SWD \(2018\) 187, Evaluation](#), May 2018.
- 14 [Directive 2009/38/EC](#), Article 15.
- 15 European Commission, [Report on the implementation by Member States of Directive 2009/38/EC](#), and [Staff Working Document SWD \(2018\) 187, Evaluation](#), May 2018.
- 16 Council Regulation (EC) No 2157/2001 of 8 October 2001 on the Statute for a European company (SE); Council Directive 2001/86/EC of 8 October 2001.
- 17 European Commission, [Report on the implementation by Member States of Directive 2009/38/EC](#), and [Staff Working Document SWD \(2018\) 187, Evaluation](#), May 2018, p 34.
- 18 Commission, [Staff Working Document SWD \(2018\) 187, Evaluation](#), May 2018, p. 35.
- 19 Commission, [Report on the implementation by Member States of Directive 2009/38/EC](#) on the establishment of a European Works Council, COM (2018) 292 final.
- 20 [ICF Evaluation study](#) on the implementation of Directive 2009/38/EC on the establishment of an EWC, p 93.
- 21 ETUI survey conducted among EWC coordinators 2016 — project co-financed by the European Commission.

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