



Resolution

Workers representatives of EWCs in the tobacco Sector support a quick revision of the EWC directive.

Warsaw. 12 September 2008. Representatives of the workers from the tobacco industry, including the European works councils of British American Tobacco, Japan Tobacco International, Philip Morris International, Scandinavian Tobacco, Swedish Match, Altadis and Imperial Tobacco, on the light of their practical experience of activities of European Works Councils in this sector, support the joint advice of the European social partners as a means to a quick and targeted revision of the existing EWC Directive.

The development of the European Union has led many big multinational companies to operate more and more on a Europe-wide basis. Reducing trade barriers and harmonising standards has meant that everything, including jobs and money, can be moved around more easily within the EU, and big companies naturally take advantage of this. This has led to an increasing number of major decisions in multinational corporations being taken at European level.

Works Councils are very important bodies for worker representation in multinational companies. They give millions of European workers the right to be informed and consulted on company decisions. Good EWCs play an important role in their companies, especially when they are going through restructuring. At their best EWCs are of serious benefit to the workers we represent in big multinational companies. They are also acknowledged as good news by enlightened employers and indeed they are good for Europe. However a number of weaknesses in the current directive mean that many EWCs don't have the tools and entitlements they need to do their jobs properly.

EFFAT has been campaigning for improvements to the EWC Directive since 1999 when this was first supposed to have been up for review. The Commission published a draft directive on 2 July 2008.

The procedure of the revision of the existing directive should now be passed as soon as possible, in 2008 or early in 2009. The tobacco sector is restructuring at high pace and workers this sector should benefit of the improved regulation as quickly as possible. For this reason, we support the joint advice of the European social partners as a way forward to a quick and useful revision of the EWC Directive.

In particular we welcome improvements concerning a clear definition of information and consultation, an improved status of trade union representatives in the SNB and in the provision of training. However, we reject the European Commission's proposal for a definition of transnationality that is against the founding principals of the EWC Directive and would obstruct the entitlement to information and consultation for EWCs concerning many transnational restructuring projects.

Therefore we call on the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers to take the workers' views into account in their consideration of the issues.

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