

Project beneficiaries



Workplace democracy has been an important focus of European trade union since the 1980s. There are several main forms of workers' participation, which have been implemented as a means of improving the workplace democracy during the following 40 years, in particular financial participation, representative participation and direct participation. It is an important focus of the European trade union movement (ETUC Resolution Strategy for More Democracy at Work) and of employers' and management activities, expanding the use of forms of direct and indirect democracy as managerial approaches.

Workplace democracy, especially direct workers' participation in governance (management), besides improving labour motivation and efficiency of production/services, can also be used to humanise work and the working environment and also increase job satisfaction and workforce development. It is a system of work organisation that allows for the input of employees into the day-to-day operations of the enterprise. It can include both consultation and delegation arrangements in the workplace, which includes both individual and group participation. The promotion of direct participation can be a competitive strategy for an enterprise, contributing to continued economic recovery within the EU and making European enterprises more competitive in the global marketplace by been more efficient, lowering production costs, allowing for greater innovation and providing for increased commitment among employees. Many previous studies have shown that all forms of workplace democracy, especially direct participation in governance, result in improved worker motivation and increased productivity.



Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB), Bulgaria



Confederation of the Employers and Industrialists in Bulgaria (KRIB), Bulgaria



Cyprus Workers' Confederation (SEK), Cyprus



fundación
1º de mayo

Fundación Cultural 1º de Mayo, Spain



Fondazione Giuseppe di Vittorio (FDV), Italy



SGH

Szkola Glowna Handlowa w Warszawie, (SGH), Poland



Institute for the Development of Employee Advancement (IDEAS), Ireland

Associated partners



Bulgarian Industrial Association (BIA), Bulgaria



Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, United Kingdom

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EXPANDING AND IMPROVING WORKPLACE DEMOCRACY AS A PREREQUISITE FOR HUMANISING LABOUR AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

DIRECT II VS/2020/0101



The project is implemented with the financial support of the European Commission – Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG, Budget Heading 04.03.01.06

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

- To expand and deepen **the study of direct workers' participation in governance** in the partner countries, including unexplored sectors and businesses, where new technologies are implemented;
- To explore in more detail the relationship between direct participation in governance and:
 - humanising the work environment
 - improving skills and workplace welfare
 - improving worker satisfaction and motivation
- To study further the links **between direct participation and other forms of employee participation and representation, in the context of the direct** influence on the above mentioned aspects of work and the working environment, including the impact of new technologies;
- To explore the importance of the simultaneous application of direct participation, industrial relations and trade union **representation for improving the working environment and the motivation for work**;
- To make a **comparative analysis** of the trends in the partner countries;
- To train workers, workers' representatives, trade unionists and employers on the specifics of direct participation and its links with the representative (including the trade union representation) participation, in particular in relation to the introduction of new technologies;
- **To organise discussions between trade unionists and other workers' representatives, managers and employers** on the role of direct participation in the context of its social dimensions at national and transnational levels by exchange of information and best practice examples;
- **To develop a 'Handbook of Good Practice Guidelines'** to assist management and employee representatives to smoothly facilitate the introduction of new technologies through enterprise level joint steering committees and joint implementation groups; for combining direct participation with other forms of representation and industrial relations as well as corporate social responsibility practices;
- **To promote direct participation practices** and positive outcomes for social development and economic effects in the partner countries and other EU countries;
- **To make recommendations for actions** by the EU institutions and the institutions of the Member States for the promotion of direct and indirect employee participation.

EXPECTED RESULTS

1. Carried out further and more deep research of the existing literature, previous analysis and survey data related to direct workers' participation arrangements, the impact of the new technologies and digitalisation on the work-place democracy and direct participation; analysis of the role of the patterns of direct participation for improvement of technical, technological and organisational innovations, for humanising working environment; further analysis of the role of the work-place democracy and direct participation, in particular, for the improvement of the social partnership at company level in each co-applicant country;
2. Collected data at national level of the processes, mentioned in the project aims and developed six National Reports;
3. Organised and carried out six National Workshops for discussion, exchange of experience, capacity building, knowledge and skills of the workers' representatives and employers and for collecting suggestions for innovations and improvement of the social partnership at company level and democracy at work;
4. Organised and carried out three European Round Tables for sharing information, building experience and finding solutions on the issues to be surveyed;
5. Developed, published and translated European Comparative Report on the impact of Direct Participation on the issues defined in the project objectives, based on the results of the national research and the exchange of experience and good practice examples between the partners during the national Workshops and the Round table discussions;
6. Developed Handbook of Good Practice Guidelines to assist management and employee representatives to smoothly facilitate the introduction of new technologies through enterprise level joint steering committees and joint implementation groups;
7. Organised and carried out a Final International Conference to present the results of the research findings; to spread the knowledge and good practice examples to a broader public and other countries/regions and to enhance the mainstreaming of the project results into other national and regional contexts;
8. Created website of the project which will become a platform for all stakeholders interested in the topics of workplace Information, Consultation and Direct Participation;
9. Maintained and improved network for an exchange of experience between the partner countries, other countries and stakeholders in the sphere of information, consultation and workers' representation and participation.

METHODOLOGY

The research will be undertaken in three stages:

1. Stage 1 will consist of desk research on the links between direct participation and other forms of employee participation and representation, in the context of their direct influence on humanising the work environment, improving skills and workplace welfare, improving work satisfaction and worker motivation, including the impact of new technologies in the six beneficiary countries (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Spain).
2. Stage 2 will consist of interviews (from 5 to 10) with selected respondents from the social partners and other organisations who may be key stakeholders in employee participation (e.g. national trade union officials, branch officials and shop stewards, employers' associations, public policy experts etc.).
3. Stage 3 will consist of case studies of selected companies.

