

Strengthening of the EWC Directive is necessary

FinUnions supports the Commission's goal to revise the European Works Council Directive. The Commission published its proposal for the revised directive on January 24, 2024.

The task of European Works Councils (EWCs) is to provide employees with influence in large multinational companies where important strategic decisions are made at the company's European headquarters. Their purpose is to ensure that despite economic globalization, workers' rights to information and consultation in decision-making are respected. It is a form of transnational cooperation. Finland has a significant number of EWC companies on a European scale. A considerable number of Finnish employees in various sectors are represented through the EWC system.

The proposed changes to the directive aim to facilitate the establishment of European Works Councils in multinational companies. It is also necessary to clarify the regulation regarding the matters on which European Works Councils need to be informed and consulted. The Commission aims to promote timely information and consultation of workers the changes and ensure that EWCs have the necessary conditions to carry out their tasks. The purpose is also to strengthen gender equality in EWCs.

FinUnions and European trade union confederations consider the strengthening of the directive necessary. Currently, the directive does not ensure workers' rights as of timely access to information and consultation. Consultation often occurs too late in the process. Additionally, excessive confidentiality has limited consultation rights and information sharing. There have also been problems in determining which issues are considered transnational, or within the scope of the European Works



Council's responsibilities, and how the impacts or potential impacts of the issue are assessed. The sanction system related to non-compliance with regulations is inadequate, and the legal protection process is complex. The sanction system should be clearly outlined in the directive, as it supports the implementation of the directive's purpose in all EU/EEA countries.

The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) and the Finnish Confederation of Professionals (STTK) will form a more comprehensive opinion on the details of the directive as the directive is making progress, considering also the influencing and preparatory work of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC).

Additional information:

- Susanna SALOVAARA, Head of Office, FinUnions, +32 488 479 508, susanna.salovaara@finunions.org
- Pekka RISTELÄ, Head of International Affairs, SAK, +358 40 5468781, pekka.ristela@sak.fi
- Maria HÄGGMAN, Head of International Affairs, STTK, +358 40 148 9091, maria.haggman@sttk.fi

