English for European trade unionists

Level Four

European Works Councils

Study Guide

The ETUI-REHS is financially supported by the European Commission
European Works Councils

Working with reading 1

European Works Councils (p. 8)

1i See paragraph 2 of text
1ii See paragraph 3 of text

2.1 False: it only applies to companies employing over 1000 workers that have at least 150 employees in each of two or more EU countries.
2.2 False: there is no requirement that the workers’ representatives have to be trade unionists, however, in practice most of them are.
2.3 True: the emphasis is on consultation and information at the company-wide (group) level rather than on an individual plant basis.
2.4 True: in 2004, 36% of the 1800 companies covered by the Directive had in fact established EWCs.
2.5 False; the figure is 10 million which is considered to be inadequate but at least it is a step in the right direction.
2.6 True: 61% of multinationals employing 10,000 or more people have EWCs while only 23% of companies employing more than 1000 but less than 5,000 have EWCs.
2.7 True: it appears to be the companies with a low level of TU participation that do not have EWCs.
2.8 False: All the new member states have transposed the Directive into national law.
2.9 False: the changes that have taken place in the industrial relations situation are just one of several factors that indicate the need for a revision of the Directive.
2.10 True: the ETUC thinks the Directive needs strengthening in a number of areas including sanctions for companies that flout (ignore) the law. Workers’ reps should be given the power to challenge breaches (infringements/violations) of agreements.

3.1 acceptance; entrance; start; taking on; taking on board of new legislation (in this case the EWC Directive)
3.2 plans; tactics
3.3 not being insignificant; being of high standard (e.g. she was no mean player ie she was a good player).
3.4 extreme /severe organisational changes (usually involves large job losses)
3.5 transferred; incorporated by a member state’s legal procedures into national legislation
3.6 subsidiary companies, companies controlled by other companies, companies under the control of a group company/parent company (and therefore referred to in Euro-English as daughter companies!)
European Works Councils

3.7 a small group responsible for meeting to prepare for larger meetings, to communicate between meetings, to put into effect decisions made at plenary meetings (sometimes called a 'select committee').

3.8 standardisation; bringing to the same level; levelling up

3.9 keeping information private or secret ie not to be made public (often used by management to withhold data that they believe may prejudice the economic or financial position of the company)

3.10. breaking of/violations of agreements, laws etc

**Working with listening 1**

**The role of European Works Councils (p. 12)**

Interview with Jean-Claude Le Douaron

1 **What do you see as the function of EWCS?**

   (See Jean Claude’s responses to questions 1&2)

   Apart from the formal function laid down in the EU Directive for consultation and information, Jean Claude thinks that the real value of EWCS lies in the possibility of creating an effective network between the workers’ representatives. He believes this ability to share information across national boundaries presents an excellent opportunity for trade unions. The fact that the employers are paying the costs for workers’ representatives to meet and for translators is a very positive step but trade unions need to take advantage of this situation—they need to get a grip otherwise they may only be “talking shops” (see Working with listening 2, interview with Doug Miller)

2 **Can EWC influence company policies?**

   (see his response to question 3)

   The fact that information is shared across national boundaries means that companies can no longer say one thing to employees in one country and something else to workers in another country—this must have an impact on the way multinational companies behave. So the opinions of workers will have to be carefully considered (it appears that central management sees the benefit also in getting information from delegates about the activities of its managers in other countries!)

3 **Is it worth EWC delegates trying to learn a common language?**

   (see his response to question 4)

   This is clearly important if delegates are going to be able to communicate with each other outside of the formal meetings (with translators). The establishment of a workers’ network depends on delegates being able to inform each other in a common language (there is already evidence of this happening as a result of language courses organised by ETUI-REHS). However, Jean Claude thinks it is still important to take advantage of the use of translators (he appreciates that not all delegates can be expected to
European Works Councils

be sufficiently fluent in another language to enable them to contribute fully
to a formal meeting).

Transcript of the interview
Note that is an authentic and unscripted interview. The transcript below
does not include provision for pauses and fillers which as can be expected
punctuate a discourse such as this. The interviewee, while a fluent speaker
of English, is a French native speaker who has lived for many years in
Sweden!

1. What is the function of an EWC?

Well that depends on how you look at it but according to the legislation...
the idea was to set up an information... a transnational information and
consultation body between employees’ representatives and the central
management. But since the definitions of the concept of information and
consultation are so weak in the Directive, so in my view, what we should
try to do is to use European Works Councils or to transform them into the
core of a representation network... and that would mean that the network
functions in order to organise the flow of information between different
national representation bodies, and they could also start to inform and
consult each other, which in the long run would mean that they co-
ordinate a number of activities.

There is an article in the Directive saying that the Directive could be
revised and in fact the Commission has started the consultation process of
the social partners, but there is not much hope that we are going to see a
revision of the Directive in the near future, so for the time being I think
there is a lot of work to do as trade unions in order to transform European
Works Councils into networks of representation- or the core of those
networks.

2. Despite this, do you think that EWCs have played a positive role
over the last 10 years?

Yes I think so...I think so, anyway the good question in that context is to
ask were we better off, would we be better off, if we didn't have European
Works Councils? And the fact that we have European Works Councils
anyway makes it possible to gather representatives at the company level,
from different countries- to organise translation and to have the company
to pay that, otherwise we would need those transnational networks, but
then the unions would have to finance them with all means.

So, of course I think European Works Councils are an opportunity. As a
trade unionist, I see them as a possible trade union tool, but then that
implies that we as trade unions have to get our grip on the European
Works Councils
3. **So do you think European Works Councils can make a difference, a genuine difference to company policies?**

Yes, not so much, if you only focus on the meeting with the central management which takes place once, or twice or in some cases three times a year, if it’s... if that’s the only activity of the European Works Council, that’s not going to change so much but if the European Works Council ...if the flow of communication runs through the network, thanks to the European Works Council, all the year, then the central management will very soon realise that they can’t actually order one local management to do one thing and another to do the contrary, and to play them against each other... in that case, so what you are going to discover is that they will have to take into the consideration what the workers’ view is.

4. **Are there any examples of EWCs where they try to use one common language?**

Yes, it’s quite often the case when it comes to Nordic-based companies...culturally, Nordic companies, quite often when they negotiate the agreement, the management says, well, the company language is English, so every representative should speak English, and what you discover, when you attend a meeting or run a training with those EWCs is that quite often, the English proficiency of all representatives is not just enough to take part in that....but, of course it’s quite important when it comes to language... to language learning, because if we try to convert, from a trade union point of view, European Works Councils into the core of a representation network, that supposes that there is information exchange between the meetings and of course what happens between the meetings, in the long run, gets quite often as important, if not more, than what’s happening during the meetings, because if it’s...something happens between the meetings, it’s the quite the situation... quite often ... the situation of urgency and the fact that the representatives are, or would be able to communicate in one common language would of course facilitate, that communication.

So... my advice is, in that case, well don’t give up the translation, in the negotiation, when you negotiate an agreement, but if you have possibility to get people who are...who have a common language, try to have that also as a priority because it’s going to be very useful for the communication between.
European Works Councils

Working with reading 2

Comparing EWC Agreements (p. 13)

A. 1. In Company X the EWC consists of workers’ representatives only while the consultation and information process with the employers takes place in the Company Euro-Forum; The process in Company Y takes place in the EWC where both parties are represented.

2. In Company X:
   1 delegate per every 1000 workers per country up to a maximum of 10 delegates per country
In Company Y:
   1 delegate per country for 50-250 workers
   2 delegates for 250-700
   3 delegates for 700-1000
   4 delegates for 1000-2500
   5 delegates for 2500+

3. Company X: maximum of 5 employer representatives
   Company Y: Employer representatives not to exceed the number of workers’ representatives

4. Company X: the same amount of protection as enjoyed by TU representatives according to the legislation of each specific country - see Composition clause (6)

5. Letters indicate the clauses in Company X Agreement and numbers represent the clauses in Company Y Agreement
   - The structure, economic and financial situation of the company: (a); 1, 2
   - The probable developments of the business, and production and sales: (a); 3
   - The number of jobs and future prospects: (a); 4
   - Investment: (b); 5
   - Substantial changes in organisation, new working methods or processes: (b); 7
   - Transfers of production: (c); 8
   - Mergers, cutbacks or closures: (c); 9
   - Collective redundancies: (d); 10

6. Company X Agreement in section (f) refers to “other essential matters”
   Company Y Agreement in sections 11-16 specifies a number of other issues and then concludes with a catch-all phrase in section 17 “other matters and projects”.
Other provisions that are likely to be included are:

- Duration of the Agreement: how many years it will last
- Location/venue: where meetings will be held
- Pre-meetings: time for workers’ representatives to meet prior to the main meeting (and sometimes afterwards)
- Confidentiality: reference to the fact that some information may be classified as secret
- Agenda: who is responsible for compiling the agenda for the meetings
- Facilities: the provision of secretarial help, the use of translators
- Expenditure: the items that management will pay for (e.g. travel & accommodation; translators)

Further information on Agreements can be found through ETUI-REHS in the European Works Councils database [30 May 2006]

Description

The European Works Councils database 2006 contains information on

* 2204 multinationals falling within the scope of the EWC directives and on
* 1155 European Works Council agreements.

The records are searchable by multiple criteria: company name, country or region of the headquarters, countries or region of operation, sectors of activity, merger activity...

The full text database offers more than 1470 documents:

* the English text of more than 960 EWC agreements,
* national transposition laws of the EWC Directive,
* documents regarding the revision of the EWC Directive,
* judgments of the European Court of Justice,
* documents regarding the European Social Dialogue framework,
* more than 200 European sector and cross-sector agreements,
* ILO and OECD texts,
* articles on EWCs from the European Trade Union Yearbook
* around 70 substantive and global agreements concluded by EWCs or within the contexts of EWCs
Working with language 1

Similarities and differences (p. 18)

1. In contrast to / unlike -----------------
2. ------------ similar to ----------- in that (= because) -----------
3. ----------- whereas -----------
4. ------------ similar to ------ in that (= because) -------- .
5. While ------------ by way of contrast ---------
6. On the one hand -------------- on the other hand --------

Working with words 1

Business organisation (p 25)

2.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>policy</th>
<th>subsidiary</th>
<th>foreign</th>
<th>firm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>director</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>business</td>
<td>undertaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secretary</td>
<td>public sector</td>
<td>concern</td>
<td>enterprise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.  
| C | TRANSNATIONAL | Network of interlinked foreign subsidiaries, many of them having a role beyond their own region |
| A | INTERNATIONAL | Dominant parent company – no links between foreign subsidiaries except through company headquarters |
| B | MULTINATIONAL | International federation of national companies, working for their own national markets. |

4.  
| 1. mergers | 9. alliance |
| 2. bid      | 10. conglomerates |
| 3. acquisitions | 11. downsize |
| 4. takeover  | 12. over-capacity |
| 5. shareholders | 13. spin-off |
European Works Councils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. stake</th>
<th>14. buy-out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. competition</td>
<td>15. restructuring</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. asset stripping</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1 (a) Company news items

1. Revlon: Share market confidence weakens because of a forecast of poor results due to disappointing sales (possible danger for future employment prospects?)
2. Hornby; Made higher profits in spite of lower sales –this must be due to lower costs (reduction in employee costs?) and/or higher prices
3. European Commission oversees potential mergers in order to prevent monopoly situations and reductions in competition
4. Akzo Nobel: an example of a disposal (consequences for employment?)
5. New Look: shares are not currently on the stock market but they are likely to be floated (i.e. placed or quoted on the stock market) next year.
6. Sales of television:, an example of how demand can fluctuate and affect sales (and employment?)
7. GlaxoSmithKline: potential takeover to eliminate competition and gain access to US markets (consequences for employment?)
8. Abbot Group: takeover Songa Drilling which becomes part of the group company (acquires more capacity and know-how?)
9. Azzurri: CEO benefits from disposal (but what about employees?)
10. KPN : example of synergy where related areas of business are combined to gain overall benefits in technology and/or market access
11. General Motors: has the EWC network been able to support the Portuguese workers with information about comparative production costs?
12. Navistar International: to mire = to sink in mud or dirt, a dramatic way of describing the suggestions that the accounts could have been subject to fraud.
13. Nissan: an example of companies combining together for some specific purpose without losing their individual identity.
14. BAA: bid to takeover British Airports Authority (owner of 7 of Britain’s major airports) was not initially successful because the offer by the Spanish company Ferrovial was not judged to be sufficient. However, BAA agreed several days later to accept an improved offer.
European Works Councils

5.2 Positive terms include:
rose; approved; agreed; double; expansion; biggest; payout; acquired;
strengthen; expand; reinvigorate

Negative terms include:
plunged; fall; weaker than expected; pay cut; mired; fraud; sluggish;
unsuccessful

refused and rejected (see General Motors) are examples of words that
could suggest a negative approach but in the context they are used here
they are clearly positive actions by the worker

Working with speaking 3

Employment issues (p. 30)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEADLINE</th>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>E</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TEXT OF PROBLEMS + RESPONSES

1 Standing up to workers who play the race card

P W writes: I have warned an employee about his poor performance. But
he believes that the warning was issued as a result of discrimination
because of his race. He is using discrimination as an excuse and I am
frustrated that there is little I can do.

You are dealing with a sensitive matter but I can understand your
frustration, writes Peter Done, managing director of Peninsula. It is sadly a
fact that some people play the race/pregnancy/sex card, thus devaluing
claims. The statutory disputes resolution procedure applies to almost
everything an employer does regarding employment. It would be prudent
to treat his belief as a grievance.

Under the statutory grievance procedure your worker should set out his
case in writing. If you understand the substance of it, then set up a
meeting.

Tell him he can be represented, or accompanied by a fellow employee or a
trade-union representative if he wishes. Some of the things he says, or
allegations made, may involve others. If so, you need to interview them
and take statements from them.

Reconvene at a suitable time and tell him your decision on his grievance.
At one extreme, you could reject it in its entirety and at the other
extreme, you would accept everything he says.
2 Recruits on probation have usual staff rights

P W writes: We have two probationary employees who we fear may not be suitable for our business. Do such workers have any rights?

They do have rights, writes Peter Done, managing director of Peninsula. Generally speaking, they will have exactly the same statutory employment rights as any other employee who has the same length of service who is not on probation.

If, for example, they also happen to be pregnant or to have a disability, they may even be better protected than longer-serving employees.

In terms of employment law, probationary periods are largely irrelevant. They are given no special treatment and are neither lawful nor unlawful. Badly worded clauses on probationary periods might cause problems in some cases.

3 Ring the changes after consultation

TR writes: We wish to extend working hours to cover extra demands on our business. In exchange for this, we will give staff extra holiday. Can we dismiss employees who do not accept the changes?

It is possible for an employer to change terms and conditions, writes Peter Done, managing director of Peninsula, even against the wishes of the staff, providing there is a good business reason for doing so and the employer goes about it reasonably.

Explain to your staff the business argument for what you wish to do. They may be able to suggest ideas that would enable you to resolve the problems without the additional hours. However, if they are not able to do so, you will need to find out why a particular individual cannot or will not change his or her hours. Those who simply decline will be treated differently from those who cannot, for example, because they have transport or childcare problems.

Most staff may be willing to comply with the new hours and you would then need to consider whether you could live with the others working their original hours. You must apply some sensitivity to those who cannot change their hours because getting it wrong might result in a claim for discrimination at tribunal.
4 Sacking during maternity leave

*S K writes: One of my employees is on maternity leave. She has been absent for five months and I am not sure if she is coming back. She has called in saying she was depressed, and has a sick note for a further four weeks off work. She has been with me for two years and in that time has had two verbal warnings about her performance. Can I get rid of her?*

Any absence related to pregnancy must be treated with great caution, writes Peter Done, managing director of Peninsula, because pregnant women have additional employment rights. There are often problems in pregnancy and so the system has been set up to allow for things such as post-natal depression.

This appears to be the case here. A woman retains her right to delay her return for a number of reasons but it would seem your worker has not yet reached the end of those limits and, indeed, the pregnancy-related depression would extend that time.

You will need to get a medical report and then you should set up a meeting with her. Consider extending her right to be accompanied - by letting, say, her mother or solicitor come along so that when you talk to her you do so in the knowledge that she or her representative is competent to speak about her situation.

Discuss the problem and the amount of time it is likely to take for her to be able to return to work, if not full-time then perhaps part-time as a gradual reintroduction to work.

5 Staff can't be made to retire before 65

*GF writes: Our company has a retirement age of 60. I know that new legislation will raise the retirement age to 65. Will this apply to one of our employees who reaches 60 in October?*

The age discrimination legislation comes into force on October 1, 2006, writes Peter Done, managing director of Peninsula.

The government had originally planned to bring it before parliament by the end of 2004 to give businesses time to prepare. However, this deadline was missed and the final regulations were published only a few weeks ago.

The purpose of the law is to prohibit direct and indirect discrimination, or harassment, on the grounds of age. It creates a default retirement age of 65, and requires employers with a retirement age below 65 to provide objective justification for maintaining it. It will not be sufficient to rely on the statement of main terms, or a job-offer letter. It will be mandatory to write to employees informing them of their date of retirement and their right to ask to work longer.
6 Crack down on office abuse of the internet

J G writes: There has been widespread abuse of the company's internet and e-mail facilities. We wish to curb this and introduce guidelines in our contracts of employment. How should we go about it?

The situation you face is common, writes Peter Done, managing director of Peninsula. Some websites are distasteful and illegal, so employers must ensure they have policies on how the internet is to be used.

There are also problems with the nature of e-mails. In the past when someone wrote a letter that had to be typed up, and subsequently checked, there was an automatic cooling-down period. However, with e-mails the thought is master of the deed. Automatic forwarding is not unknown.

Employers should have a comprehensive policy on the use of all electronic facilities, including the phone, e-mail and the internet. The policy should make clear precisely what is allowed and what is not. It should state what disciplinary action will be taken if the rules are infringed. Some of those rules would fit into the gross misconduct category, where an individual can be dismissed summarily. Minor infringements would warrant warnings through the normal system.

You should draw up a policy and consult with your workforce. However, ultimately it is up to the employer to decide the policy. And you must monitor and enforce it, or you will be vulnerable.

Having no contractual terms exposes you to high risk. But you can still take action if, say, somebody has downloaded illegal images.

3. a) legislation
   b) (to) curb
   c) verbal
   d) (to) extend
   e) probationary
   f) (to) apply to
   g) wide-spread
   h) facilities
   i) called in
   j) (to) get rid of
Working with words 2

Financial terminology (p. 33)

1. Gap-filling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. parent company</th>
<th>9. liabilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. subsidiaries</td>
<td>10. currency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. group</td>
<td>11. retained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. consolidated</td>
<td>12. turnover</td>
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<td>5. balance sheet</td>
<td>13. costs</td>
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<td>6. earnings</td>
<td>14. employee</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. cash flow</td>
<td>15. results</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. assets</td>
<td>16. loss</td>
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</table>

Newspaper headlines (p. 34)

These are relatively self-explanatory although some of the language is typically journalistic and dramatic as in the following cases:

2. plunged = fell sharply (you plunge into the sea or the swimming pool i.e. you dive down)
4. slashed = cut drastically (you use a knife or sword to slash a person or a thing)
5. receiving end = the recipient (used in some sports to indicate where the action takes place)
7. struggling = progressing with great difficulty
11. soaring = rising upwards (birds and aircraft soar into the sky)
12. hike = increase/rise (used in this sense with prices and costs but in other contexts refers to a walk or the act of hiking)
15. triggered = set off (pulling the trigger sets off the gun)

Guidance regarding the meaning and application of financial terms can be found in *An introduction to understanding financial statements.*
EU Social Partners issue joint statement on EWCs (p. 38)

1. The social partners are the organisations representing the trade unions and the employers. At the European-level these are:
   - the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and
   - the Union of Industrial and Employers’ Confederation of Europe (UNICE) and European Association of Craft and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME).
   - European Centre of Enterprises with public Participation and Enterprises of General Economic Interest (CEEP)

2. 1. European Committee on Information and Consultation (Carrefour); European Employee Council (Henkel); European Forum (GKN)

   2. Ericsson: restructuring to achieve cost cuts most probably involves job losses. The EWC must have cooperated in ensuring these were achieved in the best possible ways - through natural wastage and voluntary agreements with good compensation packages wherever possible.

   3. GKN: the company is engaged in a large range of activities and employs a widely diversified workforce. It is difficult to represent their many different interests in a single body such as an EWC and therefore some groups of employees may not feel that it serves their interests.

   4. The Fortis Group: the development of a group culture would help employees from different countries and backgrounds to integrate and to share a set of common objectives.

3. There will be a variety of ways of describing the lessons from the case studies. However, here are some suggestions with regard to the expressions in bold:
   (1) **corporate culture**: a shared outlook and attitude within an organisation
   (2) **climate of mutual trust**: an atmosphere of confidence in the sincerity of two groups
   (3) **optimise**: to make the EWC work with maximum efficiency; to make the best use of it
   (4) **addressing**: dealing with (e.g. you address a problem)
   (5) **ownership**: a feeling that an organisation (or a plan) belongs to (works for) the participants
   (6) **fine tuning**: making minor adjustments
European Works Councils and social responsibility (p. 41)

Stage 1

a) Globalisation refers to the world-wide provision of manufacturing and services. Old limitations disappear and plants, processes and ideologies can shift to other countries.

Outsourcing refers to the sub-contracting of some processes or services from within an organisation to outside contractors (e.g. cleaning, maintenance).

b) Some processes/services can be separated (hived off) from an organisation and be performed in other parts of the world (e.g. some UK banks have outsourced their customer advice divisions to India).

c) These issues are extremely relevant because multinational companies are major players in the international market and they constantly look for opportunities to transfer production/services to less costly environments. EWC delegates seek not only to protect the job prospects of their own colleagues but as Doug Miller points out, they need to safeguard the terms and conditions of workers in other countries who may be exploited to work at much lower costs.

Stage 2

1. Because production has moved from the countries with markets for the production to developing countries where the products can be manufactured more cheaply.

2. Sometimes their rights are violated such as by forced overtime.

3. To meet deadlines imposed by the buyers to keep prices low.

4. Putting the defence of workers’ rights at a global level on EWC agendas.

5. They may be just pleasant talking shops.

Stage 4

If necessary consult the transcript below. The following is a brief outline of the meaning of the terms referred to:

1. Proprietors of major names (makes)

2. Non-governmental organisations (e.g. aid agencies, charities)

3. A supply chain consists of links from the raw materials through production and distribution to retailing.

4. Short periods of time for the completion of a task or activity.

5. Securing a position for further expansion.

6. Acting responsibly towards society (e.g. working conditions, environment protection).
European Works Councils

7. Set of rules or expectations regarding the way to perform
8. Infringements (of regulations/standards of behaviour)
9. Overall view (e.g. as presented by US presidents on TV “State of the Nation address)
10. Colleagues discussing work related subjects (compare “small talk” about the weather, holidays)

Transcript of interview with Doug Miller, Multinationals co-ordinator, ITGLWF

(The transcript below does not include provision for pauses and fillers which as can be expected punctuate a discourse such as this. This is a good example of how even a native speaker of English hesitates and backtracks on occasions to rephrase what he is saying).

‘Well, the sector I work in is textiles, clothing and footwear. It’s probably one of the most globalised industrial sectors in the world...globalised meaning that production really no longer exists in the main markets which are, of course the United States, Europe and Japan... most of production has been outsourced... to North Africa and Central and Eastern Europe in the case of Europe ...to Central America and Asia in the case of the United States market...and largely China in the case of the Japanese market.

What that means is that the major companies which buy - the brand owners and the retailers - because they no longer have production of their own...we, and indeed many NGOs, argue that they still have a major responsibility for the terms and conditions and working conditions of the workers in those supply chains.

Why? Because there have been a whole series of stories that keep coming through, about major abuses of worker rights, largely caused by very tight deadlines imposed by the buying firms and, of course, pressure on price, which means that it’s very difficult for workers in these companies and factories to earn a living wage and in some cases to have a decent working day. It’s not just a case of excessive overtime, it’s a case of forced overtime, people being locked in factories until an order is completed.

So where this... leads us to in terms of our strategy and, particularly in relation to European Works Councils, is that... there is an opportunity, I think, in a European Works Council which has been established for some time, which has begun to, in a sense, shape the agenda for the meetings, to put on that agenda the whole issue of corporate social responsibility. To some extent, that has been lent some weight by the recent communication from the Commission on CSR.

And actually if you think about it, it’s an opportunity for a European Works Council, in a sense, to engage in some negotiation, to treat a code of conduct as an agreement rather than something that is unilaterally determined by a company.

Now from the perspective of the International Textile, Garment, Leather Workers’ Federation, we believe in international framework agreements, but sometimes the European Works Council can be a bridgehead for such an agreement.
There are cases of some European Works Councils which are already extending their membership and other cases where they have already become global works councils... and it isn't just becoming a global works council for the sake of becoming a global works council ... it’s about genuinely creating a forum so that if violations occur, they are, they begin to be addressed at that level.

And I think that’s quite an exciting prospect or way to go because it gives a European Works Council some sort of sense of direction, because at the moment, information and consultation, as I’m sure many European Works Council delegates would testify, is, at best, a talking shop, and sometimes it’s just a one-way talking shop, where the company comes in and spends half a day giving a state of the nation report, everybody has a nice meal, they’ve been in a nice European city and they all go away again. And you know trade unionism and workers’ representation is about much more than that.

**Working with video 1**

**Understanding modern business jargon (p.43)**
- an introduction to ‘management-speak’

1. a) a revenue manager  
   b) a waste manager  
   c) an urban bird manager

2. Jargon
   (George Orwell was a British writer who lived 1903-1950 and who was most famous for his book about the future, *1984*, and also for *Animal Farm*)

3. a) to make something unpleasant appear better / pleasant  
   b) someone with an active involvement  
   c) Rule 4: Work harder or you’re fired!

4. a) profession  
   b) client  
   c) engagement  
   d) colleagues  
   e) values

5. to succeed
Working with words 3

Buzz words at work (p.46)

1. 
   a) a ball-park figure
   b) to pass the buck
   c) to drill down into
   d) OTT (= over the top)
   e) to go pear-shaped
   f) a road-map
   g) to go ape
   h) to have a bad-hair day
   i) a hero-to-zero
   j) a big cheese

2. 
   a) ----- a dry run ------------- had got legs
   b) ------------- a golden hand-shake
   c) --------------- bring (the committee) up to speed ------------- grasp the
                  nettle ------------ going down the tube
   d) ------------ cronies / mates ---------------- a scam
   e) ----- for some face-time with------------- draw the line under -----

3. 
   1 e
   2 g
   3 a
   4 c
   5 h
   6 b
   7 d
   8 j
   9 f
   10 i

4. 
   1. -------------- a think-tank -------------- floats my boat
   2. ---- cut to the chase -------- park -----
   3. Spin-doctors ----------- gobbledygook
   4. ----------- given gardening leave ------------- to go belly up.
   5. -------------- an exercise in box-ticking ----------- get our ducks in a row
Working with language 2

Using expressions of time (p. 50)

2. 1. -------------- on -------- at ----
    2. X -----------------
    3. -------------- in ------
    4. -------------- X ----
    5. -------------- in / during ------
    6. -------------- on -------- at -------- for / X ----
    7. X -------------- in -------- until ------
    8. In -------------- for -------- at -------- for ------
    9. -------------- X -------------- on -------- at -------- in -------- for / X ----
   10. -------------- ago, at -------- in ------

3. 1. the weekend before last
    2. 2 centuries ago
    3. 2 months ahead
    4. the day before yesterday
    5. a fortnight ago
    6. Sunday after next
    7. in 3 days’ time
    8. a week on Tuesday
    9. next Monday
   10. one year from now
   11. last year
   12. 15 June 2006
Working with words 4

Meetings (p.60)

1. (1) standing orders (sometimes referred to as the protocol) (9) floor
   (2) agenda (10) point.
   (3) items (11) motions
   (4) minutes (12) hand
   (5) matters arising (13) abstain
   (6) chair(person) (14) resolution
   (7) chair(person) (15) amendments
   (8) turn (16) adjournment

Working with speaking 4

Taking part in meetings (p. 62)

2. Who says what?

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<td>P or C</td>
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Working with language 3

Dealing with data and statistics (p. 67) - a case study

BIRMINGHAM, UK

1. | a) rise, increase (v. & n.) | e) similar to |
   | b) gently, steadily       | f) considerable |
   | c) decline, deterioration | g) sharp, sudden, abrupt |
   | d) fluctuation, change    | h) decrease, fall, decline (v. & n.) |

2. 1) -------------- bar chart ---------------- figures indicate / show / demonstrate --- --------- steady / slight increase / rise -------
   2) ------ graph ------ shows / indicates / demonstrates -------- downward trend or sharp / abrupt fall / slump ----------- corresponds --------- trend -------
   3) ---------------- steady decline -------- graph --------- shows / demonstrates
   4) ---- bar chart -------------- clearly indicates / shows / demonstrates --------- growth / increase ------------ similar to --------
   5) In contrast to ----------- figures ----------- stable --------- slight / gentle rise / increase

In some cases other answers are also possible.

More about BIRMINGHAM
-an extract from the article accompanying the charts & graphs in The Times, 20/1/06:

The collapse of MG Rover last year was one of the biggest industrial blows of recent years in Britain. About 6,000 direct jobs were lost and a similar number went from the supply chain and the local economy. The only relief was that it was not worse. The near-crash of the business five years previously had encouraged most suppliers to diversify.

MG Rover’s demise was iconic for a region synonymous with car-making and engineering, but the failure was part of a general economic shift from dependence on heavy industry. In 1989 manufacturing delivered a third of gross value added in the West Midlands. In 2003, the latest available figures, it was 18.9 per cent. Yet there is hope in the region that the decline will not be inexorable and that, instead, the trend will shift towards different types of manufacturing.
The unemployment rate in Birmingham, just under 6 per cent, also reflects poorly on the region. John Edwards, CEO of the regional development agency, says: “There are too many people with no or low skills. Unemployment is greatest among the ethnic minority communities. The region also lacks an entrepreneurial spirit. Too few people decide to set up their own companies.”

Communication Activity 1

EWC membership (p. 74)

Obviously there is no set answer to this activity, rather it provides an opportunity for participants to practise the language strategies and vocabulary that they have been acquiring.

However it may be useful to refer to the two Agreements contained in Working with Reading 2 where different formulae are used to arrive at the composition of the EWC memberships.

The case of Romania should lead to some discussion (either before or after accession to the EU). Does the number of workers justify membership of the EWC? Which representation body can be contacted in order to secure an authentic delegate?

Participants may want to question the decision to limit the size of the EWC membership

There is plenty of scope for discussion!

Communication Activity 2 and 3

Goals and priorities for the EWC (p. 76)

An organising model for the EWC (p. 78)

There is no set answer to these activities. Participants will clearly bring their own experience and judgement to the themes. They are intended as an opportunity for participants to practise the language strategies and vocabulary that they have been acquiring.

Useful information can be found in the ETUCO publication Working with the European Works Council (1999) from which these activities were drawn.

The two Working with Listening sections in this unit provide some good material on which to build a case as does Working with Reading 1. If time permits, participants can do a websearch (e.g. ETUC; ETUI-REHS; European Foundation for the improvement of Living and Working Conditions; TUC and other national websites) to build up their case. The priority is for participants to feel they now have the tools and the confidence to express themselves clearly in English!
## Glossary

(\(v = \text{verb}, \ n = \text{noun}, \ adj = \text{adjective}\))

1. acquisitions  
2. adjournment  
3. (to) allocate  
4. ballot (\(v \& n\))  
5. (to) brainstorm  
6. brainstorming  
7. chief negotiator  
8. clarification  
9. (to) clarify  
10. company-wide  
11. competitiveness  
12. compulsory / mandatory  
13. confidential  
14. consensus  
15. consultation  
16. consultative  
17. contentious  
18. contract  
19. contractual  
20. corporate  
21. deadline  
22. decision (to make a ---)  
23. decision-maker  
24. decision-making  
25. delay (\(v \& n\))  
26. de-merger  
27. deputy  
28. (to) disclose  
29. disclosure  
30. draft (\(v \& n\))  
31. duration  
32. early-warning  
33. fait accompli  
34. feedback  
35. firm (\(n\))  
36. firm (\(adj\))  
37. follow-up  
38. gap  
39. goal  
40. hotly debated issue / question  
41. initiative  
42. key point / issue  
43. leader  
44. leadership  
45. legal  
46. legally binding  
47. legislation  
48. legislative  
49. (to) merge  
50. merger  
51. minutes  
52. misinformation  
53. network  
54. networking  
55. parent company  
56. party  
57. performance-related pay  
58. phase  
59. plenary  
60. (to) pool  
61. practice  
62. pre-meeting  
63. profit-sharing  
64. provision  
65. provisions  
66. proviso  
67. redundancy  
68. redundant (to make ---)  
69. (to) reformulate  
70. representation  
71. restructuring  
72. sectoral bargaining  
73. statutory  
74. strategic  
75. strategy  
76. subsidiarity  
77. subsidiary  
78. subsidiary issue  
79. substitute (\(v \& n\))  
80. supranational  
81. timing  
82. union density  
83. vocational training