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## **BEERG:** September meeting agenda takes shape

Our next BEERG Network meeting will take place in the Pullman Hotel, Gare Midi, Brussels on Wednesday afternoon/Thursday morning, September 28/29. We will circulate fuller details shortly, along with a hotel room booking form. Items on the agenda will include:

- *An update on the EU legislative agenda, including developments around EWCs (following the June meeting, we will circulate a briefing paper on the legislative within the next week)*
- *Managing virtual meetings effectively, including EWC and works council meetings*
- *New employee relations challenges involving the interaction of the GDPR, the governance of artificial intelligence and employee information and consultation obligations. The Spanish government has just published a paper on this which could well become a European template.*
- *The management of contingent workforces in the context of new reporting requirements (see elsewhere in this newsletter) and supply chain due diligence*



At our June meeting, Anne-Perrine Cades from FIS Global gave a presentation on ***Developing an Employee Relations Index***. The presentation can be found at [this link](#). We plan to do a follow up online discussion with Anne-Perrine on this in the coming weeks.

The video of the BEERG testimony on EWCs in Ireland to the Irish Parliament's Joint Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment is now available at the Committee's [WEBPAGE](#) (note that the public session starts 16 mins into the video). The official text transcript should shortly appear on the same webpage (we were expecting it this week). You will also find the written presentations from both BEERG and SIPTU (under the documents tab).

## Europe: Collective bargaining developments

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IndustriALL Europe, the manufacturing sector trade union federation, reports:

- In **Germany**, trade unions are adapting their strategies to the current fluctuating situation. In the chemical sector, IG BCE reached a short-term agreement, valid for seven months, winning a one-off payment of €1400 for workers. IG Metall has just reached a deal for steel workers in North-Rhine Westphalia with the highest pay rise in 30 years. On top of a 6.5% increase, there will be one-off payments of €500 and apprentices will receive €200. Lump sum increases of fixed amounts for all will give a relatively higher increase for workers with low wages.
- The social partners in **Finland** have also immediately adapted to the current volatile context, as they have recently made a creative deal by negotiating an agreement in two stages. This means that they will meet again at the negotiating table earlier than normal, at the end of 2022, in order to compare pay and inflation and adjust these to the real situation.
- **Romania** is the perfect example of why sectoral bargaining is highly needed. Strong unions manage to win impressive company-level agreements, but these benefits cannot be extended to the whole sector and supply chain, leading to massive inequality among workers. FSLI Petrol Energie has won a 10% wage increase, but this cannot be extended to the rest of the sector because social dialogue law limits negotiations. Similarly, Metarom has won a 14 % increase that cannot be extended to the whole sector.
- In **Austria**, trade unions negotiate sectoral agreements at the national level and have achieved solid increases of nominal pay in 2022. Wages go up by between 4.5% and 5.9% with variations between sectors. It is still not enough to fully compensate for the record high inflation. Therefore, trade unions call on the government to mitigate the effects of the rising inflation, demanding: a price commission composed of the social partners to monitor the situation; the increase of pensions in line with inflation; a social balancing compensation that consists of a 6% pay rise; and direct payments to households.



Isabelle Barthès, industriAll Europe Deputy General Secretary, comments:

*“As experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic and other previous crises, we see once again that collective bargaining and social dialogue offer tailor-made solutions to the immense challenges posed by a volatile economic situation and geopolitical uncertainty. We observe that in countries with strong unions and social partnerships, collective bargaining is possible, and successful, despite the uncertainty. Creative outcomes are being reached in agreements that ensure win-win solutions for workers and employers.*

*Employers and policymakers must join trade unions’ quest to find the best solutions to overcome the current inflation and cost of living crisis. Workers cannot be left alone to pay the bill. Austerity must be avoided at all costs to prevent an economic disaster.”*

Meanwhile, CNBC [reports](#) on a potential “summer on discontent” in the UK as unions push for inflation-matching pay increases.

## EU: New company reporting

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Members of the European Parliament and representatives from EU Member States agreed new sustainability reporting rules that aim to end so-called “greenwashing” and lay the groundwork for a common set of global standards. Pascal Durand MEP (Renew Europe, France), who led the negotiations for the parliament, said:

*“Today, information on a company’s impact on the environment, human rights and work ethics is patchy, unreliable and easily abused. Some companies do not report. Others report on what they want. Investors, consumers and shareholders are at loss. From now on, having a clean human rights record will be just as important as having a clean balance sheet.”*

The new EU sustainability reporting requirements will apply to all large (public and private) companies with more than 250 employees and a €40m turnover. Non-EU companies with substantial activity in the EU market (€150m in annual turnover in the EU) will have to follow equivalent reporting rules.

The *Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive* (CSRD), which amends the *2014 Non-Financial Reporting Directive* (NFRD), will introduce detailed sustainability reporting disclosures for large companies, prepared according to European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRSs) currently being developed by EFRAG.

Legislators believe that the new reporting rules will make businesses more accountable by requiring them to disclose their impact on people and the planet, including the environment, human rights, social standards, and work ethics.

The agreement also requires companies to have the information on their impact on the climate or human rights to be independently audited and certified, allowing investors to have access to reliable, transparent and comparable data.

The rules will apply from 1 January 2024 for companies already subject to the NFRD. From 1 January 2025 for companies that are not presently subject to the NFRD and from 1 January 2026 for listed SMEs, small and non-complex credit institutions and captive insurance undertakings.

Mairead McGuinness, Commissioner for Financial Services, Financial Stability and Capital Markets Union, said: “This is a landmark in the development of company reporting, a significant step forward in the area of disclosures, covering many sectors of the economy. Sustainability reporting will now be on an equal footing with financial reporting.

*“The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive will help drive the transition to a sustainable economic system built on innovation and investment opportunities. It will enable companies to communicate and manage their sustainability performance more efficiently. Citizens will be able to measure the success of companies not just in financial terms but also in terms of how they impact people and the environment.”*

The EU Parliament and Council now has to formally approve the agreement before it is published in the EU Official Journal. It will be effective 20 days after publication and member states will have to integrate its provisions into national laws after 18 months.

## Future work: Turn off the camera

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According to a [report](#) from the BBC, experts say turning off video call cameras could improve worker wellbeing and make meetings more efficient. "At the beginning of the pandemic, it made a lot of sense that people wanted to be on camera, because we were living under the premise that this was going to be a two-week pause of our lives – and so we were like, 'We want to see everybody, we want to connect'," says Allison Gabriel, professor of management and organisations at the University of Arizona, who has studied the effects of Zoom fatigue.

But most workers now think that leaving cameras on for everything can exacerbate Zoom fatigue: a tiredness linked to factors including fixating on your own on-camera appearance and the cognitive strain of

trying to identify non-verbal cues that are much easier to interpret in person. These distractions may also reduce productivity, if workers are "focusing on themselves and how they might be being perceived," rather than the meeting itself, says Winny Shen, associate professor of organisation studies at York University, Canada.

## Europe: Commitment to negotiating “right to disconnect” agreement

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European trade unions and employers have signed a “work programme”, including a commitment to negotiate a legally binding agreement on ‘Telework and right to disconnect’. The Work Programme 2022-24 consists of 6 joint actions:



**Telework and right to disconnect:** Review and update the 2002 Autonomous Agreement on Telework to be put forward for adoption as a legally binding agreement implemented via a Directive.

**Green Transition:** A framework of actions to ensure that a just transition, with appropriate public funding and investments, creates quality jobs and supports enterprises and workers adapting to change.

**Youth employment:** A joint seminar and statement following up on the ‘Framework of Actions on Youth Employment’ to explore best practices, challenges and tools to facilitate youth employment.

**Work related privacy and surveillance:** Joint seminar and guidelines on workplace monitoring and surveillance technologies to exchange views on the trends and their relevance for social partners and collective bargaining at all appropriate levels across Europe.

**Improving skills matching in Europe:** A seminar followed by a joint research project on effective access to training, social partners’ involvement in skills intelligence, and addressing skills mismatches and skills shortages.

**Capacity building:** A joint project to review the effectiveness of capacity building projects and identify obstacles to implementing existing social partner autonomous framework agreements.

Commenting on the Work Programme, BusinessEurope Director General Markus J. Beyrer said: “Social dialogue has a fundamental role to play in making our labour markets more productive, competitive and resilient. This work programme demonstrates a shared endeavour and commitment in times of rapid labour market change.”

ETUC Deputy General Secretary Esther Lynch said: “Agreeing to negotiate an EU Directive on Telework and the right to disconnect is good news for employers and workers alike. It shows that where there is a will, even the most difficult issues can be resolved by constructive negotiations.”

## ILO: Health and safety become first core principle

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Delegates attending the [International Labour Conference](#) (ILC) have adopted a resolution to add the principle of a safe and healthy working environment to the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: [HERE](#) Delegates adopted the measure at the [Conference’s plenary sitting](#) on Friday 10 June.

Until now there have been four categories of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work:

- *freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;*
- *the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour;*
- *the effective abolition of child labour;*
- *the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.*

The decision by the Conference means that Occupational Safety and Health will become the fifth category. The Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work were adopted in 1998 as part of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Under the Declaration, ILO Member States, regardless of their level of economic development, commit to respect and promote these principles and rights, whether or not they have ratified the relevant Conventions.

*For a trade union view on the decision see [here](#)*

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## HRP India: Changing Scenario in Global Workforce Deployment      Webinar July 20, 9 - 10am EST

**HR Policy in India** is organizing a panel discussion on 'Changing Scenario in Global Work Force Deployment' on 20th July 2022, at 6.30 PM India time for 60 minutes. We plan to have some CHROs of member companies on the panel, give valuable insights into what changes are likely to happen in the future of work from a work force deployment point of view.

[Book July Webinar](#)

## BEERG Members' Network Meeting      Pullman Hotel, Gare du Midi Brussels Sept 28/29

Attendance at the September BEERG Network Meeting in Brussels is open to BEERG members, HR Policy Global members. Click link on right to book a place at the meeting. A draft agenda with details and accommodation booking form will be available in July.

[Book Sept Meeting](#)

## BEERG Training: Managing European Employee Relations      Hotel Estela Sitges: Oct 18-21

Over the past fifteen years, hundreds of executives have participated in our twice yearly BEERG training programs. We have radically restructured our program to include a twin track component offering participants a tailored choice of modules. Download the training brochure and draft course schedule [ONLINE HERE](#).

[Book Oct Training](#)

\*BEERG/HR Policy Global Members can self-register online for these events via the links supplied. Members who get the "No Tickets Available for Purchase" message online should contact [Derek](#).

## BEERG Dates for your Diary:

Date	Event	Booking Links	Venue
July 20	<b>HR Policy in India: The Changing Scenario in Global Workforce Deployment</b>	<a href="#">Book July Webinar</a>	Webinar on Zoom
Sept 28/29	<b>BEERG Members' Network Meeting</b>	<a href="#">Book Sept Meeting</a>	Hotel Pullman, Gare du Midi, Place Victor Horta 1, 1060 Brussels
Oct 18 - 21	<b>BEERG Training: "Managing European Employee Relations"</b>	<a href="#">Book Oct Training</a>	Hotel Estela, Port d'Aiguadolc, Sitges, Barcelona, Spain