



# Networking for Europe

You may have already seen an English language edition of “Die Mitbestimmung”. We are delighted if this is the case, as it has become something of a tradition to publish our monthly journal once a year in English. The aim is to provide an insight into the work of the Hans Böckler Foundation and the state of discussions on co-determination within the German trade union movement. This year our English language edition has been published to coincide with the Congress of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) in Helsinki. But we are equally happy if you know about the Foundation in some other way.

The Hans Böckler Foundation promotes the philosophy of co-determination and democracy. A foundation of the Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund - DGB (German Trade Union Federation), the Hans Böckler Foundation is primarily concerned with employee participation. We support those involved in co-determination at both plant and company level in their efforts to ensure that employees have the right to participate at work. It is the employees' representatives on the Supervisory Boards, who receive around DM 36 million a year in fees for this work who provide the financial basis of the Foundation's activities. (You will find further information about the Foundation and the range of its operations in the article on pages 62 to 64.) This is one of several reasons why,

from the point of view of trade unions and employees, co-determination must be safeguarded in the proposed European Company. Would it not be of enormous benefit for the European trade union movement if a European network of trade union foundations were to emerge? The Hans Böckler Foundation would be delighted to be involved in such a network if it could be set up.

In places where the Hans Böckler Foundation already has links it has been increasingly active in conducting joint events on the German model of co-determination. We presented the findings of the “Co-determination Commission” to interested audiences in London and shortly afterwards in Brussels. This Commission consisted of leading employers and workplace employee representatives, trade unionists, academics, an official from the German Ministry of Labour, academics, and the President of the German Bundesarbeitsgericht (Federal Labour Court). It set out how co-determination currently works in practice and made a series of recommendations. There is an English language summary of both the report and the recommendations, which you can request from us or alternatively download at the website address at the foot of this page.

In Germany, the continuing high level of unemployment is a central problem facing employees and their trade unions. We are therefore happy to

publish Dieter Schulte's view of the “Bündnis für Arbeit” (“Alliance for Jobs”) for our European readers (*see page 38*). Dieter Schulte is the Chair of the German Trade Union Federation (DGB), and also Chair of the Hans Böckler Foundation. We are convinced that in Europe today national developments increasingly have an echo and an impact on a much wider scale, as this and other articles in the magazine make clear. It is obvious that we are already learning from one another to our mutual benefit.

Peace and freedom, human rights and democracy, social justice and protection of the environment; these must all be constantly secured and extended, if not introduced for the first time. Even in Europe there is still a long way to go. Employees bear a heavy responsibility. However, together with their trade unions they are well equipped to make a decisive contribution towards social progress in Europe and in the world. The resolutions of the ETUC Congress in Helsinki will help in these efforts. We wish the conference every success.

I would be delighted if reading this magazine provides you with a little more insight into the world of German trade unions as well as providing inspiration and assistance. It may even give you a taste for forthcoming editions of our magazine “Die Mitbestimmung”.

**Nikolaus Simon**  
Managing Director

<http://www.boeckler.de/map/english.htm>