Co-determination and digital change –
employee representatives‘ views and influence on the „digital revolution“

Results – Interpretation - Discussion

based on the AK-IFES-survey „Strukturwandelbarometer“ (2016)

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The Chamber of Labour in Austria

- Legal Representation of 3,4 million consumers and employees in Austria
- Compulsory membership / Right to vote for all members
  - Fundamental Research
  - Participation in Legislation / Control of Legislation
  - Services
- 9 regional chambers / Vienna chamber of Labour acts as national chamber
Agenda

- Frame and setting of the AK-IFES-survey „Strukturwandelbarometer“
- Understanding of „digital change“
- Selected Results of the survey
- Interpretations – Conclusions/Learnings - Issues for co-determination?
IFES (2016): Strukturwandelbarometer „barometer of structural transmission“

- Online-survey carried out by IFES
  - September-December 2015
- Author/Project head: Georg Michenthaler/IFES
- 4th wave: Focus on digital change
- Sample: 271 panel members / works council chairpersons in Austria
- Target: Explore employee representatives‘ views and concerns due to „structural change“
- Quantification: Experienced Evidence and Impact
What does „digital change“ mean?

- Industry 4.0? Work 4.0? New Work Order?
  Smart Economy? Internet of Things?
  Prosuming? CPM?
- Communication:
  Data growth
  Real time on long distances
  Lower marginal cost
Digital change focused on single plants

- Use of mobile devices
  (with access to a company network)
- Forms of virtual work
  (virtual meetings, virtual groups, distance working)
- Automated planning or steerage of production
- Automated communication with suppliers and customers
Has there been a change in one of the following fields in your company in the last 6 months? (IFES, 2016: 18)
Selected Results 1: Overall impact of digital change

The impact of digital change in your company as a whole is rather positive or rather negative on...? (IFES, 2016: 29)
Selected Results 2: Sources of digital change

The introduction of digital items was accompanied by: (IFES, 2016: 25)
Selected Results 2: Sources of digital change

- The introduction and implementation of digital technologies was pushed on and promoted by which interest group within the company? (IFES, 2016: 262)
Selected Results 2: Sources of digital change

(If your company is part of an affiliated group): Was the introduction of digital technologies decided on by the management of the company or by the management of the affiliated group? (IFES, 2016: 23)
Selected Results 3: Co-Determination

- Company bargain agreements in the field of … have been accomplished or renewed in the last 12 months? (IFES, 2016: 23)

- In this case, the agreement was mainly initiated by …? (IFES, 2016: 23)
Selected Results 3: Co-Determination

The works council was involved in the introduction / implementation of new digital technologies by …?

(IFES, 2016: 22)
Interpretation

- Works council heads have a general positive view on digital transformation and value the chances for their companies.

- There is, however, a large number of concerns in specific fields and issues (working conditions, older staff, work-life-balance).

- The implementation of digital technologies is mainly promoted and driven by top management and group management.
Interpretations

- Co-Determination in the field of digital transformation has a lot of room for improvement – in two thirds of the cases works councils were only informed and not involved.

- Even if there are legal obligations to a company agreement, works councils have to claim for it.

- Digital transformation in companies is not a detached event. It is rather integrated in a framework of decisions and long term organisational development.
Discussion

- Promotion of awareness and sanctions for legal requirements
  eg. employee data privacy
- Step-by-step approach towards digital transformation