

[Launch of EUWIN's Knowledge Bank](#)[View in your browser](#)

EUWIN is an initiative of the European Commission's Directorate General for Enterprise & Industry



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Welcome to EUWIN's Knowledge Bank

EUWIN's April Bulletin is dedicated to the launch of EUWIN's Knowledge Bank, a unique resource that will help to spread awareness and know-how about workplace innovation throughout Europe.

The Knowledge Bank is a rich resource for practitioners and researchers alike. It includes articles, case studies and practical guides which will stimulate, inform and sustain change in all kinds of workplace.

By joining our unique community of people in more than 30 countries you can share knowledge and experience, find answers and collaborate with EUWIN members across Europe.

Click [here](#) for a preview or [log in](#) to access the full Knowledge Bank, comment on documents, subscribe to our monthly Bulletin or contribute to discussion forums. You can navigate using the Search facility, through the Themes or **The Fifth Element** pages.

Your feedback is important so please **let us know** if you have any comments or suggestions.

Go to the Knowledge Bank

[You may have set a password when you subscribed to this Bulletin. If not, or if you have lost it, just follow the [link](#) to get a new one!]

Explore workplace innovation through EUWIN's Knowledge Bank

Workplace innovation can be understood in terms of four main elements. Firstly it's the individual employee's job and team. Secondly it's the structure of the organisation as a whole, and thirdly about opportunities for reflection and improvement. Finally it means bringing the employee's voice to both strategic and operational decisions.

But it is when these elements combine in a web of mutually reinforcing practices that something remarkable begins to happen. This is **The Fifth Element**, the buzz you get in a workplace where employees at every level use and develop their knowledge, experience and creativity to the full, where employees come to work to improve the organisation as well deliver their functional tasks in the best possible way.

See our **short video** on the benefits of workplace innovation.

Work Organisation - The First Element

Employee initiative and the ability to work without close supervision are highly cherished: architects, midwives and refuse collectors perform their jobs well because they can make many on-the-spot decisions based on background knowledge and accumulated experience of what works in practice, avoiding delays caused by unnecessary referral to managers or manuals.

In the best cases they make time to learn and to reflect on what is working well and what should be changed. This generates steady flows of improvement and innovation. Such employees may also enjoy discretion in scheduling their own work and in controlling its pace, minimising physical strain and psychological stress.



Trust is a vital nutrient. Employees can often help their customers and colleagues more effectively when they're trusted to use their judgement.

Moreover in exercising discretion employees acquire skills that are transferable, increasing their adaptability and resilience within the organisation and their employability outside it, even in quite different occupations.

Read more and access the case studies. . .

Organisational structure and systems - The Second Element

What about the organisational walls and ceilings that allocate people to departments, divisions, grades and professions? Do they constrain the way that people work together, creating separate silos that put barriers in the way of doing a good job? Or is there a sense of openness and expectation that lets the fire of innovation and improvement create heat and light throughout the organisation?



Innovative organisations are those that ignite common understanding and purpose for everyone, letting each person share what they know so that they can deliver a better product and a more seamless approach to the customer. When you join two candle flames together you get a much greater flame than the sum of just two. Sharing understanding between people without boundaries creates an unstoppable and beneficial wildfire which, of course, spreads.

Of course some demarcations may be necessary, reflecting different bodies of expertise and knowledge. But this shouldn't lead to fragmentation: different groups within an organisation should intertwine naturally in ways that share the richness around them, helping everyone understand other people's jobs, professions, specialisms, priorities, problems and vision.

Read more and access the case studies. . .

Learning, reflection and innovation - The Third Element

Great organisations understand that a continual stream of ideas is a vital resource for improvement and innovation. They create times and spaces where people can discuss ideas with their co-workers or in their team meetings. They set up buzz boards where ideas can be shared and dedicated spaces where people can think in different ways together. They encourage meetings in cafés, a creative time away from the immediate pressures of the workplace. They enable ad hoc teams, awaydays, and times when people who otherwise wouldn't meet are mixed together, a pool of dialogue and creativity.



Watch **EUWIN's video on employment driven innovation** featuring four very different organisations, all of which create spaces in where people can step back from their day-to-day tasks to generate ideas for improvement and innovation.

Read more and access the case studies. . .

Workplace partnership - The Fourth Element

Partnership between management, employees and trade unions can take many forms, but always requires openness, transparency and two-way communication. At the very least it can be an effective tool for positive industrial relations, minimising conflict and resistance to change.

So this means that industrial relations go beyond adversarial bargaining; it looks for win-win outcomes for the organisation and its employees. It means partnership forums, times and spaces where senior managers and trade unions or employee representatives get together to tackle big issues in a climate of openness and trust.

Yet partnership can also transcend the industrial relations sphere. Where it works best, partnership blows through the entire organisation. It stimulates dialogue and, like a wind, carries the seeds of innovation both ways between senior management and

frontline employees.

An important body of research has begun to show that representative partnership structures on their own may have little direct impact on performance or quality of working life. Rather they can exert a positive influence on the development of activities and practices that may do so.



Read more and access the case studies. . .

EUWIN's Knowledge Bank reveals some of Europe's outstanding examples of workplace innovation.

And they can be found in a diverse range of organisations. Here are just a few examples:

Hydro Aluminium Salko Oy, a medium-sized Finnish company, achieved significant improvements in productivity and profits by working with the chief shop steward to empower frontline workers in day-to-day decision-making.

In Denmark, **Aarsleff Pipe Technologies** avoided potential technical difficulties by engaging frontline workers' know-how and experience, using an innovative scenario-based approach to model the implementation of a new production system.



The UK's **Lindum Group** achieved significant growth through its entrepreneurial culture, empowering employees at every level to improve the business and to develop new business

opportunities. The company is remarkable for its open style of leadership and flexible systems and procedures.

EUWIN's Knowledge Bank is a rich resource of many other examples for practitioners and researchers alike. It includes articles, case studies and practical guides which will stimulate, inform and sustain change in all kinds of workplace.

Beating the competition with workplace innovation!

EUWIN's Vienna Conference on 6th May to be hosted by Microsoft

This free workshop will focus on concrete cases of companies from Austria and other neighbouring countries. Discussions and groupwork throughout the day will create an interactive environment designed to stimulate active participation. You can check the agenda and register here. Contact **Alexander Kesselring** or **Steven Dhondt** for more information.

EUWIN's Vienna workshop will attract around 100 business practitioners, trade union representatives and other interested stakeholders. Exciting business cases and practical tools will help you to implement workplace innovation in your organisation. The event will be held in English.



The Vienna workshop will be hosted by Microsoft Austria. Participants will also join a guided tour through the Microsoft facilities designed according to the company's "new world of work" concept combining human, spatial and technological dimensions.

The Conference is targeted at companies from the region as well as professionals in the field of organisational change and workplace innovation.

Participants will share:

- Enhanced understanding of workplace innovation and its implementation.
- Transferable lessons from company case studies:
 - Why did they want to change?
 - How did they do it?
 - What were the main challenges and how were they overcome?
- Knowledge of participatory tools and approaches for workplace innovation.
- Experience and creative thinking with peers through group work.
- Insights from professional change managers and experts.

The workshop will take place on 6th May, between 10:00 and 18:00. Coffee will be served from 09:15. Address: Am Euro Platz 3, 1120 Vienna, Austria.

Join us in Vienna for this unmissable free event!

EU Task Force and IndustriALL Manifesto both recognise workplace innovation's key role in re-industrialising Europe

Two significant publications have highlighted the role that new ways of working can play in meeting Europe's goals for competitiveness and innovation.



The **Task Force for Advanced Manufacturing Technologies for Clean Production** co-ordinates EU efforts to increase the competitiveness of Europe's manufacturing industry by fostering the development, and speeding up the market uptake of, European advanced manufacturing technologies by industry. Its "**Advancing Manufacturing - Advancing Europe**" **Report** argues strongly for the diffusion of workplace innovation in advanced manufacturing, citing the important role of **EUWIN** in achieving this objective. "*Workplace innovation has to provide advanced solutions for manufacturing industry, based on the newest technologies. Virtual reality and side laboratories, where employees can perform extra research and experimentation, not connected with their daily tasks, are examples of combining advanced manufacturing technologies and advanced workplaces. Furthermore, workplace innovation can help companies to enhance competitiveness by using the innovativeness and creativity of all employees.*"

The European trade union **IndustriALL** released its Manifesto for European industry last week. Arguing that new ways of working can create more productive and more sustainable industries, the Manifesto argues that "The gradual fading out of repetitive factory work should provide motivation to invest in social and workplace innovation focusing on competences, creativity, autonomy, innovative work organisation and decent, high quality jobs."



IndustriALL argues that government and other stakeholders can help to promote workplace innovation through the instigation of national programmes including the benchmarking of practices between companies, creating learning networks and establishing knowledge centres.

You can download the Manifesto [here](#).

And it's not too late to join us in Copenhagen for Trade Unions as Knowledgeable Participants in Workplace Innovation

Line Sandberg (Vice President, Novozymes) and **Anders Hentze Knudsen (3F – The United Federation of Danish Workers Shop Steward at Novozymes)** are the latest speakers to be signed up for the EUWIN/LO Denmark workshop on 29th-30th April. They will join management and union reps from **Copenhagen City Council, Lamborghini** and **Becton Dickinson** in sharing experiences of the vital role that trade unions can play in workplace innovation.



Britta Thomsen MEP, Steen Høyrup (University of Aarhus), Jan Arlbjørn (University of Southern Denmark), Pia Mulvad Reksten (LO Denmark), Peter Dragsbæk (CO-Industri Denmark), Greet Vermeylen (Eurofound), Tuomo Alasoini (TEKES, Finland), Rosemary Exton (UK WON) and Peter Totterdill (EUWIN) will explore the wider implications of the trade union role in workplace innovation.

Book your place [here](#).

Save the date!
EUWIN's Sofia Conference is on 29th September 2014
Watch this space . . .



Help us build a mass movement

Thank you for being part of **EUWIN**. Together we bring together the knowledge, experience and enthusiasm of enterprises, employees, unions, employers' organisations, policymakers and researchers from across Europe. Spread the word!

Please forward this briefing to your colleagues, associates and suppliers. Ask them to sign up [here](#). Make sure they don't miss out.

What does EUWIN offer me?

EUWIN offers enterprises in the private and public sectors across Europe unique opportunities to learn from each other, sharing experience and knowledge of "what works" online and through workshops.

Policymakers, employers' organisations and trade unions gain insight into how they can make a difference by actively promoting and resourcing ways of working that lead both to higher performance and to better working lives.

Researchers gain important new opportunities for collaboration, and for disseminating their work in ways which influence academic debates and workplace practice alike.

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