



Welcome to:

European Workplace Innovation Network | June Newsletter

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

What a waste!



"So much money wasted as organisations only associate innovation with technology."

This was the message from a Tweet while **the EUWIN Team** reviewed old and new evidence and experience about how employee participation and empowerment lead to more innovative, competitive organisations and better quality of working life. But the EUWIN session during the Gipuzkoa Workplace Innovation Conference *Dialogue with the actors: People, Companies and Public Administration* in Donostia/San Sebastian on 7th May also showed the size of the mountain that Europe has to climb. Successive surveys indicate that only a small minority of European workplaces systematically create opportunities for employees to use their knowledge, skills, experience and creativity to the full.

Not only is this a waste of human talent but it also means that a vast potential for innovation, productivity and employee health and well-being goes unrealised.

Fortunately we are always finding fresh examples of inspiring workplaces! **Tiina Saar-Veelmaa** is Workplace Happiness Advocate at **Proekspert**, a successful Estonian IT company. Her article tells the story of why Proekspert isn't "full of distant and self-critical nerds".

The other good news is that an increasing number of policymakers are beginning to take workplace innovation seriously. **Oscar Usetxi Blanco, Gipuzkoa's Director of Innovation**, has written an inspiring article for this month's Bulletin in which he sees workplace innovation as a vital component in forging the territory's economic, social and environmental cohesion.

Elise Ramstad, of the Finnish innovation agency **Tekes**, will find much in common with Oscar's approach. She makes a strong case for a more open and inclusive approach to innovation policy, one which brings national strategy and the workplace together through dialogue.

Yet the wasted talent and experience of older workers continues to trouble employers and policymakers alike. Despite increased longevity, the pensions crisis and the efforts of many national governments too many people still take the opportunity for retirement at the earliest possible opportunity. Are we missing something obvious in our attempts to stem this tide? The European Commission's **Workage** project thinks we are and is piloting a new approach based on workplace innovation.

You'll also find **Rasa Rotomskienė's** preview of June's Vilnius Conference. And if you follow the link in the **Events** section, **Steven Dhondt** will explain what we have in store for **EUWIN's unmissable [Leuven event](#) on 9th September!**

Enjoy the Bulletin, and please continue to contact us with your ideas, experiences and examples of good practice.



Professor Peter Totterdill, EUWIN

Get in touch

Proekspert

A story of workplace happiness



What happens when a passionate Workplace Happiness Advocate starts working at a company? Such an expert may want to cross development psychology and contemporary career philosophies with the company's values and operations in order to bring happiness at work to centre stage. The result is a relatively unique HR philosophy.

After I had taken a job at Proekspert and the CEO Marko Sverdlik was introducing me to my new colleagues, I eagerly asked them what they did. The laconic answer I got was: "we programme". I was slightly perplexed because the happiness at work equation strongly underlines sensing the "mammoth", i.e. understanding how we can make the world a better place. The perplexity turned into astonishment when I got hold of a list of powerful "mammoths" Proekspert had shot - and I realised they don't even talk about it!

Tiina will be talking about her experiences at [EUWIN's Vilnius Conference](#). Click [here](#) to learn more.



Tiina Saar-Veelmaa

[Read Tiina's story here](#)

Gipuzkoa

How can public authorities support the creation of modern workplaces? Lessons from Gipuzkoa



Gipuzkoa is becoming one of the leading regions in Europe in terms of support for workplace innovation. Recently the Province has launched a [dedicated programme](#) to support this type of innovation. Oscar Usetxi Blanco of the Provincial Council explains the motivation behind it.

The Spanish province of Gipuzkoa wants to help to build a territory based on the Knowledge Society, integrating social cohesion, economic sustainability and environmental sustainability, with the support of local action.

The Provincial Council wants to contribute to developing a Socially Responsible Territory committed to sustainability through collaborative strategies and multilateral commitment with efficient solutions that create value for all parties. A territory that generates social capital and trusting relationships; a territory with a sense of belonging, identity and a strong willingness to change.

Our contribution to this is the vision of a new model of economic and social development which includes a new understanding of organisations and companies based on worker participation and people-centred principles.



*Oscar USETXI BLANCO
Director of Innovation, Rural Development and Tourism
Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa*

[Download Oscar's article](#)

Generating innovation

A new model for policymakers



Elise Ramstad, of the Finnish innovation agency Tekes, argues that the “triple helix” model in which governments, universities and businesses work together to stimulate innovation is not sufficient on its own. We need a new approach which is both systemic and inclusive.

Some governments in Europe – still a minority – understand that innovation isn’t just the domain of entrepreneurs and people in white coats. Moreover it isn’t just about technology. Innovation is rather seen as the outcome of interaction between people and between organisations. It is forged in the spaces where people come together to share knowledge and experience and to pool their creativity.

So how can policymakers facilitate this broader concept of innovation in the interests of national and European competitiveness? Firstly we need to redefine what we mean by “policymakers” to include those who shape the direction of employers’ organisations, trade unions and other key actors in the economy. Secondly we need a systemic policy framework that embraces innovation at the micro-, meso- and macro-levels.



Elise Ramstad

[Download Elise's article here](#)

Retaining valuable workers



Workage is a three year EU-funded project testing the proposition that the engagement and retention of employees aged 50+ will be improved by enhancing employee voice and empowering workplace practices for everyone. It focuses on removing obstacles to achieving a healthy and productive workforce.

The importance of retaining older people in the workforce has been widely recognised as an EU policy goal and is linked to a wide range of economic and social benefits relating to knowledge and skills, financial security, health and social inclusion.

Workage is facilitating the transformation of work practices and cultures in two pilot sites: the maternity service in the Southern Health & Social Care Trust, Northern Ireland, and the Place Division, Stoke on Trent City Council. Interventions are focused on job design, self-organised teamworking, continuous improvement, high involvement innovation, workplace partnership and employee voice in strategic decision making.

[Read more](#)

Workplace innovation takes the high road in Lithuania

The poster features a central illustration of a man in a suit sitting on a stool, holding a glowing lightbulb. Behind him is a large lightbulb shape composed of puzzle pieces. The background is light blue with a white and blue wave-like border at the bottom.

Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists (lplc logo)

European Economic and Social Committee Employers' Group (EESC logo)

15.06.2015
BOD Group
Mokslininkų g. 6A, Vilnius
Lietuva

**Industrial competitiveness:
How to respond to
innovation challenges?**

BUSINESSEUROPE (logo)

MINISTRY OF ECONOMY (logo)

EUWIN (logo)

On 15th June, the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists together with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) Employers' Group, EUWIN and other partners, holds the third high-level conference on the future of EU industrial policy – **“Industrial Competitiveness: How to Respond to Innovation Challenges?”**

This is a historical moment for Lithuania when workplace innovation is recognised by one of the most influential national business associations as vital for boosting industrial competitiveness. High level speakers and exemplary companies will share their experience with representatives from a diverse range of businesses and sectors, starting a momentum that could transform the way we work.

Look out for the conference report in July's Bulletin!



Rasa Rotomskienė

[Read more about the conference](#)

Save the Date

Keep up to date with EUWIN events



15 th June	Vilnius, Lithuania	EUWIN event in Vilnius: Industrial Policy Conference. Click here for details.
16 th June	Warsaw, Poland	EUWIN Event in Poland: Current scientific work on workplace innovation. Details and registration here .
9 th September	Leuven, Belgium	EUWIN's Large Scale Event in Leuven, Belgium. This is part of a week of activities organised in conjunction with EUWIN, the International Workshop on Teamwork (IWOT) and the Global STS-Design Network. Read more about EUWIN's event here .
8 th October	Bucharest, Romania	Euwin is cooperating with the "Business Summit for HR Directors-HR with Impact"
TBA October	Warsaw, Poland	Euwin regional event in Poland, together with Polish Development Agency. More details to follow.

[Find out more about our events](#)

Please Forward

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.

