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Gate Gourmet Forum Europe

- A Case Study of a Voluntary European Works
Council

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1 – Executive Summary

In this thesis it is examined how home and host countries of an MNC are influencing the functioning its European works council. The research is conducted as a single-case study of the Forum Europe of Gate Gourmet. Lecher et al.'s (2001) typology on EWCs is applied as a theoretical framework to determine the type of the EWC being studied. The primary data for this research is collected through interviews with employee representatives of the EWC and with the management representative. These interviews have been qualitatively analyzed with the aim of establishing an understanding of how the internal and external factors of the EWC influence its functioning and how these factors are influenced by their country of origin. It is found that the differences in the country of origin factors are causing the EWC to be dominated by some employee representatives, which prevents it from creating an internal coherence.

This research contributes to an understanding of the necessity of internal coherence as a prerequisite of an EWC's ability to influence the outcome of transnational decisions made by the central management of an MNC. The research shows that for an EWC to become a strong partner vis-à-vis the central management in the social dialogue within the corporation, an internal coherence among the employee representatives must be developed. If an internal coherence is not developed, the EWC might not become more than a symbolic EWC which may be used by the central management for communicating information to the employees. It is suggested that the internal coherence should be developed through joint training of the employee representatives. Not only may the joint training develop the skills of the employee representative, it is also likely that there may be a spillover effect of the socialization between the EWC members at the joint training on the internal coherence of the EWC. By generating an internal coherence the country of origin differences of the employee representatives may be overcome.

2 – Introduction

2.1 – The European Union Directive 94/45/EC

A works council is an intra-organizational organ through which the central management and the employees of an MNC can commence or improve the communication and knowledge transfer within the corporation. Works councils bring with them a way of communication and representation of employee interests within multinational corporations (Weston and Martinez Lucio 1997) and as Whittall et al. (2009: 554) define it, EWCs are “...an institution for developing transnational solidarity” which can be better obtained through the increased communication and knowledge transfer which an EWC allows for. A works council can either be established on a voluntary basis or on the basis of law as is the case with most EWCs. (Streeck 1995)

In 1994 when the European Union Directive 94/45/EC was introduced it was adopted by all the then twelve EU Member States¹ with the exception of The United Kingdom². The Member States were then given two years to implement the Directive into national laws. MNCs with at least 1,000 employees within the Member States and at least 150 employees in at two or more Member States are required to comply with the Directive. Even if the company’s head quarters are not located within the EU territory, those of the company’s subsidiaries located within the EU territory are still subject to the directive (OJ 1994).

2.1.1 – Developments Leading to a Legal Framework for Works Councils in the EU

In the years following the end of World War II different forms of works councils were introduced in several European countries including France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and West Germany as it was believed that collective bargaining performed by the unions was not enough to reorganize employment conditions in a socially sustainable and economically productive way. In France, Germany and the Netherlands the introduction of works councils was the result of legislation while in Italy and Sweden it was the result of collective agreements negotiated

¹ Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain.

² Later the United Kingdom adopted the Directive as well.

between employers and labor unions. In the 1950s and 1960s however, the use of works councils in corporations was significantly reduced in most of the countries where they existed with the exception of West Germany. This decrease was, however, reverted in the late 1960s and early 1970s following the European-wide wave of strikes which called for an industrial democracy and the participation by employees on work-place specific interests (Streeck 1995).

Works councils have been on the agenda of the work of the EU since the 1960s. First as part of the European Company Statute which was adopted on a voluntary basis (Gold 2010), then as the 5th Directive which was never adopted and later as part of the Social Act Program in the 1970s including the Vredeling Directive in 1980, that drew on the Treaty of Rome which called for a harmonization of legal provisions in the member states (Streeck and Vitols 1995). Hostility towards the Vredeling Directive, mainly from businesses, however, caused the work on the Vredeling Directive to be suspended in 1986 (Gold 2010). After a number of years with stagnation in the integration of the industrial relations in the EU member states, the Commission in 1990 issued a draft Directive on EWCs and on September 30th 1994 the European Union implemented Directive 94/45/EC which is the legal instrument to ensure workforce participation in corporations at the European Union level (Streeck and Vitols 1995). 15 years later the Directive 94/45/EC was amended by Directive 2009/38/EC, which is a recast of the original Directive, on May 6th, 2009 (Jagodzinski 2009).

The purpose of the EWC Directive is to improve the dialogue between management and labor in multinational enterprises operating within the EU through giving employees a legally founded right to information and “*transnational questions which significantly affect workers’ interests*” (OJ 2009: Art. 6:3)³. The quality of EWCs, however, differs significantly. According to Gold (2010: 3) the EU Commission’s rationale behind the directives has been a combination of a desire to harmonize company law; prevent social dumping; protect and extend workers’ rights; and to promote participation as a productive factor. Therefore, this thesis is focused on the following questions:

³ The definition of transnational used in the directive is: “... *matters which concern the entire undertaking or group or at least two Member States are considered to be transnational*” (OJ, 2009: p. 29).

2.2 – Research questions

- How do the home and host countries of Gate Gourmet influence the functioning of their Forum Europe and thus its ability to influence the transnational decisions made by the central management?
 - What type of works councils is the Forum Europe of Gate Gourmet according to the typology developed by Lecher et al.?
 - How are the central management of Gate Gourmet utilizing the Forum Europe?
 - How can the Forum Europe of Gate Gourmet improve its ability to influence the outcome of transnational decisions made by the central management?

2.3 – Objective

The aim of this thesis is to define how the home and host countries of Gate Gourmet influence the functioning of the Forum Europe and thus its ability to influence the decisions made by the central management. This will be done through first analyzing the four fields of interaction of an EWC as identified by Lecher et al. (2001) and second, by analyzing how the central management is utilizing the Forum Europe. Subsequently this will lead to recommendations on how the Forum Europe can improve its ability to influence the outcome of transnational decisions made by the central management.

2.4 – Route map to guide the reader through the rest of the report

Chapter 3 first gives an introduction of the EWC directive, followed by a review of the past research conducted on works councils. In chapter 4 the theoretical foundation of this thesis will be presented. In chapter 5 the research method of this thesis will be presented and justified. In chapter 6 the results of the case study will be present, after which these results will be analyzed in chapter 7 and subsequently in chapter 8 the results and the analysis will be discussed. In chapter 9 the conclusion of the findings in the thesis will be presented, followed by the perspective of further research in chapter 10.

3 – Literature Review

In this chapter the previous research concluded in the field of European works councils will be presented. First the development of EWC will be outlined. This will be followed by a review of the literature on respectively the Euro-pessimists and Euro-optimists positions towards the EU Directive, the voluntary article 13 EWC agreements, which factors, both internal and external, are influencing the functioning of an EWC. Subsequently the country of origin effects influencing the EWC will be presented.

3.1 – Establishment of EWCs

There are two ways in which the establishment of an EWC can be initiated. First, if at least 100 employees of an MNC in at least two different Member States in writing request the establishment of an EWC, then the central management is, according to the Directive, required to initiate negotiations with the goal of establishing an EWC. Second, the management of a MNE can also on their own initiative commence negotiations on the establishment of an EWC in their corporation. The negotiations on the establishment of the EWC shall be conducted between a special negotiating body (SNB), set up solely with the purpose to conduct the negotiations, and central management and they are in co-operation to define the terms of the EWC, such as: the nature, the composition, the function, the mode of operation, the procedures, and the financial resources of the EWC (OJ 1994). If the central management refuses to start negotiations to set up an EWC within 6 months after a request by the employees to do so or if the SNB and the management fail to come to an agreement on the terms of the EWC no later than three years after the such a request, then the EWC will be established based on the terms specified in annex I of the Directive (OJ 2009: Art. 7, para. 1). Thereby it is prevented that either of the negotiating parties neglect the negotiations or pose unrealistic demands to the agreement, whereby no EWC would be established.

Table 1 – An EWC in Short

<i>EWCs in short</i>	
What is an EWC?	An intra-organizational organ functioning as a forum where central management meets with employee representatives to inform and consult the employees on transnational strategies affecting subsidiaries in two or more EU Member States.
Who are required to establish an EWC?	MNCs with at least 1,000 employees within the EU and at least 150 in two or more EU Member States.
Why is an EWC required?	EWCs are an organ required to be established in MNCs by the EU Directive 94/45/EC to facilitate that employees are heard in transnational decision-makings.
Where are the EWC meetings held?	It is up to each MNC to decide where the meetings are held, however, often they are either held at head quarters or the location alternates between the different subsidiaries.
When does an EWC meet?	Usually EWC meetings are held annually, however, some MNC have bi-annual meetings or more frequent meetings.

3.1.1 – Article 6 vs. Article 13 EWCs

One of the requirements of the employers’ organizations to support the Directive was that corporations should have the option to have voluntary EWCs which did not need to meet the requirements of the Directive (Waddington 2010). These voluntary EWCs are the so-called Article 13 agreements, though in the recast directive they correspond to Article 14.

Prior to the implementation of the Directive, 522 MNEs had established a voluntary EWC (ETUI – A 2010). As they are subject to Article 14 of the recast Directive they are allowed to resume operations at the terms on which they were implemented while all EWC established after the Directive was implemented must abide by Article 6 which entails that a special negotiation body and central management must come to an agreement on the before mentioned terms of the EWC (OJ 2009).

3.1.2 – Information and Consultation

When an EWC has been established, the employee representatives are entitled to be informed and consulted on transnational issues which significantly affect the employees whose interests they represent. The employee representatives of the EWC must be subject to information and consultation on those transnational issues in a timely manner prior to when the final decision is to be made by central management (OJ 2009). However, it is left to the individual MNC to define what timely manner is since there is no definition of it in the Directive. The information and consultation also refers to decisions to be made in subsidiaries in other Member States if those decisions will affect the employees in other Member States than just their own. In Directive 94/45/EC, no specific definition of ‘information’ and ‘consultation’ was included. This had received considerable criticism by trade union organizations and researchers and consequently a definition has been included in the recast.

3.1.3 – The Recast Directive

The most notable differences between Directive 94/45/EC and the recast are the following: Inclusion of a definition of information; improvement of the definition of consultation; inclusion of a definition of transnationality and clarification of the transnational competence of EWCs; link between various levels of employee information and consultation; employers’ obligation to provide EWC members with training; facilities provided to the SNB; obligation to inform the European social partners of negotiations; and mandate for the employee representatives in the EWC to collectively represent the employees and obligations for the management to provide the EWC with means necessary to perform this function (ETUI – C 2010).

Article 15 of Directive 94/45/EC specified that by 1999 the Commission had to review the Directive with the purpose of proposing revisions to the Directive which could improve the effectiveness of EWCs. However, this process did not commence until 2004 where the Commission commenced consultations with the social partners, i.e. the employers’ organizations and the trade union organizations, on a revision of the Directive. A main reason for the delay of the recast was effective lobbying by the employers’ organizations, especially UNICE, who found it more important to monitor the implementation of the Directive in the new member states of the

EU than to revise the Directive and thus possibly give employees increased power on the managing of the MNCs. Instead UNICE found it to be the responsibility of the parties involved with the EWCs to improve their functioning (Waddington 2006). The disputes were especially regarding whether the terms ‘information’ and ‘consultation’ should be defined more specifically as was requested by the trade union organizations. Another significant point of dispute between the employers’ organizations and trade union organizations was whether the voluntary Article 13 agreements should be allowed to continue operations under the less strict conditions or if they should be subject to the Article 6 terms as well (Waddington 2010).

3.1.4 – EWCs Established so Far

By 1994, the year that the Directive was signed, 54 EWCs had been established and were still operating. In the following two years this number rose to respectively 72 in 1995 and 396 in 1996 to a total of 522 established EWCs (ETUI – A 2010). This is primarily a response to Article 13 in the Directive which allows EWC to resume operations under the terms agreed on between the EWC and the management of the MNC, while EWCs established post the implementation of the Directive are obliged to abide by the terms of article 6 which gives a framework that the EWCs must follow (OJ 2009). By November 2011 1216 EWCs had been established in 933 firms of which 998 EWCs still remained active (ETUI – B). The number of EWCs is higher than the number of firms with an EWC since it is possible for a corporation to have more than one EWC. Some EWCs have been dissolved since the implementation of the Directive, which is often a result of merging companies where both companies have an EWC and decide to continue operations with only one of the EWCs (OJ 2009)

Out of all established EWCs by late 2011 48 % were functioning under article 6, 38 % under article 13, while the remaining 14 % were either functioning under article 3, were a SE⁴ works council, had an information and consultation procedure other than an EWC or a subsidiary requirement (ETUI – A 2010).

⁴ Societas Europaea

3.2 – Euro-pessimists Vs. Euro-optimists

The introduction of the EWC Directive and its recast has brought about a debate among researchers, especially in the fields of industrial relations, human resource management, and organizational research on the implications of the Directive and the recast and whether a legally founded and mandatory EWC is desired as a European industrial relations instrument.

The difference in the Euro-pessimists and the Euro-optimists view on EWCs can to some extent be explained by their different frames of reference. While the Euro-pessimists focus on the structural framework of the EWCs, the Euro-optimists focus more on the actors of the EWCs and their ability to generate political action and cross-border cooperation (Müller and Hoffmann 2001). A characteristic of the difference between the Euro-pessimists and the Euro-optimists is the factors on which they base their arguments. While the Euro-pessimists focus their arguments around the Directive and its immediate transposition into different national laws, the Euro-optimists tend to focus on the longer-term possibilities that the EWC through training and networking are able to develop (Waddington 2010).

3.2.1 – Euro-pessimists

According to Streeck (1997a), one of the main proponents of the Euro-pessimistic perspective (Müller and Hoffmann 2001: 108), EWCs foster intra-company competition because, as he sees it, EWCs are merely an extension of national systems of employee representation, whereby the national industrial relations regimes remain unchanged (Streeck 1997b). The failure of the EWC Directive to prevent a competitive atmosphere between the different national systems of employee representation and between the different national establishments of the corporations within which the EWCs exist is pivot of Streeck's Euro-pessimistic argumentation of EWCs (Müller and Hoffmann 2001).

Another critical view of the EWC directive put forth by Streeck is that the implementation of the Directive is left to national law and thus the rights of the employees and the obligations of the employers differ among the EU member states (Streeck 1997a; 1997b). Thus the corporations which are headquartered outside the geographical scope of the EU have the opportunity to choose

which EU member state should host their European headquarters, whereby they are able to choose the country with the least stringent implementation law (Streeck 1997a). This, Streeck (1997b) argues, causes a degradation of national regulations in countries with high standards of information and consultation rights of employees. Streeck (1997a) further argues that because the EWC directive is implemented in the different national laws of the EU member states, the employee representatives of EWCs are subject to unequal rights and thus he argues that EWC are not European and that the directive does not contribute to a common Europeanization of national industrial relations.

Other Euro-pessimists stances are presented by Schulten (1996) and Martin and Ross (1999) as they argue that EWCs can become a mere HRM tool for communicating transnational business strategies to employees at different national sites. Schulten (1996) further argues that in cases of transnational organizational change in a corporation, the EWC is not necessarily able to prevent social dumping unless the EWC is capable of forming information and consultation structures which are independent of the central management whereby it compensates for the central management's advantage of superior access to information. He also argues that the functioning of a works council is dependent on whether agreements between the management representatives and the employee representatives of the headquarters or other employee representatives have been established since such agreements will primarily benefit those employee representatives and not the entire EWC.

Keller (1995) is, like Streeck, Schulten, and Martin and Ross, also a Euro-pessimist. He finds that the inability of trade unions to provide ongoing assistance to EWCs due to limited resources available negatively affects the effective functioning of EWCs. Likewise, he argues that conflicting country-specific interests of both the employee representatives and the trade unions and a lack of appropriate conflict solving mechanisms creates obstacles for the effective functioning EWCs. Hence, it is expected that:

H1: EWCs are not able to generate transnational employee participation in MNCs as was intended by the EU Commission when introducing the Directive.

3.2.2 - Euro-optimists

From the Euro-optimist perspective, EWCs are a logic step towards the integration of European industrial relations resulting from the market- and social integration of the EU member states, whereby the national actors are forced to re-define their strategies to focus at the European, rather than the national, level (Müller and Hoffmann 2001; Lecher et al. 2001). The Euro-optimists argue that EWCs allow for the generation of networks for communication and employee representation within multinational corporations and causes for an increased Europe-wide co-operation and co-ordination between national and European trade unions (Weston and Martinez Lucio 1997). Further they (ibid) find that the establishment of EWCs in corporations has led to the local management generating an increased interest in the broader corporation and in the information stream from the corporate management.

Knutsen (1997) in his critical assessment of the Euro-corporatism argue that the EU Commission, through introducing the EU Directive on EWCs, and the European Trade Unions Associations through its lobbying have facilitated the development cross-border co-operation among employees of multinational corporations and trade unions through EWCs. He does though point out that voluntary forms of works councils already existed before the Directive was implemented, but that they prior to the Directive did not have a European legal foundation. Thus:

H2: EWCs are able to generate transnational employee participation in MNCs as was intended by the EU Commission when introducing the Directive.

3.3 - Voluntary Article 13 EWC Agreements

The advantage to both the central management and employees of corporations of establishing an Article 13 EWC agreement over the stricter Article 6 agreement was the flexibility that it allowed for (Hall et al. 1995; and Marginson 1998). By establishing an article 13 agreement, a tailor made works council could be established which suited its actors and the individual corporation best. Thereby when establishing such works councils agreements the existing structures of industrial relations surrounding and within the corporations can be taken into account in the EWC agreement (Marginson 1998). Hall et al. (1995) and Marginson (1998) argue that the flexibility

offered by article 13 compared to article 6 worked as an incentive to corporations to establish voluntary EWCs and is thus one of the explanations to the increase in the establishments of Article 13 EWCs between September 1994 when the Directive was signed and September 1996 when the Directive came into force.

A number of Authors, including Streeck and Vitols (1995), Rivest (1996) and Knudsen and Bruun (1998) have found that there is a correlation between the national industrial relations and the emergence of voluntary EWCs. Until 1992 almost all voluntary EWCs were established in MNCs headquartered in countries with a long-standing tradition of national information and consultation practices, such as Germany and France.

Other correlations for the establishment of article 13 EWC agreements have also been found, such as the sector within which the corporations operate (Streeck and Vitols 1995; Rivest 1996; Marginson et al. 1998; and Marginson 2000), the production structure of the corporations (Marginson 2000), and the introduction of the EWC directive (Hall et al. 1995; Rivest 1996; Marginson 1998). The sectoral influence on the establishment of voluntary EWCs has been found to be explained by the trade unions and their strategy for European industrial relations (Rivest 1996). Marginson (2000), however, found that the correlation between the establishment of voluntary agreements and the sector was to be found in the 'strike rate' of the sectors, which he also suggest is dependent on the how internationally organized and integrated the production structure of a corporation is. Streeck and Vitols (1995) in their study of the historical development of a legal instrument leading to Directive 94/45/EC and thus the establishment of voluntary Article 13 EWC agreements and mandatory Article 6 agreements in 100 European multinationals found little correlation between the establishment of voluntary EWC agreements and the introduction of the EWC Directive. They instead argue that the explanation of the establishment of voluntary EWCs is to be found in the "... *national conditions in companies' home countries...*" (ebid: 275). However, their study was published in 1995 which was shortly before of the period where most voluntary EWCs were established. While their findings might have been valid when published, later research by Rivest (1996), however, shows that there is in fact a correlation between the establishment of voluntary EWCs and the Directive. Her research showed that there was a significant increase in the number of voluntary EWCs established in the

months just before the Directive came into force and a significant fall in the number of EWCs established in the following year. She found that between 1993 and 1995 there was an increasing tendency of voluntary EWCs being established in countries without a tradition of information and consultation, such as the U.K., the U.S., and Japan. Thus she argues that after the introduction of the EWC directive, national industrial relations only partially explain the establishment of Article 13 EWCs. This is supported by Waddington and Kerckhofs (2003) who likewise ascribe the peak in EWCs being established during 1996 to the deadline of the conclusion of voluntary EWCs. Hence it is proposed that:

H3: EWCs established immediately before the implementation of the Directive were established as a response to the Directive.

3.4 - Internal Factors Influencing the EWCs

For an EWC to develop a European identity, and thus obtain an effective bargaining position vis-à-vis central management, its internal as well as external relationships needs to be optimized. (Lecher 1999)

With internal factors influencing the EWCs is meant those factors which have direct influence on the functioning of the EWC and which the EWC can easily influence. These factors are the employee representatives represented on the EWC as well as the trade unions involved. In the following two sections, the past research on these areas will be reviewed.

3.4.1 - The Employee Representatives on EWCs

For an EWC to successfully become more than just a forum for information sharing between the central management and the employee representatives of an MNC, an internal cohesion among the employee representatives representing the different subsidiaries and levels of employment must be developed. The most common obstacles towards developing this internal cohesion are the language barriers (Fulton 1995; Gohde 1995; Lamers 1998; Miller and Stirling 1998; and Lecher et al. 1999) and the cultural barriers that exist between the representatives of the different

subsidiaries and levels of employment, as is inevitable in a multinational corporation (Lamers 1998; Miller and Stirling 1998; Lecher et al. 1999; Miller 1999; Wills 2000; Stirling and Tully 2004; and Timming 2006). These barriers can lead to the employee representatives forming sub-groups based on their common denominator, i.e. language, similar national industrial relations systems or level of employment, whereby the development of the cohesiveness is impaired.

The language barriers and cultural differences create obstacles for both formal and informal communication. During the formal meetings, when a translator is needed, some of the points may get lost in translation. If the language chosen as the official language of the EWC is spoken by all representatives but at different levels, then the ones that speak the language fluently, either as their mother tongue or at a very high level may be dominating the meetings as those that master the language at a less fluent level, may feel intimidated or may not entirely understand the conversations (Miller et al. 2000) and thus refrain from actively participate in the meetings. On the informal level the language barrier causes that those who do not speak the common language are less able to socialize with the other employee representatives in between the formal meetings. And according to Stirling and Tully (2004) and Timming (2006) it is exactly when socializing that the employee representatives build trust and mutual understanding towards each other and are able to overcome cultural and national political barriers as they learn more about each other, and thus will be better able to create an internally coherent EWC.

A further disadvantage resulting from the lingual and cultural barriers is that if the employee representatives are not able to communicate with each other and understand each other they may end up pursuing different strategies whereby the development of a collective European identity also is impeded. Internal cohesion and mutual trust lays the foundation for cooperation among the employee representatives of an EWC and augments the likelihood of the EWC creating a collective European identity with which the EWC will stand stronger vis-à-vis management. Training has by several authors been pointed out to hold a crucial role for an EWC to generate internal cohesion through the development of an awareness of each other's different backgrounds (Gohde 1995; Miller and Stirling 1998; Miller 1999; and Fitzgerald et al. 2000). According to Lecher (1999) the chance of an EWC to create a common European identity is further dependent on its resources available such as of time, money, information, and power. The more of those

resources available to the employee representatives on the EWC, the greater the chance that the EWC will be able to develop a European identity and thus, the greater the chance that the EWC can act effectively as an organ of cross-country employee interest representation.

Power inequalities between the home country of the corporation and other representatives can also create obstacles in developing a collective European identity since employee representatives from headquarters and those from countries with strong co-determination traditions may be overpowering the representatives from countries with weak traditions of co-determination. This can again hinder the development of trust which can have a considerable impact on the development of internal cohesion of the EWC (Timming 2006). Furthermore, the employee representatives from the headquarters have, due to geographical reasons, easier access to information from the central management on a day to day basis and may therefore not be as interested in the EWC as the employee representatives of the foreign subsidiaries may be (Lecher et al. 2001). As such it is expected that:

H4: The employee representatives of the headquarters are dominating the EWC.

Lecher et al. (1999) argue that a way to overcome the inequalities between headquarters and the large and small subsidiaries is to set up a flat representation structure, where countries with larger work forces are under-represented and countries with smaller work forces are over-represented. They further suggest that the inequalities can be mitigated through establishing a steering committee whereby the leadership of the EWC is distributed or establishing working groups, set up to focus on specific issue, which consist of employee representatives and possible also managers of different national origin whereby the different employee representatives are given an opportunity to become more involved in the work of the EWC (ibid). The working groups further diminish the likelihood of the different employee representatives pursuing individual national issues.

The ease with which a cohesive EWC can be developed according to Marginson et al. (2004) further depends on the business alignment of the MNC. They found that when the operations are concentrated in only a few countries; when there is one single line of business; or when there is a high level of cross-border interdependency in the daily operations, the likelihood of developing

coherence in the EWC is greater than when the operations of the corporation are dispersed; when there are several different lines of business; or when there is little or no cross-border interdependency within the corporation.

3.4.2 – The Trade Unions

Collective bargaining is often related to unions negotiating industry wide agreements between employers on the one side and the unionized employees on the other side. Though EWCs can be mistaken for a union's internal company union there is a clear difference (Streeck 1995). First of all, employees of a company in which an EWC has been established cannot choose not to be part of the EWCs collective bargaining process, while membership in a union is always optional. Second, EWCs are internal collective bargaining institutions, negotiating agreements only between the central management and the employees of the MNC within which the EWC operates. A union, on the other hand, is an external institution, negotiating agreements between its members and the management of multiple companies on a sector-wide scale, with the industry as a whole in focus and not the single corporation. Unions are, however, able to play a significant role in the work of an EWC. Research by Weil (1999) shows that mandated institutions such as works councils are able to supplement the work of the unions in the enforcement of workplace regulations. The degree to which the unions are able to influence the work of an EWC, though, differs from country to country due to different national legal frameworks. In some countries union workers are also members of the EWC, while in others EWCs and unions have to be separated, and in some countries unions are represented in the EWC as the employee representative is a member of the union which at the EWC elections nominated the employee representative to represent its members (Rogers and Streeck 1995). Marginson and Sisson (1998) find that EWCs are taking over some of the traditional collective bargaining roles of trade unions as they argue that the EWCs develop a process whereby arms' lengths bargaining substitute the face-to-face negotiation between trade unions.

Like the central management, trade unions also hold a dual perspective on their view of the EWCs. On the one hand an EWC is a way for their members to gain more influence on relevant

issues in the corporation within which they work, while on the other hand, the EWC gives the central management the chance to reduce the influence of the unions on the corporation (Streeck 1997a). Thus, according to Mizrahi (2002), to secure the best interest of the union members, the unions should take part in establishing the rules for an EWC, however, this also marginalize the need for the union in the future work done by the EWC. Lecher and Rüb (1999) though argue that the unions are able to exert influence over representational issues within corporations through an EWC and that both the EWCs and trade unions can benefit from such interactions. Lecher et al. (1999), finds that due to a lack of resources and a need for the unions to define an overall strategy of their role in supporting EWCs, the trade unions have not been able to exert the level of support to EWC that they provided in the foundation phase. Waddington (2010) likewise argue that the lack of coordination among the different national and international trade unions and trade union organizations negatively influence the ability of EWCs to function effectively due to the different strategies pursued. It is usually the trade unions which provide the external training and support to the members of EWCs. Therefore, when trade unions and trade union organizations do not coordinate their strategies, the employee representatives of different countries are trained and advised on different issues and at different levels (ibid). Thereby the employee representatives develop their skills at different stages and in different directions, thus:

H5: A lack of trade union coordination prevents the creation of internal cohesion among the employee representatives of an EWC.

The need for trade union support depends on the developmental stage at which the EWC is at. That is, less developed EWCs need support in organizing the works council and in lingual and cultural training, while more developed EWCs need help to shape policies and strategies vis-à-vis management (Lecher et al. 1999). According to Miller (1999) the trade unions play a crucial role in providing adequate training to the EWC members as they are the only transnational organizations independent of the corporations which hold knowledge about the different national industrial relations systems.

Trade unions can support EWC both directly through providing support and training to the employee representatives but also indirectly through lobbying the different national governments

as well as the European Commission and the European Parliament (Miller and Stirling 1998; and Miller 1999). The training and support will develop the skills of the employee representatives in their work to represent the employees' interests while lobbying politicians can facilitate that the legal framework of the EWC under which the employee representatives work can be altered in favor of the employees.

The closer integrated the EWC and trade unions are, the better they are able to withstand conflicts in the case of for example company restructuring that may in turn cause a restructuring of the composition EWC. Thus the stability of the EWC and of the relationship between the EWC and the trade unions is better kept when there is a close integration. The level of stability is though diminished when there is competition among the trade unions (Lecher et al. 2001).

3.5 - External Factors Influencing the EWC

An EWC is to varying degrees influenced by many different external factors, including national and international level politics, national institutions, organizational structures (Müller and Hoffmann 2001). The external factors are characterized by being difficult for the employee representatives to influence or change. However, for the purpose of this thesis, focus on external factors will be on the central management of the MNCs in which EWCs exist and the national level of employee representation. In the next two sections past research on those two external factors will be reviewed

3.5.1 - The Central Management of MNCs

Edwards and Bélanger (2009) argue that in MNCs there is a conflict of interests between the management and the employees of the corporation. The interest of the management is to create profit while the interest of the employees is to secure the quality of jobs, job-security and hence the long-term survival of the corporation. They divide the conflict of interests into: 1) a conflict of goals; 2) a conflict of the means of pursuing these goals; 3) and a conflict of the process of by which these goals are pursued. An EWC can act as a solution to the latter conflict as it is the

employees' formal collective channel to communicate with management on the conflicts of goals and means. It is therefore proposed that:

H6: The management representatives and the employee representatives of an EWC disagree on the objectives of the EWC.

The central management of an MNC has a contradictory relationship to works councils. On the one hand they can utilize works councils as a HR tool in order to generate acceptance of decisions among employees, generate loyalty among their employees towards the company and increase productivity. Lamers (1998) and Lecher et al. (2001) have for example found that there is a tendency that management uses an EWC as a forum for communicating ideas that can bring together groups within the undertaking, thus an EWC can facilitate that horizontal communication within the corporation is improved. EWCs further facilitate a collective communication channel between management and the employees of a corporation. By that is, however, not meant that management is made more accessible to the individual employee, rather management is made more accessible to the collective bargaining institution as a whole through the works council's organization of representative communication between management and the employees. Thereby the EWC acts as the voice of the employees collectively. However, when management use the works council as an information sharing channel rather than a consultation forum, the works council function more as an 'ear' than a 'voice' of the employees (Roger and Streeck 1995).

The perceived benefits of an EWC to management are that the EWC can be used as an HRM tool whereby corporate strategies can be communicated to the employees, it can be useful in the development of more communication between the employees and the central management and between employees at different international subsidiaries, it can help in creating a corporate culture and corporate identity and it can help in facilitating organizational restructuring through the employee representatives creating legitimacy for the restructuring among the employees (Gold and Hall 1992; Lamers 199; Wills 1999; Nakano 1999; and Weber et al. 2000;). Thus it is expected that:

H7: The management representatives of an EWC find that the employees are easier persuaded to support tough decisions when they are communicated to the employees through the EWC.

On the other hand however, the employees can also utilize the works council to organize on collective bargaining when it comes to managerial decisions or redistribution of the additional profit that they generated. Therefore from that angle, the danger for the central management is that the works council might undermine the managerial control (Rogers and Streeck 1995). Freeman and Lazear (1995) thus argue that works councils will contribute to profitability when they have adequate but limited control.

Among researchers there are different views as to whether organizational re-structuring increases transnational communication. Weston and Martinez Lucio (1997) did find a correlation between the development of transnational communication and the management's strategies of benchmarking in corporations with an integrated production structure. Lecher et al. (2001) argue that EWCs may lead to increased information transfer since, at times the EWC receive more information on group strategy than do national level management, even where personnel management across the corporations European countries already meet regularly. Weston and Martinez Lucio (1997) further argue that works councils also can lead to an increased upward flow of information, thus providing the central management with corporation wide information from decentralized levels which the central management might not have had direct access to without the works council. Hancké (2000), however, found that the introduction of benchmarking put the corporation's subsidiaries in the different countries in competition with each other, and thereby utilizing information gained at the European level to strengthen their national level interests, thus leading to intra-corporation competition rather than generating a pan-European vehicle for corporation.

The central management's attitude towards the EWC is one of the external factors affecting the type of the EWC and its development. When the central management of a corporation is hostile towards the EWC the employee representatives face challenges of receiving the information from management needed to perform their task as employee representatives. Furthermore, the

likelihood that consultation or co-determination will take place, when the central management does not recognize the EWC as a partner in the social dialogue within the corporation, is very low. Thus, when the management holds a hostile attitude towards the EWC they are in the possession of a number of ways to limit the influence of the EWC. For example, as Royle (1999), in his study of the EWC at McDonalds, finds the central management succeeded in altering the organizational structure of the corporation so that the labor of the unionized workers was outsourced and by hiring primarily non-unionized workers for positions where the workers could otherwise be expected to organize.

On the contrary, when the central management sees the EWC as a valuable partner in the social dialogue within the corporation, the EWC is more likely to receive the information needed in a sufficient quality and in a timely manner, as was intended by the Directive. Furthermore, there is a higher probability that the management then is willing to consult the EWC on transnational issues prior to the final decisions are to be made. When the central management recognize the EWC as a partner and thus provide the EWC with the tools, such as information, resources and training, needed to perform the tasks of the EWC, the EWC can become a conflict reducing-factor if tension between central management and the workers should arise. The role of the EWC in such an event can be to function as an information tool where the EWC acts as a mediator between the central management and the employees since the EWC has direct contact with both the central management and the employees across the corporation.

When the central management recognize the EWC as a social dialogue partner there is, however, the risk that the dominating employee representative delegation of the EWC may abuse its role granted by the central management. Thus the central management's positive attitude towards the EWC may generate tensions among the employee representatives of the works council. This is the case in the research conducted by both Cressey (1998) and Wilson (1999) of the EWC at NatWest. They find, however, that the central management is able to minimize the tension by establishing focus groups consisting of both central management representatives and employee representatives. Thereby the chance of the largest delegation to dominate the other representatives was reduced.

There are a number of factors influencing the central management's attitude towards an EWC. According to Nienhueser (2009) the attitude of the central management towards the EWC depends on the EWC's willingness and power to cooperate. Based on these two dimensions he defines four different types of works councils and their ability to conclude works agreements with the central management: (1) weak and willing to cooperate, (2) weak and less willing to cooperate, (3) strong and willing to cooperate, and (4) strong and less willing to cooperate. In his research he finds that works councils which are strong are more likely to conclude agreements with the central management than are works councils which are weak. Thus, according to Nienhueser, it is the power, rather than the willingness of the works council to cooperate which influence the number of agreements concluded by the works council and the central management. However, he does find that the willingness of the works council to cooperate influence the assessment of the works agreements by the human resource managers. The power to cooperate is furthermore only an advantage, though, if it is perceived by the other bargaining party which in this case is the central management. Nienhueser furthermore argues that the size of the corporation also influences the attitude of the central management towards the EWC. He finds that the central management of large corporations is more positive towards EWCs than those of smaller corporations. The reason thereof, he states, is that the larger the number of employees the more costly it is for the employer to negotiate individual agreements compared to the costs of a collective agreement. It is therefore proposed that:

H8: A positive attitude among the management representatives towards the EWC leads to increased influence of the EWC on the outcome of transnational decisions.

Marginson et al. (2004) differentiate the influence that the EWC is able to exert on the central management's decisions between an influence on the process of decision-making and on the outcome of a decision. They further differentiate on the influence on short-term decisions such as decisions on working conditions, working time, pay, and job classifications and on long-term decisions such as decisions on rationalization and restructuring, investment, and business plans. In their research of the impact of EWCs on managerial decision-making in eight UK- and US-based MNCs they find that when EWCs are able to influence the decision-making, the influence

is most often limited to affect the implementation of the decisions rather than its content. These decisions which the EWCs are able to exert influence on are most often regarding short-term issues even though the intention of the Directive was to grant the EWCs more influence over the long-term issues, hence:

H9: When an EWC is able to exert influence over transnational decisions, it is on the implementation phase of short-term issues.

3.5.2 - The National Level of Employee Representatives

A strong national level of employee representation can both work to the advantage and disadvantage of the EWC. It can be an advantage by improving the work of the EWC in a number of different ways, including creating legitimacy for the EWC among the employees which it represent; enhancing the level of information provided by management and it also affects the ability of the EWC to acquire the resources necessary to perform the work of the EWC on a European scale (Lamers 1998 and Lecher 1999). In their research of respectively VW and BMW Helbig (1999) and Whittall (2000) argue that strong national employee representative structures affect the effectiveness of EWCs. When there is a highly developed structure of national employee representation at company level in the country where the headquarters of the corporation is located, the home country's employee representatives will have greater access to information from central management than will representatives from countries characterized by weak employee representation traditions. The reason thereof is the more developed tradition of information disclosure by central management to employee representatives and/or legal provisions to do so (Lecher 1998).

Due to the laws adopted in some countries prior to the introduction of the Directive, the representatives of those countries have an advantage because of the provision of resources being legally underpinned in their national law (Lecher 1998). The willingness of the national representatives to generate resources, however, depends on their view of the purpose of the EWC (Lecher 1999). That is, whether they see the EWC solely as an extension of the national representation system through which additional information can be obtained or as a pan-

European forum with the ability to generate pan-European communication within the corporation and influence the central management's decisions on a European scale.

Strong national industrial relations systems can, however, also be counteracting the European integration of the EWC if the industrial relations systems are weak in other countries represented on the EWC. That is because there is a tendency that the representatives from countries with the traditionally strong industrial relations system will be overpowering the other representatives. The reason thereof is to be found in that central management is used to disclose information to workers' representatives and used to an ongoing cooperation with these. Further, the unions are more active and thus seek to gain influence, and where they already have influence they seek to sustain this, on the work of the EWC through supporting the national representatives in the form of training, legal guidance, and advisory when needed (Streeck 1995; Lecher et al. 1999).

A strong relationship and good communication between the EWC and the national level of employee representation helps to ensure legitimacy of the work of the EWC. That is because the national level of employee representation will then be more positive towards the EWC and reflect that position to the employees which they all represent. When legitimacy among the employees exist, the EWC holds a stronger position vis-à-vis management and is thus better able to represent the employees' interests. Likewise, the central management can use this legitimacy to their advantage as the employees will then be more willing to accept the agreements made between the EWC and the central management. Thus the EWC can facilitate that tough decisions can more easily be persuaded to the employees whereby less friction occurs (Streeck 1995).

3.6 – Country of Origin Effects on EWCs

The home country of the headquarters of the corporation and the host countries in which the subsidiaries are located affects both the internal cohesion of the EWC as well as the way the EWC is perceived by the management and the national level of employee representation and the degree to which the EWC is supported by national trade unions. As the national business system of a country influences the behavior of the actors within a MNC, the country of origin effects influencing the actors involved in the EWC need to be taken into consideration when analyzing

the ability of a EWC to influence the decision making of the central management of a MNC (Ferner 1997). Hall et al. (2003) in their study of eight UK- and US-based MNCs found that the most dominating country of origin effect influencing the functioning of an EWC is that of the headquarter management's attitude towards the EWC.

3.6.1 - Management

The attitude of the central management of a corporation towards including an EWC in the decision-making process is in a number of ways affected by their country of origin, such as: the type of market economy in which the MNC operates; the type of organizational structure which dominates in the home country and the traditions of collective bargaining in this home country.

The central management's view on and expectations to works councils is influenced by its prior experiences with information and consultation (Nakano 1999 and Weber et al. 2000) and thus their view on works councils is also dependent on the country of origin of the management and the traditions of the industrial relations in those countries. Waddington (2003) likewise argue that the country of origin of the corporation affects the central management's attitude towards the EWC. When located in continental European countries with a coordinated market economy (CME) the managers are more likely to have a positive attitude towards the EWC than managers of corporations located in Anglo-Saxon countries characterized by a liberal market economy (LME). In Anglo-Saxon economies there is little tradition of statutory employee consultation, while in several continental European countries employees have been ensured the right to be informed and consulted either by law or as a result of negotiated agreements between the trade unions and employers organizations (Streeck 1995). Waddington (2003) in his study of EWCs in six different countries found that the country of origin of MNCs is a key influence on the functioning of an EWC. Further Gilman and Marginson (2002) and Marginson et al. (1998) have found a correlation between the country of origin of the corporation and the content of the EWC agreements, where the quality is superior in continental European countries than Anglo-Saxon ones. Thus management from countries which are characterized by a tradition of a strong

industrial relations system are more likely to include the EWC in the decision making process. Therefore it is hypothesized that:

H10: The management representatives' attitude towards an EWC is influenced by the home country of the corporate headquarters.

3.6.2 - Employee Representatives

Employee representatives from countries with well developed systems of national employee representations are less interested in participating in EWC since it is inferior to their national systems of employee representation. The degree to which the employee representatives actively question the decisions made by the management is further dependent of the national traditions of co-determination and the national industrial relations systems. In countries with a high level of union membership co-determination has existed for years and the employee representatives of those countries are thus more trained in representing the employees' interests and co-operating with management. Employee representatives from countries with a history of employee involvement and co-determination thus have an advantage in representing their national interests over those to whom this is new due to their past experiences. Hence is it expected that:

H11: The different national backgrounds of the employee representatives prevent an EWC from creating an internal coherence.

3.6.3 - Trade Unions

The ability of the trade unions to influence and assist the EWCs also depends on the country of origin. For example, the union density, the inter-union competition and whether there are direct union delegates on the EWC depends on the history and laws on trade unions in the different countries (Streeck 1995).

Where there is a high level of trade union membership the unions are better able to support the works councils as they represent a large portion of the workers' interests and due to the higher number of membership payments they are also better financially able to do so. However this

advantage diminishes where there is inter-union competition since the different unions may have different priorities and agendas and thus the cohesiveness of the goals that they seek to influence and assist the EWCs on becomes eroded. The union membership density and inter-union competition also affect the way the trade unions are perceived by the employers, that is, whether the employers see the trade unions as a partner in the social dialogue or if they see them as opponents. Where union influence on EWCs is strong the unions are able to direct the agenda of the work of the EWC towards the strategy that the trade union has set up for the sector, which may turn out to be beneficial to the employees as well as the corporation, however, on occasions it may be a disadvantage for the corporation but an advantage for the sector. Thus, whether strong influence of trade unions on EWCs is an advantage or not depends on the strategy of the trade union, that is, if they conduct the collective bargaining on a company level or industry level (Streeck and Vitols 1995). Therefore it is proposed that:

H12: The difference in the national industrial relations systems means that some employee representatives are more skilled in representing the employees' interests and receive more support from the trade unions.

4 – Theoretical Foundation

In the following section the theoretical foundation for this thesis will be presented. First the four fields of interaction as defined by Lecher et al. (2001) will be outlined followed by a description of the four categories of EWC also as defined by Lecher et al. (ibid) since the categorization of an EWC, that is the definition of the type of works council, is based on the four fields of interaction.

Typologies can be used to categorize and classify the phenomenon being studied. In the field of EWCs, Lecher et al. (ibid) argue that typologies are useful since they assist in a systematization and generalization and because this field of study has been sufficiently studied to allow for such an approach. They also argue that typologies are useful to determine where effort needs to be focused when trying to improve the work of an EWC through “... *assessing the scope, limits and tasks of EWC networks*” (ibid: 44). Thereby, both the external context and internal preconditions for improvement are mapped. As most EWCs are often hybrids of types of works councils or in a transitional stage from one category to another

4.1 – Lecher et al.’s Typology of EWCs

A number of researchers including Marginson et al. (1998) and Lecher et al. (2001) have developed typologies in order to categorize EWCs. The typology by Lecher et al. is an elaboration of Marginson et al.’s definition of EWCs as either ‘active’ or ‘formal/symbolic’ where Lecher and his fellow authors have divided the ‘active’ EWCs into three different types. In this thesis the typology developed by Lecher et al. will be used when determining which type of works council the Forum Europe of Gate Gourmet is. According to Gilman and Marginson (2002) and Stoop (2004) a reason for the need to categorize the EWCs is to be found in the different company structures, organizations, size, international spread, strategies, and the sector and home country in which the company is embedded.

The typology developed by Lecher et al. (2001) represents a systematic framework for the analysis of the practice of a works council and is able to take into account the complex and interdependent relationship between the development of a works council and the variety of ‘external’ and ‘internal’ factors impinging on this process (Müller and Hoffmann 2001: 77). The

type of works council is defined based on its capacity to act resulting from an analysis of its relationships in the four fields of interaction (Lecher et al. 1999). The strengths of analyzing the four fields of interaction of a works council is that it shows the link between the internal and external factors which influence the functioning of a works council (Müller and Hoffmann 2001).

4.1.1 – Four Fields of Interaction

In order to determine the type of EWC first four fields of interaction of the EWC must be clarified since they take part in shaping the works council. The four fields of interaction are used to illustrate the level of interaction between the EWC and its internal and external factors which influence the operation of the EWC. The level of interaction affect the degree to which the EWC is able to influence the decision making process of the central management of a MNC and thus to what degree the EWC utilize its potential and thereby whether the EWC is a valuable resource or a liability to the corporation. The four fields of interaction are: (1) EWC and management; (2) internally in the EWC; (3) EWCs and national employee representatives and (4) EWCs and trade unions. These fields of interaction will be presented in the following sections.

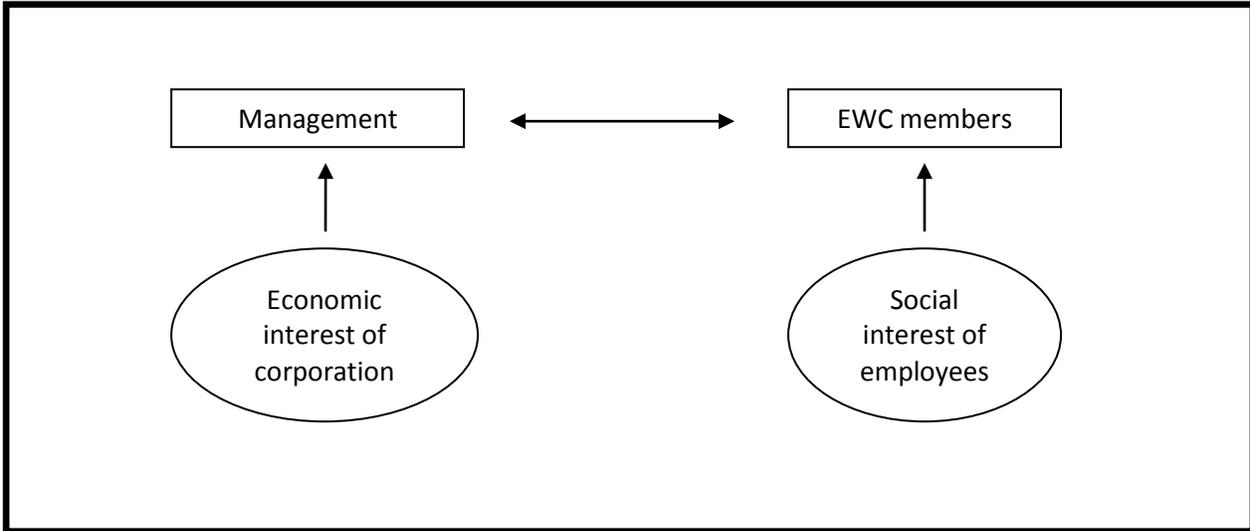
4.1.1.1 – EWC and Management

The relationship of tension in this field is that between the management and their economic interest of the corporation on the one side and the EWC members and their social interests of the employees of the corporation on the other side as shown in below figure 1.

This field relates to (1) the EWC's scope to operate and (2) its scope to participate. With scope to operate is meant which resources are provided to the EWC by central management with regards to time, money, facilities and control of the meetings. While with scope to participate is meant to what degree the EWC is allowed information, consultation, and negotiation by central management (Lecher et al. 2001). Lecher et al. (ibid) divide the information exchange into three levels: *deficient* information exchange; *satisfactory* information exchange; and *information plus*. At the deficient level of information exchange, the provision of information from central management to the EWC is at an unsatisfactory level as a result of the information either not

being disclosed in a timely manner, not being supplied at a regular basis, not being supplied in writing, or being too vague.

Figure 1 – Relationship of Tension between the EWC and Management



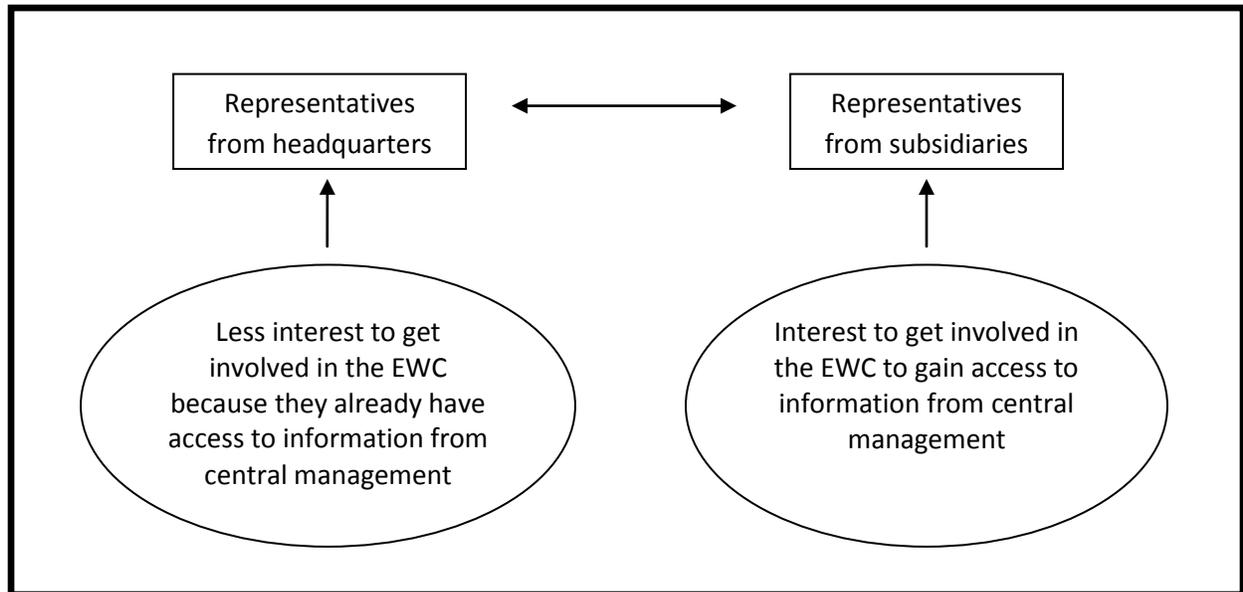
Often the EWC that receive a deficient level of information is passive and therefore does not take action to improve the level or quality of the information provided to them by the central management. When there is an information exchange at a satisfactory level the central management provides the necessary information at a timely manner, on a regular basis, and at a satisfactory quality for the EWC to act on. The EWC that receive information exchange at a satisfactory level is often active and thus will react if the information provided by central management is not of a satisfactory quality. Lastly, at the level of information plus the information flow is similar to the one at the satisfactory level, however, the EWC is in addition encouraged by the central management to be an active participant in projects as well as in the decision making process through consultation and negotiations with the central management.

4.1.1.2 – Internally in the EWC

This field of interaction refers to (1) the internal capacity of the EWC such as the structure, procedures, individuals, and the field of activity, and (2) the internal structure, such as dominance

by either parent-company or trade union, language barriers, groups formed based on mutual interests. The relationship of tension in this field of interaction is that between the employee representatives of the headquarters and the employee representatives of the subsidiaries as shown in figure 2.

Figure 2 – Relationship of tension internally in the EWC



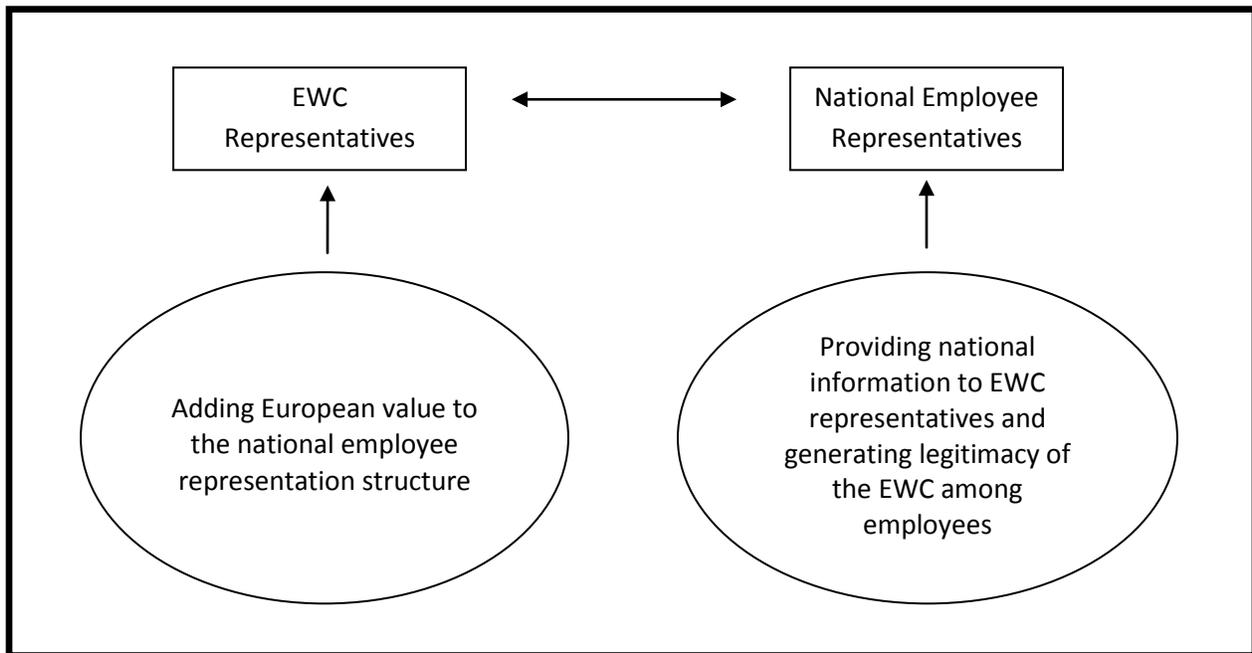
Lecher et al. (2001) defines five different structures in the internal field of interaction: the hegemonial structure; the open conflict; the concealed conflict; a simple or complex division in the structure; and equality. At the one pole, when there is a hegemonial structure there is an accepted dominance of the EWC by the parent company and at the other pole, equality, there is cohesion between central management and the employee representatives on the EWC. In between is the open conflict structure where the central management's dominance of the EWC is contested by the employee representatives, the concealed conflict where the central management's dominance of the EWC is reluctantly accepted, and lastly is the simple or complex division in the structure where dominance by any part is low. This capacity and structure of an EWC is shaped by three dimensions which Lecher et al. (1999) defines as: (1) the communicative dimension, which relates to the internal formal and informal communicative relationships within

the EWC and the structures established to nurture these relationships; (2) the socio-cultural dimension, which refers to whether the individual members of the EWC hold the competences needed to sustain and advance the communicative dimension; (3) the institutional dimension, which relates to whether there are any organizational structures which ensures the continuity and capacities of the EWC.

4.1.1.3 – EWCs and National Employee Representatives

This field of interaction looks at the mutual exchange of resources between the national level of employee representation and the EWC. It further looks at to what degree there is a European ‘value added’ and a common European identity (Carley and Hall 2006) among the employee representatives as a result of this exchange of resources from the European level down to the national level (Lecher et al. 2001). The resources are divided into infrastructure, time and capacity, capabilities, and information. Infrastructure refers to how the EWC and the national representatives are able to communicate with each other. With regards to the resource transfer from the national level to the European level, the time and capacity refers to whether the employee representatives are able to get time off from their primary position in the corporation in order to carry out their tasks as an employee representative in the EWC. With regards to the resource transfer from the European to national level the time and capacity refers to the extend to which the EWC is able to support the national level in resolving conflicts. The capabilities from the national level is the strengths it has within the EWC and the degree to which the representatives are able to influence central management, while it from the European level, like with time and capacity, refers to the degree to which the EWC is able to assist in conflict solving. Information refers to the transfer of information between the national and European level and between the European level and the central management. The degree of the European ‘value added’ depends on how successful the EWC is in its consultation and negotiation with the central management (Lecher et al. 2001). When the channel for the exchange of resources is established it helps to prevent that the EWC becomes marginalized and isolated from the employees. Thus this field of interaction establishes the legitimacy of the EWC among the employees of the MNC. The relationship of tension within this field of interaction is summarized in figure 3 below.

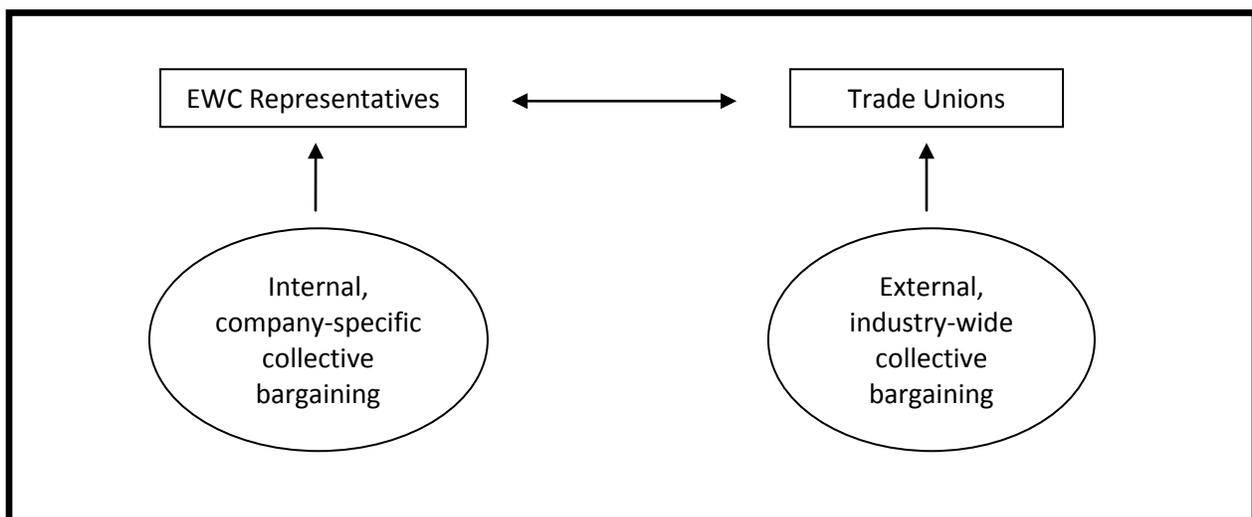
Figure 3 – Relationship of Tension between the European and National Level of Employee Representation



4.1.1.4 – EWCs and Trade Unions

This field of interaction refers to the level of integration of trade unions in the operations of an EWC. The relationship of tension is therefore that between the EWC representatives and the trade unions which is shown in figure 4.

Figure 4 – Relationship of Tension between the EWC and Trade Unions



The level of integration of the trade unions into the EWC depends on whether the trade unions provide support to the EWC and if so, what kind of support and to what degree, and the extent to which the EWC and trade unions in collaboration or independently co-ordinate their actions and interests when communicating with central management and to what degree the EWC and trade unions transfer knowledge among each other (Lecher et al. 2001).

4.1.2 – Four Categories of EWC

The categorization by Lecher et al. (2001) represent four types EWCs in different developmental stages ranging from a symbolic EWC which merely exists on paper to a participation-oriented EWC which shows the strongest signs of internal cohesion and is recognized by management as an autonomous actor. The defining difference between a symbolic EWC at the one extreme and a participatory EWC at the other is the EWC's ability to overcome the domination of the home country delegation and to develop increasingly institutionalized communication and working structures. Such working structures enable a participation-oriented EWC to achieve autonomy from management and to create added value for the members of the EWC and the different national workforces that they represent. This typology represents an analytical framework for the analysis of the practice of EWCs which is able to take into account the complex and interdependent relationship between the development of EWCs and the variety of external and internal factors impinging of this development process (ibid). While the symbolic EWC describes the forum where the central management simply relay information to staff, the participative EWC goes beyond this level and attempts to provide a more robust and consultative structure (Bailey 2008).

4.1.2.1 – The Symbolic EWC

According to Lecher et al. (2001: 54) “*the symbolic EWC is one which [...] does not truly operate*”. The members of such a type of an EWC are passive and unable or unwilling to challenge the central management beyond national issues and this category of EWC rarely adds value to the European-level information and consultation within a MNE. Thus, this type of EWC

functions more as a formal institution rather than as an active institution challenging the management on its decisions affecting operations in two or more EU member-states, which was the intention behind the Directive. Stoop (2004) argues that the symbolic EWC is to be found primarily in companies which focus more on their home country than on the international market, whereby the EWC by nature will have a small role in European-level decision-making due to the low international involvement by the company.

The symbolic EWC is characterized by poor information exchange between the central management and the EWC, little exchange of resources between the EWC and the national level of employee representation and little or no trade union involvement (Lecher et al. 2001)

4.1.2.2 – The Service EWC

A service-oriented EWC is characterized by mutual information exchange and support among the employee representatives, but also between the EWC and trade unions, where present (Lecher et al. 2001).

This category of EWC functions as “*a ‘service agency’ for the national workplace or enterprise employee representation by providing additional information obtained at European- and Group-level and via cross-border exchange and the horizontal communication of (national) experiences*” (ibid: 55). Thus it adds European value by functioning as a channel of information between top management and local employees in foreign subsidiaries and among the employee representatives on the EWC.

The service EWC is characterized by a satisfactory level of information exchange between the central management and the EWC. However, no consultation or negotiation takes place. It is further characterized by an organically developed level of information exchange among the employee representatives, mutual exchange of information between the EWC and the national levels and occasional integration of trade unions.

4.1.2.3 – The Project-oriented EWC

A project-oriented EWC defines and carries out projects on the systematic development of their internal operational and communication structures. Like the Service EWC, this type of EWC also functions as a channel for information communicated between top-management and employees. However, as the name states, this type focus their attention on projects which will facilitate that the EWC will have better opportunities to be consulted by the management and thus enable the EWC to participate in negotiations.

The characteristics of the project-oriented EWC are other than the EWC focusing on projects very similar to those of the service EWC (Lecher et al. 2001).

4.1.2.4 – The Participative EWC

This type of EWC is the strongest and most influential one of the four since the employee representatives actively negotiate with management on issues falling under the EWC Directive. A participative EWC aims to widen the scope for participation beyond the level of information and communication to include formally regulated consultative procedures with management. Formalized information and consultation procedures are set up and management accepts the EWC as an important actor in the decision-making process. This type of EWC will have a principle of transnationality and has obtained a '*concept of its own activities*' (Miller 1999: 347) since the EWC communicates effectively in between meetings and the members of the EWC are able to operate in a multicultural and multilingual environment. Thus the EWC members' ability to operate in multicultural and multilingual environments is important for them to attain their power and control vis-à-vis the central management.

The participative EWC is characterized by a satisfactory level of information exchange between the central management and the EWC and by formalized procedures for consultation and negotiation. It is further characterized by being a cohesive EWC with well developed structures and procedures, mutual exchange of information between the EWC and the national levels and the co-operation with trade unions is well developed (Lecher et al. 2001).

5 – Research Method

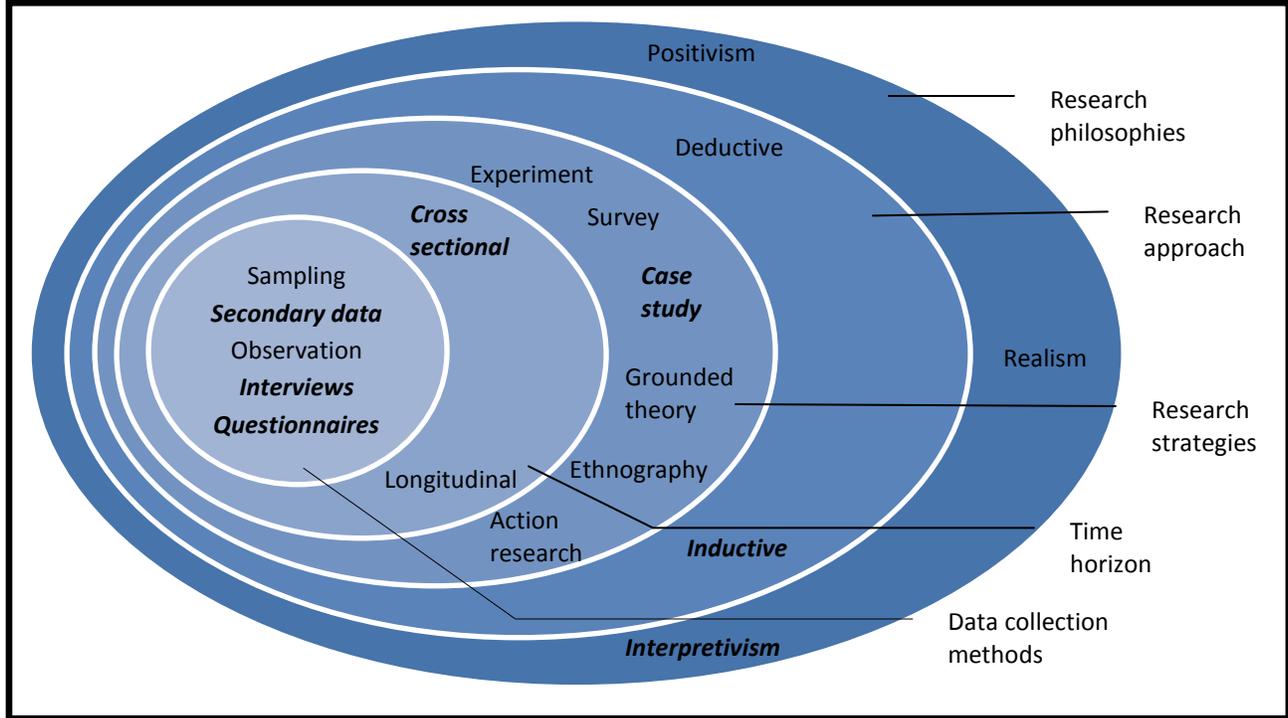
In the following chapter the choice of research approach and research strategy of this thesis will be explained following a review of the different research philosophies, research approaches, and research strategies guided by the research process ‘onion’ as presented by Saunders et al. (2003). This will be followed by an explanation of the choice of time horizon and data collection method. Finally the reliability, validity, and generalizability of this study will be explained.

5.1 – The Research Process ‘Onion’

The research process ‘onion’ developed by Saunders et al. (2003) helps to give a research design a clear structure as well as it illustrates the interrelations of the choices made in the different stages of the research process. When doing research, different paths are available depending on which assumptions are held about the creation of knowledge, which is the overall aim of research. Likewise, different research paths are better at achieving different goals, thus no one research path is better than others. The choice of which research path to apply should, however, always be adapted to the aim and scope of the research. When the specific path has been chosen, subsequent decisions related to the research process should be guided by prior decisions and the overall path in order to obtain a high level of consistency among decisions and thus a well-founded, valid and transparent research project. (Guba and Lincoln 1994 and Saunders et al. 2003) Saunders et al. (2003) have illustrated the process of research as a research process ‘onion’, which is shown in figure 5. The research process ‘onion’ helps the researcher to “*depict the issues underlying the choice of data collection methods*” (ibid: 82).

Figure 5 further shows the research process ‘onion’ as applied in this study. The research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, time horizon, and data collection methods chosen for this thesis are indicated by the bold, italic font. Since the choices in the different layers are interdependent. They suggest that a research design should be developed from the outside and in starting with adopting a research philosophy, after which each layer should be peeled away until the inside layer of defining data collection methods is determined.

Figure 5 – The research process 'onion'



Adapted from Saunders et al. (2003: 83)

The following sections focus on dominant views of how knowledge is created and how research should be undertaken, and subsequently relates these ideas to the thesis. Focus will first be on the outer two rings of the research onion; research philosophy, which addresses ontological and epistemological issues; and research approach, which is concerned with methodological questions. These elements are the most fundamental structures and guide the choice of research strategies, time horizons and data collection methods, which will subsequently be addressed.

Scientific method is not a discussion of 'for' or 'against' positivism or interpretivism, or any of the research other philosophies within the research philosophical continuum or their epistemological, ontological, or methodological perspectives. Rather, it is about which philosophy is most appropriate for a given study combined with the applied research strategy.

5.1.1 – Research Philosophy

A research philosophy is a reflection of the way the researcher thinks about the development of knowledge, and by which criteria the validity, reliability, and generalizability of knowledge is evaluated (Saunders et al. 2003). As such, a research philosophy, that is the ontological and epistemological positions, is the first clarification to make. Ontology deals with the fundamental issue of the nature of the world. With that is meant that it focuses on what is reality and what can be known about it (Guba and Lincoln 1994 and Olsen and Pedersen 1999). Hence, the ontological perspective describes what the research is about, and requires the researcher to position herself and to understand how her worldview influences her research (Scott and Usher 1999). Classic ontological perspectives revolve around (1) whether a research phenomenon is conceptually constructed through ideologies and the questions asked by the researcher, etc., or whether it indeed is an objective reality, and (2) whether society is best understood through the making of law-like quantitative generalizations or by seeing all situations as unique (Olsen and Pedersen 1999). Epistemology emphasizes the criteria that allow the researcher to determine what is legitimate knowledge and what is assumptions. Scott and Usher (1999: 11) defines epistemology as “*How do we know what we think we know?*” The relation between the researcher and the knowledge she is able to produce is central, and specifically the extend to which the phenomena under investigation and the researcher are (in)dependent. The continuum of epistemology ranges from objectivism, according to which it is in fact possible to obtain true knowledge about the social world, to subjectivism where the assumption is that all knowledge obtained is dependent on the specific and subjective context of the situation from which it is generated, including the researcher and other individuals involved (Guba and Lincoln 1994). Thus, the purpose of epistemology is to create a set of rules for knowing. Therefore, the moment any claim is made about knowledge and the validity thereof, epistemology is applied (Scott and Usher 1999).

5.1.1.1 – Positivism

At One end of the research philosophical spectra is positivism, which has been one of the most influential philosophies of research for several generations, and remains a dominant perspective

within social science (Saunders et al. 2003). The positivist researcher believes that only what she can observe can lead to credible data. Therefore, the positivist philosophy adheres to an objective ontology and emphasizes the objective analyst, who makes generalizations, often about cause-effect relations, that can easily be duplicated by other researchers based on quantitative facts about the external world and its objective, which are observable to the researcher. Reality is considered to be objective as well as identical across different social contexts.

In terms of epistemology, the positivist researcher is unbiased towards and independent of the phenomenon of research, and is thus able to objectively analyze the collected data by means of a highly structured methodology, often through quantifiable observations and statistical analysis, which offers transparency and thereby facilitates replication and/or test of a specific study at a later point in time (Guba and Lincoln 1994 and Saunders et al. 2003).

5.1.1.2 - Interpretivism

At the other end of the research philosophical spectra is interpretivism. The research philosophical stance of the development of knowledge in this thesis is interpretivism, which is founded on a belief that the world is too complex and diversified for generalizations to provide relevant knowledge. The interpretivist sees the world as being socially constructed and believes that the world is static and thus will change over time. As the analysis of the single-case study in this thesis is qualitative, the result of the research is affected by the researcher through the interaction with the researched phenomenon. Thus this ontological position applied is one which focuses on uniqueness and subjectivity (Olsen and Pedersen 1999 and Saunders et al. 2003). The epistemology applied is constructivism as it is believed that due to the individuality of the case being studied, the findings will be true to this specific case at this moment in time only. Thus cannot easily be transferred to other cases which are influenced by a different context. In the constructivist's view, reality, and thus true knowledge, is constructed by social relations, interactions between the researcher and the object of research, individual experience, and social structures (Guba and Lincoln 1994; Olsen and Pedersen 1999 and Saunders et al. 2003). The goal

of doing research, according to the constructivist, is to understand a phenomenon within its own context, rather than to make quantitative generalizations (Saunders et al. 2003).

5.1.2 – Research Approach

The research approach of a study is concerned with which analytical approach should be applied in a research process in order for the researcher to obtain knowledge that fulfils the criteria of what defines true knowledge according to the individual researcher (Olsen and Pedersen 1999). The research approach indicates whether or not the use of “... *theory is explicit within the research design*” (Saunders et al. 2003: 85). The main research approaches are induction and deduction (Olsen and Pedersen 1999).

The aim of the deductive approach is to explain causal relationships between variables, which is done by first developing propositions or hypotheses about causal effects, and secondly to design a thorough research strategy which enables the researcher to test the suggested correlations. The third and final step is the execution of the research strategy, which is often done through quantitative data and large sample sizes. In other words, data follows theory by means of a structure methodology and large samples which facilitates replication of the conditions of the study as well as generalizations about the phenomenon studied (Saunders et al. 2003).

In contrast to deduction, the aim of the inductive research approach is to formulate a theory through the collection of data, which is subsequently structured and analyzed. In the process of making sense of the data available, the context from which it is collected and the human understandings of the situation under investigation play a significant role. In addition to the concrete formulation of theories, an inductive research approach provides an understanding of the situation behind a specific theory. Induction is a flexible research approach, since it potentially results in the development of several alternative explanations of the observed data. Hence, induction is advantageous when investigating a phenomenon of which little is known in advance (Saunders et al. 2003). When applying an inductive research approach the researcher is likely to work with qualitative data and relatively small sample sizes in order to have access to the sufficient level of detail. The limitation of induction is the inherent element of uncertainty, as

results reached by induction is only as good as the empirical data on which the results are based and the ability of the researcher to extract patterns and meaning (Guba and Lincoln 1994).

In principle, the application of either research approach may generate comparable results, however, the choice of methodology should always be in accordance with the aim of the research project and comply with the characteristics of the research philosophy to a study (Saunders et al. 2003).

5.1.3 – Research Strategy

A research design is focused on the practical execution of empirical studies, and revolves around the three inner circles of the research process onion, which are the research strategy, the time horizon, and the data collection methods. The research design must consequently correspond with the research philosophy and approach of the study as defined in the two outer rings.

As shown in the third ring of the research process onion, a research strategy can be based on an experiment, survey, case study, grounded theory, ethnography, and action research. The choice of research strategy should be an outcome based on the ontological and epistemological stance of the research and what type of questions are sought answered, whether a control of behavioral events is required and whether the research focuses on contemporary events or not (Yin 2003).

The form of the questions is an indicator of what type of research strategy will be used depending of whether the questions are ‘how’, ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘who’, or ‘why’ questions. Case study questions are most likely to be ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions, whereby the nature and complexity of the phenomenon being studied can better be understood (Yin 2003). Case studies are further the preferred method of research when the researcher cannot manipulate or control the events, and when the studied phenomena cannot easily be distinguished from its context. When doing case studies a distinction is to be made between qualitative and quantitative ones. While qualitative case studies rely on evidence which cannot easily be converted into numbers, quantitative case studies rely on evidence collected for statistical analysis (Yin 1993). Merriam (1998: 27) defines a qualitative single case study as “...*an intensive holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit.*” Thus it is defined in terms of its end product.

According to Yin (1994) a case study design is applicable for five different purposes, which are: to explain, to describe, to illustrate, to explore, and to be used as a meta-evaluation (Yin 1994; 2003).

5.1.4 - Time horizon

A study can either be cross-sectional where a phenomenon is studied at one given time as is traditional in the interpretivistic research philosophy or it can be longitudinal where a phenomenon is studied over time as is traditional in the positivistic research philosophy (Saunders et al. 2003).

5.1.5 - Data Collection Methods

As indicated in the research process 'onion', data can be collected in multiple ways. The combination of different data collection methods increases the validity of the researched as the sources used in the research will bring about a reality seen from more perspectives.

There are three principals of data collection which are extremely important when doing case studies: using multiple sources of evidence, creating a case study protocol, and maintaining a chain of evidence. When using multiple sources of evidence, the validity of the data collected is increased. Through this data triangulation the problems of construct validity can be addressed because the use of multiple sources of evidence provides multiple measures of the same phenomenon (Yin 2003).

One advantage of using a case study method is that it allows for multiple sources of evidence such as documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations, as there will be more variables than data points. Thus a triangulation of the data collected can be obtained. The researcher, though, needs to ensure that the data is in fact triangulated, that is, to ensure that the data of the single phenomenon is supported by more than one source and not a separate analysis of the phenomenon for each of the different sources. Therefore, there need to be convergence of the

evidence to ensure that the findings from the different sources will not become separate studies (Yin 2003).

5.1.6 – Reliability, Validity, and Generalizability

The reliability and validity of a study refers to whether what is presented as a result of the research can be deemed true or not. With reliability is meant whether another researcher would have come up with the same result and whether it is transparent how the raw data was converted into conclusions. The more unaffected by external factors the studied phenomenon is, the higher the validity tend to be (Saunders et al. 2003).

Generalizability refers to the ability to transfer the result of the research to other studies. When doing research using a case study method the goal will not be to make universal generalizations through statistical generalizations as is the case when doing experiments, rather the goal is to expand and generalize theories through analytical generalization (Yin 2003).

In order to ensure the credibility of a case study, four conditions must be sought maximized. The first condition, construct validity, can be maximized through the use of multiple sources of evidence, the establishment of a chain of evidence, and letting key informants review the case study report. The second condition, internal validity⁵, can be maximized through pattern-matching, explanation-building, addressing rival explanations, and using logic models. The third condition, external validity, can in single-case studies be maximized through the use of theories and in multiple-case studies through the use of replication logic. And finally, the fourth condition, reliability, can be maximized through the use of a case study protocol (Yin 2003).

5.2 – Limitations

The theoretical foundation of this thesis is Lecher et al.'s (2001) typology of EWCs. However, due to the nature of the size of this research, the primary data is collected from the employee representatives and the management representative of the EWC only, and not from the national

⁵ Relevant for explanatory and causal case studies only.

employee representatives and the trade unions, which could have brought about a different more holistic picture of the relationships of tension of the works council.

5.3 – The Research Method Applied

The research philosophy stance applied in the study is interpretivism with a subjectivist ontological world view. It is believed that the internal and external factors influencing the functioning of an EWC are in a constant change and thus the generalizability of the findings are likely to be very low and it is thus also unlikely that the findings of this case can be the same should the research be concluded at a different point in time. The aim of the research is therefore not to generate findings that can easily be transferred to other studies, instead it is to understand the functioning of the EWC and how internal and external factors are influencing it.

An inductive approach is chosen to ensure that all angles are covered in terms of understanding the deeper structure of the functioning of an EWC and how it is influenced by its internal and external factors. A number of hypotheses have been deduced from the existing literature on EWCs and subsequently these hypotheses are tested. Therefore, the analytical strategy of this case study is pattern matching as an empirical based pattern will be compared with a hypothesized pattern.

The chosen research strategy for this research is a qualitative single-case study. A qualitative single-case study is further a good fit with the research questions since the main research question and two of the substituting research questions are ‘how’ questions. The definition of a case study reflects the actions of this study, since a holistic description is given of a specific phenomenon in a specific context, where the Forum Europe of Gate Gourmet in this study represents the single phenomenon and Gate Gourmet represent its context.

Given the research philosophical approach and limited time horizon of this thesis this case study is a cross-sectional one illustrating the researched phenomenon at one given time. Thus, if an identical study of the same phenomenon was performed at a different time, the outcome is likely

to be different than that of this study as the phenomenon due to internal and external factors changing over time.

For this present research, primary data is collected through interviews with the employee representatives and the management representative of the Forum Europe. Secondary data is used to give as holistic a picture as possible.

Given the nature of this research being a single case study with an interpretivist philosophy of knowledge creation, the findings cannot be generalized as it is believed that the findings are constructed in a social environment which is influenced by its internal and external factors which in their composition are unique to this specific case. Construct validity of this thesis is sought maximized by using both interviews and secondary data. Including observations as well would further have strengthened the construct validity. However, for this research it was not possible due to confidentiality. The internal validity is sought maximized by comparing the hypothesis based patterns with the empirically based ones. The external validity is sought maximized through the inclusion of Lecher et al's (2001) typology, serving as the theoretical foundation.

Thus the research of this thesis is a single-case study, guided by an interpretivist research philosophy, with a pattern matching inductive approach. The time horizon of the study is cross sectional while the data collection method is a combination of interviews and secondary data. The concern for generalizability is low as there is an understanding that the context within which the research is conducted greatly influences the outcome of the research results and thus the results cannot easily be transferred to other case studies since they will be influenced by a different context.

6 – Results

In this chapter the results of the interviews with the employee representatives of the Gate Gourmet Forum and with the central management representative as well as the secondary literature in the form of the Forum Europe Agreement on the Transnational Information and Consultation with Employees of the Gate Gourmet Group will be presented. For analysis purposes when presenting the results they will be divided in to the four fields of interaction of a works council which Lecher et al. (1999) distinguish between. The results will in the following chapter be used for analyzing what type of works council the Gate Gourmet Forum Europe is, how the central management of Gate Gourmet is utilizing it, and the way the country of origin of the interviewees is affecting the way the actors of the Forum Europe are interacting in relation to the Forum Europe. Subsequently the results and the analysis based on these will lead to recommendations to how the Forum Europe can improve its ability to influence the outcome of transnational decisions made by the central management of Gate Gourmet.

6.1 – Gate Gourmet

Gate Gourmet is a leading global provider of catering and provisioning services to airlines and railroads headquartered in Switzerland. Gate Gourmet is the core business of Gate Group which in addition has 11 associated brands (Gate Gourmet – A).

6.2 – Forum Europe⁶

The Forum Europe is the European Works Council of Gate Gourmet. The Forum Europe of Gate Gourmet was established in 1996 with the conclusion of the Forum Europe Agreement of the Transnational Information and Consultation of Employees of the Gate Gourmet Group. As Gate Gourmet is not an EU Member State, German law applies to the FE agreement.

⁶ The following section is unless otherwise specified based on The Forum Europe Agreement on the Transnational Information and Consultation with Employees of the Gate Gourmet Group.

6.2.1 - The Agreement

The agreement was concluded prior to September 1996 where the EWC directive was effective from and the terms of the agreement were negotiated in accordance with article 13 of the EWC directive. In 2000 the agreement was renegotiated and a new agreement entered into force. Since the parties negotiating the new agreement were able to come to a conclusion on a new agreement it still adheres to article 13 of the EWC directive.

Because the agreement has been established in accordance with article 13, the legal requirements to information and consultation are less stringent that had it been an article 6 agreement. However, many of the issues intended covered by the EWC directive have been included in the Forum Europe agreement. An overview of these topics covered in this agreement is found below in table 2.

Table 2 – Topics covered by the Forum Europe Agreement

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structure, economic and financial situation of the group of undertakings.• Probable developments of production and sales.• The situation and probable trend in employment.• Investments.• Organizational changes with transnational effects.• Introduction of new working methods and production processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transnational transfers of production with collective redundancies.• Mergers.• Safety and hygiene and environmental protection/waste management over the period since the last meeting.• Group-wide human resource matters.• Policy and effectiveness of information and communication.• Management development.• Other relevant matters according to the EU Directive.
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Reference: Forum Europe Agreement on the Transnational Information and Consultation with Employees of the Gate Gourmet Group, Art III, para 6.

There is no specific budget related to the FE. The reimbursement of expenses related to the Forum Europe are to be divided between the Gate Gourmet Group and the local units, where the Group is responsible for the expenses related to the meetings, such as their organization and the accommodation and dinning of the participants. The local units shall hold the expenses for their

employee representative(s) traveling to the joint Forum Europe meetings and for local management should they wish to attend meeting as well; and language training.

6.2.2 – Employee Representatives

There are 11 employee representatives in the FE and they are elected or appointed to serve a four year term with the possibility to be re-elected. How the employees are elected or appointed depends on the different countries law. Some employee representatives are elected to the Forum Europe by the workforce and some are appointed by their national management. The employee representatives are representing respectively Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK & Ireland. Most of them work as drivers and in the production facilities, while a few work in the customer service department and one is a data controller. They have varying degrees of experience on the FE as the newest employee representative was just elected in May 2012 while the one who have served most years on the FE has been a member for the 18 years that the FE has existed.

The division of seats on the Forum Europe among the different European countries in which Gate Gourmet operates is by qualified proportionality. Therefore all countries covered by the agreement in which at least one domicile is located shall elect or appoint one employee representative, while countries with more than 750 employees have to send one more employee representative and countries with 2500 or more employees have to send a third employee representative as well. If a country hosts more than one domicile, then the possible second or third employee representative should be send from different locations.

It is a prerequisite for the employee representatives on the Forum Europe that they “*have a reasonable command of the English language.*” (Gate Gourmet – B: Art. II, para. 1) However, in order to obtain a high a level of conversation at the Forum Europe meetings, the agreement suggest that all new employee representatives receive ongoing language training as well as a training course preparing them to understand the tasks they will be presented with on the Forum Europe. This two day training session is further intended to functions as team building.

When applicable, the Forum Europe employee representatives are according to the agreement allowed one day per year to inform the head of the national level of employee representation about the outcome of the Forum Europe meeting.

6.2.3 – Management Representation

The management of Gate Gourmet has the option of being represented on the FE with both representatives of the Executive Management and the national level of management. The national management level is entitled to be represented with the same number of national management representative as there are employee representatives from their undertaking, however, it is not a requirement.

6.2.4 – Steering Committee

There are four members of the steering committee and they are elected among the employee representatives of the Forum Europe.

The main responsibilities of the steering committee are to ensure that: the rights of the employee representatives of the FE are met; the employee representatives are equipped with the tools to perform their role as employee representatives to ensure the effectiveness of the Forum Europe; the employee representatives receive adequate time off from their daily work to attend the FE meetings; there is a detailed agenda for the Forum Europe meetings and that the minutes are approved; the preparatory meeting prior to the joint Forum Europe meeting are preparing for and the transnational communication involved with the Forum Europe exists.

When needed, the steering committee is according the Forum Europe agreement allowed to increase its size for the purpose of producing reports and recommendations on issues to be dealt with at an annual or extraordinary Forum Europe meeting.

6.3 – Field of Interaction I: The FE and the Management Representative.

The relationship of tension between the FE and the management representative is determined by the FE's scope for activity and its scope to participate.

6.3.1 – Scope for Activity

The scope for activity of the FE is determined by the resources made available to the FE by the management representative.

6.3.1.1 – Money:

According to one employee representative the budget available to the Forum Europe has not been adjusted since the establishment of the FE, and now thus found the budget to be insufficient. Another of the interviewed employee representatives informed that even though the employee representatives have not so far been included in setting the budget for the FE, it is always sufficient to cover the expenses. The rest of the employee representatives interviewed were not aware of a budget for the FE. The belief of whether the employee representatives are able to influence the budget available is mixed as one says that when the FE suggests changes to the budget they are declined while others consider it to be likely that the FE can influence it.

6.3.1.2 – Time:

When meeting for the joint FE meetings, the employee representatives meet for a pre-meeting without the management representative to discuss what the FE would like to add to the agenda of the joint FE meeting, however they do not meet for a post-meeting. There are independent steering committee meetings in between the joint FE meetings three times a year where steering committee members meet. The chairman of the steering committee is the Spanish employee representative and the other members are one of the Belgian employee representatives and the German and the Swedish ones.

6.3.1.3 - Infrastructure:

The infrastructure available differs from country to country. Some employee representatives do have offices available at their work site. There is no administrative staff allocated to the FE but some of the interviewees inform that they are able to seek support from their local HR department if needed. The interviewed employee representatives inform that the communication with the management representative via e-mails functions and some also inform that they communicate with the management representative over the phone. The Swedish, Danish, Spanish and one of the Belgian employee representatives keeps more frequent contact with the management representative, both via e-mails and phone.

6.3.1.4 - Control of Meetings:

The meetings are chaired by the VP HR Europe and Africa and it is the management representative who sets the agenda. However the FE is able to add the points to the agenda that they agree on at the pre-meeting. Usually those points are at the end of the agenda and it is not always the case that there is enough time at the joint FE meeting to cover those points and instead they will be covered by the steering committee at a subsequent meeting. The annual joint FE meeting is held at HQ in Zurich while the place of the three steering committee meetings rotates.

6.3.2 - Participation

The participation is determined by the degree to which the FE is informed, consulted and negotiated with by the management representative.

6.3.2.1 - Information:

The type of information that the FE is provided with at the joint meetings is general and continuous. Usually the information provided is the financial report, and information on the group development such as buying companies or selling subsidiaries, and company policy related

issues. As Gate Gourmet is a stock listed company the information is primarily non-confidential as the management representative is not convinced yet that the information will not be forwarded.

Most of the employee representatives expressed that in the past the information has not been shared with the employee representatives prior to the meetings. They have, however, already requested the management representative that they receive the information ten days prior to the meetings in the future. Some of them though said that they are able to access to some of the information such as the financial report but that it is not provided to them by the management representative until on the day of the joint meeting. So if they want it earlier they have to obtain it themselves.

All the interviewed employee representatives expressed that they find the information provided by the central management easy to understand. However, one of the interviewed informed that some of the other employee representatives do not as easily understand the information. The management representative explained that he has already taken a step towards making the financial information provided easier to understand, as the CFO was present at the most recent annual meeting, giving a lecture on how to understand a financial report while taking the employee representatives through it.

The information is usually provided in writing following the meetings in the form of the minutes of the meeting. The management representative also share information with the FE employee representatives via an online portal which the FE employee representatives have access to but cannot upload to. At the joint FE meetings some employee representatives, especially the Spanish one, bring up local issues. However, the management representative only wants to deal with European issues at the FE and thus will refrain from dealing with those local issues.

6.3.2.2 – Consultation:

A recent change in the chairman of the FE from a UK management representative to a Dane has led to the FE changing from being a dormant works council to one that the management representative wishes to include more. Therefore, the management representative will on relevant issues consult the FE. An example of that is a whistleblower alert line which the management

representative consulted the FE on to ensure that all national laws would be abided. The consultation led to some changes in the decision because it had to be in accordance with the different national laws. Most of the employee representatives informed that they have experienced that the FE has been consulted and that the management did hear their opinions but that they did not always feel that they were listened to. What they mean with this is that the management representative does ask them for their opinion but does not take their opinions into consideration. When their opinion is taken into consideration, one employee representative informed that it was usually on the implementation phase rather than on the content, while another expressed that he finds that he is able to influence both the content and the implementation of the decisions.

Table 3 – Field of Interaction I: The Forum Europe and the Management Representative

Dimensions	Indicators
<u>Scope of activity</u>	
<i>Money</i>	No own budget, expenses are shared between HQ and local units.
<i>Time</i>	Pre-meetings, but no post-meetings.
<i>Infrastructure</i>	No FE administrative staff. Some can draw on local staff. Communication with management representative via e-mail and occasionally phone.
<i>Control of Meetings</i>	Management representative sets the agenda, but FE can add points. HR chairs the FE and is the management representative. Meetings are usually held at HQ in Zurich.
<u>Participation</u>	
<i>Information</i>	Information is provided at the FE meetings in writing and is up-loaded to an online portal.
<i>Consultation</i>	When consulted, it is usually on the implementation of decisions already made or on adjustments to the decisions.
<i>Negotiation</i>	There is no negotiation.

6.3.2.3 – Negotiation:

The management representative does not see the FE as a place for negotiating with the employees as they believe that the central management of Gate Gourmet then “*will loose our ability to*

maneuver across the whole company” (Jesper Bulskov). They are, however, not opposed to local negotiations as long as they remain local. Therefore the majority of the interviewed employee representatives have not experienced any negotiation at the joint FE meetings.

6.4 – Field of Interaction II: Internally in the Forum Europe

The relationship of tension internally in the FE is determined by its internal capacity and cohesion.

6.4.1 – Capacity

The internal capacity of the FE is determined by the structures and procedures for operating, the actors of the FE and the issues dealt with.

6.4.1.1 – Structures:

Almost all employee representatives expressed that they were able to communicate both formally and informally with each other. One member, however, does not speak English, which is the official language of the FE and one of the interviewed pointed towards that as being a barrier to communication. However, the rest reported that they did not see it being a problem neither formally as there was an interpreter present at the meetings nor informally as some of them are able to speak a little Spanish and thus can communicate some with him. In connection with the joint FE meetings the employee representatives are able to socialize with each other which they all express that they find helps them to get to know each other in an informal environment as well and thus become stronger as a group.

6.4.1.2 – Procedures:

There are no formal procedures for information exchange set up among the FE employee representatives. When they do communicate with each other in between the joint FE meetings it

is primarily via e-mails. When the employee representatives gain access to information that the others do not have they all say that they will share the information with the other employee representatives as long as it does not breach confidentiality. They also assume that the other employee representatives will do the same since as one expressed it *“I think it is very important that you are all informed on equal levels...”* (Claire Stephens). The type of information that is usually shared between the employee representatives is the results of local negotiations and whether the national employee representatives have approved or signed agreements that they have for example been informed or consulted on by at the joint FE meetings.

6.4.1.3 – Actors:

Not all employee representatives are equally involved in the FE. For example those who are appointed by their national management do not come across to the other employee representatives as being as enthusiastic about the FE. To some of the employee representatives this type of representation is new, while others have many years of experience, either on the European or the national level or both. The Spanish member for example, in Spain not only represents the employees of Gate Gourmet, he is also the representative of all the employees of the hospitality industry. Further, those employee representatives who keep more frequent contact with the management representative are most active both at the joint FE meetings as well as in between the meetings.

Upon joining the FE, the new employee representatives are not offered any FE specific training, and the rest of the FE is not offered any specific training separate from the joint FE meetings either.

6.4.1.4 – Fields of Activity:

The employee representatives of the FE are mainly focusing on their local and national issues.

6.4.2 – Structure

The structure of the FE is determined by the level of dominance within and cohesiveness of the FE.

6.4.2.1 – Parent-company dominance:

Most of the employee representatives expressed that they have not experienced that the employee representatives from the HQ have better access to the management representative or to more information than the rest of the FE employee representatives. Further, the management representative expressed that they had very little contact to the Swizz employee representative and that they were in more regular contact with the Scandinavian employee representatives, as well as, however not as much, a Belgian and the Spanish employee representative.

6.4.2.2 – Trade Union Dominance:

Some of the employee representatives have been suggested for election by trade unions and therefore they express that they work to promote their trade union's agenda more than their own personal opinion. Some of the interviewed argue that the difference to the degree that the employee representatives are influenced by trade unions in their work at the FE has to do with their national employee representation structures and how much support they are thus able to obtain. One of the interview thus said that *“I think it's normal that somebody with really country responsibility have more support than somebody that just has its local unit.”* (Leeroy Peeters)

6.4.2.3 – Language Group:

None of the interviewed expressed that employee representatives of the FE are excluded based on language since no language groups have been formed.

6.4.2.4 – Interest Groups:

Most employee representatives informed that they had no knowledge of any interest groups having been formed. However one did express that the Scandinavian employee representatives communicate more with each other in between the joint FE meetings than they do with the rest.

6.4.2.5 – Inter Trade Union Competition:

Almost all employee representatives either directly or indirectly expressed that there exist inter trade union competition in the FE. Some employee representative said that the different political views of the trade unions do affect the positioning of the employee representatives and the direction that they want to direct the FE towards. One also said that because being a member of an EWC in some countries is prestigious it is not always the one who is best suited who gets elected but the one from the trade union who wins the competition which is often the largest union. However, in Sweden the employee representative is not from the largest union. Instead he was elected because the largest union suggested their members to vote for him because they found that he would be a better FE employee representative than their own candidate.

Table 4 – Field of Interaction II: Internally in the Forum Europe

Dimension	Indicators
Capacity	
Structures	Both formal and informal communication. Communication in between joint FE meetings primarily via e-mails.
Procedures	No procedures for information exchange.
Actors	11 employee representatives – 9 men and 2 women.
Fields of Activity	Primarily focus on local issues.
Structure	
Parent-company Dominance	No parent-company dominance.
Trade Union Dominance	Trade unions influence those employee representatives who have been nominated for election by trade unions.
Language Group	No language groups. Only one does not speak the official FE language.
Interest Groups	No official interest groups, but some communicate more than others.
Inter Trade Union Competition	Different political streams of the trade unions influence the employee representatives.

6.5 – Field of Interaction III: The Forum Europe and the National Structures of Employee Representation

The relationship of tension between the FE and the national structure of employee representation is determined by the transfer of resources between those two levels of employee representation.

6.5.1 – Resource Transfer from National to European Level

The resource transfer from the national to the European level is determined by the development of the national structure and the co-operation between the two levels.

6.5.1.1 – Infrastructure:

The national structure of employee representation differs from country to country. In some of the FE employee representatives' country there is a well functioning national structure of employee representation while in other countries there is no national structure, only dispersed local employee representation. In those countries where the national structure exist, the FE employee representatives usually meet with the national employee representatives regularly and are presented with issues to take to the FE joint meetings. In the other countries where there is no real national structure of employee representation the communication from the national employee representatives to the FE employee representatives is less organized. One of the interviewed expressed that he experienced that the local employee representatives did not show an interest in the FE because when he e-mailed the minutes from the joint FE and included some questions to the local employee representatives, he never got any replies to those answers.

6.5.1.2 – Time and Capacity:

Most of the employee representatives receive all the time off from their daily work that they need to perform their role as employee representatives.

6.5.1.3 – Capabilities:

In those countries where there is no national structure of employee representation the national strength is weak, while the opposite is the case in those countries where there is a well developed structure of national representation.

6.5.1.4 – Information:

The FE employee representatives who meet regularly with their national body of employee representation also express that they receive local information from the national and local employee representatives to take to the joint FE meetings. Some FE employee representatives also expressed that the level of information transferred from the national level to them is influenced by the trade unions as local employee representatives of other trade unions do not show an interest in the FE and therefore are not very co-operative towards the FE employee representatives.

6.5.2 – Resource Transfer from European to National Level

The resource transfer from the European to the national level is like the resource transfer from the national to the European level, determined by the development of the national structure and the co-operation between the two levels.

6.5.2.1 – Infrastructure:

It is common among the FE employee representatives that they forward the minutes from the joint FE meetings to their national employee representatives. Some also make their own minutes with more emphasis on the issues which are important for their own country and in their national language. Most of the FE employee representatives further have a meeting with the national employee representatives where the results are presented as well.

6.5.2.2 – Time and Capacity:

The FE employee representatives expressed that they are allowed the necessary time off from their daily work to communicate with their local and national employee representatives.

6.5.2.3 – Capabilities:

Where a national structure of employee representation is present the FE members meet regularly with both the national employee representatives and with their local management. And one informed that he in fact sometimes had more knowledge about some issues than his country managers because he was a FE member.

Table 5 – Field of Interaction III: The Forum Europe and the National Employee Representation Structures

Dimension	Indicators
<u>Resource Transfer from National to European Level</u>	
<i>Infrastructure</i>	Where applicable, regular meetings with national employee representatives.
<i>Time and Capacity</i>	Allowed the necessary time off from their daily work.
<i>Capabilities</i>	Where applicable, close co-operation with national employee representatives.
<i>Information</i>	Where applicable, flow of information from the national level to the FE. Often the information is influenced by national trade unions.
<u>Resource Transfer from European to National Level</u>	
<i>Infrastructure</i>	Information is communicated in writing to the national level. Where applicable, also provided at meetings.
<i>Time and Capacity</i>	Allowed the necessary time off from their daily work.
<i>Capabilities</i>	Where applicable, regular meetings with both national level of employee representation and national management.
<i>Information</i>	Communication of minutes and own reports via e-mails and in meetings.
<i>European 'Value Added'</i>	Information on practices in other countries. No negotiated results.

6.5.2.4 - Information:

The employee representatives interviewed express that they share all the information gained at the joint FE meetings with the national and local employee representatives except from the information that has been deemed confidential. Most of the interviewed employee representatives find it to be important to inform the national employee representatives, even those from countries where there is no cohesive national structure of employee representation.

6.5.2.5 - European 'Value Added':

A number of the employee representatives said that they found that the FE added a European dimension to the employee representation through introducing the FE employee representatives to information about how things are done in the other countries represented on the FE.

6.6 - Field of Interaction IV: The Forum Europe and Trade Unions

The relationship of tension between the FE and the trade unions is determined by the level of trade union integration, training and support and information exchange.

6.6.1 - Formal Integration:

There are no trade union officials present at the meetings.

6.6.2 - Specialist and Policy Support:

All the FE employee representatives interviewed are a member of a trade union and most of them express that they have close co-operation with their trade unions. In some countries, such as Belgium, the law states that to be an employee representative, one has to be a member of a trade union. The FE employee representatives are all able to seek support from the trade unions whenever there is a need for it and they have a regular contact person. It is not all of them though which are able to seek support from their trade union on EWC related issues. Some of the interviewees did express that they find that there is a difference in the level of support received

from the trade unions among the FE employee representatives. Some of the employee representatives are offered EWC related training by their trade unions while others are only offered training on national issues.

6.6.3 – Resource Supplementation and Concentration:

One of the employee representatives said that he currently is not able to align the work that the FE is performing with the work that the union is performing, while one said that it depends on the issue dealt with. The rest, however, expressed that most of the times they are able to align it. Some of the employee representatives meet regularly with their trade unions for both local and FE issues and therefore transfer information to the trade unions on the work of the FE.

Table 6 – Field of Interaction IV: The Forum Europe and Trade Unions

Dimension	Indicators
<i>Formal Integration</i>	No trade union officials at the FE meetings.
<i>Specialist and Policy Support</i>	All FE employee representatives seek support and can receive training from their trade union, but not all on FE specific issues.
<i>Resource Supplementation and Concentration</i>	The FE employee representatives are to a degree able to align the FE and trade union interests. Some transfer information between the FE and the trade unions.

7 – Analysis

In the following chapter, the result of the research will be analyzed and the hypotheses posed in the literature review chapter will be tested. Subsequently the type of works council will based on the analysis be determined.

In the case of Gate Gourmet it has not yet been possible for the FE to generate employee participation as was intended by the EU Directive 94/45/EC. As will be elaborated further on in the below analysis, first the FE has not yet been able to become internally cohesive. Second, only some of the FE employee representatives are able to receive support from their trade union on EWC specific issues. Third, the FE employee representatives do not have the resources to meet without the management representative present other than at the pre-meeting in connection with the joint FE meeting. Fourth, the management representative is not interested in commencing negotiations with employee representatives at a European level. Finally, despite the management not being opposed to consultation, a formalized consultative procedure has not been established, thus the FE is mainly used as a forum for the communication of information from the management to the employees across Gate Gourmet. Therefore hypothesis 1 claiming that EWCs are not able to generate transnational employee participation in MNCs as was intended by the EU Commission when introducing the Directive, is in the case of the Gate Gourmet Forum Europe supported.

The actors of the FE do find that they are able to communicate with and learn from the other FE employee representatives. However, because the FE employee representatives have not yet created an internal coherence and thus still primarily focus on own national issues they have not yet been able to generate transnational employee participation in Gate Gourmet as was intended by the EU Directive 94/45/EC. Thus hypothesis 2 claiming that EWCs are able to generate transnational employee participation in MNCs as was intended by the EU Commission when introducing the Directive, is at this point of time in the case of the FE rejected. As the management representative stated, the FE has been dormant for a number of years and he is now working on informing and including the FE more. Hence, it is not impossible that over the years the FE can become a forum in which the transnational employee representation will have gained strengths.

The FE of Gate Gourmet was established on August 13th of 1996 which was shortly before the deadline for the establishment of voluntary EWCs. When the agreement was renegotiated in 2000 the FE remained an Article 13 agreement EWC. Therefore it is argued that the Forum Europe was established as a response to the EU Directive 94/45/EC. This is further supported in the interview with the management representative as he emphasized that the FE was established during the voluntary period. Therefore hypothesis 3 claiming that EWCs established immediately before the implementation of the Directive were established as a response to the Directive is supported.

Even though language overall to most of the employee representatives is not considered to be a barrier to communication, there has been established more frequent communication between the Scandinavian FE employee representatives. However the study did not show that the commonalities in the Scandinavian languages are the reason thereof. Rather it is more likely that it is due to similar traditions in their respective national industrial relations systems and traditions of communication with management.

All the interviewed FE employee representatives utilize the opportunities they have for socializing before, during, and after the joint FE meetings and all stated that they think that it helps towards co-operating better with each other when they return to their local units. However, some of the FE employee representatives do not communicate much with each other in between the joint meetings, and those who do communicate actively does so within a small group. That small group consists of some of the FE employee representatives who the management representative referred to as “...*really sharp and asking really good questions.*” (Jesper Bulskov) Those are also the FE employee representatives who are most active during the joint meetings, and those who the management representative keeps the most frequent dialogue with in between the joint meetings.

Even though the FE employee representative of the HQ due to geographical reasons should be able to have better contact with the management representative, that is not the case in the FE. According to the management representative he is rarely in contact with the employee representative of the HQ and this is not one of the active employee representatives at the joint meetings either. Therefore the employee representative of the HQ is not dominating the FE.

Rather the management representative expressed that his primary contact was with the Swedish, Danish, Spanish, and Belgium employee representatives as they are the employee representatives who, according to the management representative and several of the other interviewees, are the most active in the FE. The Spanish employee representative is considered to be dominating as well because is the chairman of the steering committee and he is also one of the active employee representatives at the joint meetings. Therefore in the case of the Gate Gourmet Forum Europe there is not a closer tie between the HQ employee representative and the central management which creates a power inequality, rather it is the national traditions of employee representation. Thus hypothesis 4 claiming that the employee representatives of the headquarters are dominating the EWC is rejected since the employee representatives dominating the FE are not from the HQ.

The creation of internal cohesion in the Gate Gourmet FE is challenged in a number of ways. First of all, because the employee representatives represent so many different countries and also different lines of business, it is inevitably difficult for the FE employee representatives to coordinate their interests, which will be elaborated further on when testing hypothesis 11. Second, there is little support from European trade unions in the FE, as only a few of the interviewed employee representatives expressed that they are able to seek support from their trade union on EWC specific issues. Therefore when the employee representatives seek support from their trade unions it is usually on issues which have local relevance. Thus, if they seek support on FE specific issues but with local relevance, they may be guided in different directions than the FE employee representatives of other countries. Further, only some of the employee representatives are offered training on EWC issues by their trade unions. Thereby those employee representatives who are offered and receive EWC training are better able to develop their skills than those who are not offered such training. Therefore hypothesis 5 claiming that a lack of trade union coordination prevents the creation of internal cohesion among the employee representatives of an EWC is supported.

The lack of internal cohesion in the Gate Gourmet FE can also be ascribed to the different expectations of the employee representatives of the purpose of FE and their personal reasons for joining the FE, which affect their enthusiasm as FE employee representatives. For example, one employee representative expressed that he thinks that the FE should be used as a place to bring up

local issues because, as he said: *“At the end the division is a sum of different countries that have problems and the FE could also be a place where unions can transmit local problems, because at the end, a local problem could be a division problem if nobody is taking action or solving the problem that one country can have in order to avoid the future impact in the rest.”* (Tomás Valencia)

However, if they all have local issues that they want to bring to the meetings, it gets more difficult to create coherence. Therefore focusing on local issues counteracts the creation of an internally coherent FE which again prevents the FE to become powerful vis-à-vis the management. Hence, it will be difficult for the FE to conclude agreements with the management representatives. The management representative on the other hand is not interested in using the FE as a forum for dealing with local issues. Instead he sees the purpose of the FE to be a forum for sharing *“...general information and specific sort of updates on projects that are right now running that we need them (read: the FE employee representatives) to be aware of.”* (Jesper Bulskov) Thus hypothesis 6 claiming that the management representatives and the employee representatives of an EWC disagree on the objectives of the EWC is supported, as the majority of the FE representatives focus on local issues, while the management representative focuses on corporation-wide general issues.

The management of Gate Gourmet utilizes the FE as a forum for communicating group wide information to the employees through the FE employee representatives. As the employee representatives have not yet created an internal cohesion among each other, the degree to which the FE can be used as the collective ‘voice’ of the employees is low. Thus the FE functions more as an ‘ear’ to the employees.

The evidence of this research does neither support nor reject hypothesis 7 which claims that the management representatives of an EWC find that the employees of the corporation are easier persuaded to support tough decisions when they are communicated to the employees through the EWC. However, the management representative did express that he sees *“... a huge value in us (read: the management of Gate Gourmet) building up good relationships with [the FE employee*

representatives] and informing them; involving them because we will benefit from that, you know, on the local level.” (Jesper Bulskov)

The management representative of the FE holds a positive attitude towards the FE in the sense that he wants to inform and when relevant consult with the FE but he will not under any circumstances negotiate with the FE on transnational issues. After a number of years where the FE has been more or less dormant, the chairman of the FE who recently took over the leadership wishes to include the FE more, as he said it *“I want the best out of this for both of us, I want an open dialogue; I want to share with them.”* (Jesper Bulskov) However, as of yet the management has not provided the FE with information prior to the joint FE meetings so that the employee representatives could prepare for the meetings. This has prevented the FE employee representatives to consult with their national structure of employee representation, where applicable, prior to the meetings and thus the quality of the consultation procedures at the joint meetings is diminished since some questions might not come up until the FE employee representatives inform their national employee representatives post the FE meeting. Further, the lack of training provided to the FE employee representatives by the corporation as is otherwise suggested in the FE Agreement can be a result of the management representative wishing to control the level of coherence of the FE, since the greater internal coherence in the FE the stronger they will stand vis-à-vis the management. Even though the recent change of the chairman of the FE has led to a more positive attitude towards the FE, hypothesis 8 claiming that a positive attitude among the management representatives towards the EWC leads to increased influence of the outcome of transnational decisions is in the case of Gate Gourmet at this point rejected since the management representative is not under any circumstances willing to negotiate with the FE. The FE was, however, consulted on the whistleblower alert line and that did lead to some changes in the decision. However, the changes were rather made due to national laws and not because of wishes from the employee representatives. On other issues that the FE has been consulted on the employee representatives found it to be primarily on the implementation phase of decisions as they, when being consulted, felt that the management had already made up their mind about the content of the decision. Therefore in hypothesis 9 claiming that when an EWC is able to exert influence over transnational decisions, it is on the

implementation phase of short-term decisions is supported since the decision to introduce the alert line had already been made so they consultation was on the implementation of the decision which is a short-term issue.

The management style of the FE is in several ways influenced by the country of origin of the management representative of the FE chairman. The previous management representative who also chaired the FE was from the UK. Therefore he, according to the current chairman of the FE, ran the FE according to the British managing traditions. Now the chairman of the FE is a Dane whose way of running the FE is mainly influenced by the Scandinavian traditions of managing. However, the issue of trust is not a typical characteristic of a continental European management style. Rather it more so reflect an Anglo-Saxon management style. Therefore in spite of Gate Gourmet being a Swizz corporation, the managing style of the FE reflects more the country of origin of the management representative than on the country in which the HQ are located. Therefore hypothesis 10 claiming that the management representatives' attitude towards an EWC is influenced by the home country of the corporate headquarters is in the case of the Gate Gourmet Forum Europe rejected.

However, the lack of internal cohesiveness cannot solely be ascribed to the lack of trade union co-ordination. The interviewed FE employee representatives are from respectively Belgium, Spain, Sweden, and the UK, countries in which there are remarkable differences in the national industrial relations systems. In addition to these there are also FE employee representatives from Denmark, Germany, Norway, and Switzerland. As most of the employee representatives are working as drivers and in the production facilities, they represent a group of workers who in most of those countries have traditions of high trade union density and high degree of trade union involvement in local negotiations. However, it is not in all of these countries that a national employee representative structure exists within the Gate Gourmet unit. In some of those countries the employee representatives have been appointed by the national management rather than elected by the employees. In other countries where such national structure does not exist, such as in Sweden, the employee representative is though, elected by the employees but the trade unions are so much involved that they play a big role in influencing who will be elected as the FE employee representative. Those who are elected after being nominated by a union expressed that

their functioning on the FE is influenced by the unions. Those who were appointed to the FE by their national management were perceived by other FE employee representatives as not as motivated to be actively involved in the FE. Therefore the different national backgrounds of the FE employee representatives are also negatively influencing the ability of the FE of creating an internal coherence. Thus hypothesis 11 claiming that the different national backgrounds of the employee representatives prevent an EWC from creating an internal coherence is supported.

All the interviewed FE employee representatives are a member of a trade union, some even informed that in their country, such as Belgium, it is a prerequisite to be an employee representative. In some of the home countries of the FE employee representatives there is also competition among the trade unions such as which trade union the elected FE employee representative is from. Therefore in those countries it is not necessarily the employee representative who is the most skilled one who is elected but the one whose union can convince most members to vote for their nominee. Thus the union with the highest number of members among the employees has an advantage in that race. However, in Sweden the representative is not a member of the largest union. But as the largest union was not satisfied with the skills of the one who wished to run for election from their union, they pointed towards the current Swedish employee representative though he is a member of another union. Thereby in Sweden some of the inter trade union competition has been eliminated. In Belgium the trade unions influence on the employee representative is dominated by which political stream the trade unions support and thus there is more competition among those trade unions to influence the work of the employee representatives. Also the difference of in trade union support such as training and support on EWC specific issues influence the ability of the FE to create an internal coherence. The reason thereof is that those who do receive EWC relevant training and support are better able to develop their skills as employee representatives and thus the level of competence among the FE employee representatives does not develop equally. Therefore hypothesis 12 claiming that the difference in the national industrial relations systems means that some employee representatives are more skilled in representing the employees' interests and receive more support from the trade unions is supported.

7.1 – Field of Interaction I: The Forum Europe and the Management Representatives

At the time that the employee representatives were interviewed, the level of information exchange was deficient since the information was not provided prior to the meetings. The information was though provided in writing, provided on a regular basis and at the joint FE meetings efforts were made by the management representative to thoroughly explain the information to the employee representatives. Further the management representative has upon request from the employee representatives agreed to in the future provide the information prior to the joint FE meetings. Thus the level of information exchange is expected to change to satisfactory level. The FE can only be considered as partially active as its scope for activity is limited. The FE has little control of the meetings, not all employee representatives have access to an office or an administrative staff, and they are not given the time for a post-meeting following the joint FE meetings. However, they do receive the time for a pre-meeting, where they can decide on some issues to add to the agenda.

7.2 – Field of Interaction II: Internally in the Forum Europe

The difference in the engagement of the employee representatives in the FE is affecting the FE's ability of creating an internal coherence. The communicative dimension of the FE has only partially been developed since the employee representatives do communicate with each other, both formally and informally at the joint FE meetings, however, only some of the employee representatives keep the communication going regularly in between the joint meetings. The socio-cultural dimension of the FE is only weakly developed. The employee representatives do exchange information with each other, however, no structures have been established for this. Further, some employee representatives are dominating the FE, however, they predominantly focus on local issues, while other employee representatives are passive. Therefore an internal coherence has not been developed. Thus the institutional dimension is neither developed. The employee representative of the HQ is not dominating the FE, instead the FE is dominated by a group of active employee representatives.

7.3 – Field of Interaction III: The Forum Europe and the National Level of Employee Representation

The level of information exchange between the FE employee representatives and their national employee representatives is influenced by whether there is a formal structure of national employee representation in Gate Gourmet in their home country. In those countries where a national employee representation structure within Gate Gourmet exists there is a frequent exchange of information between the FE employee representative and the national level. The exchange of information flows both from the European to the national level and vice versa. However, in countries with no formal national structure of employee representation the flow of information is primarily from the European level to the national or local unit level and as there is little co-operation between these FE and national employee representatives, the FE is isolated from the employees. Because the FE has only to a very limited extent been able to influence decisions when being consulted by the management representative, the FE has only added little European value to the national employee representation level.

7.4 – Field of Interaction IV: The Forum Europe and Trade Unions

There is no direct involvement of trade unions in the FE since the trade unions are not present at the joint FE meetings. Only some of the FE employee representatives are able to seek support from the trade unions on EWC specific issues, as not all the employee representatives' trade unions are internationally involved.

As the world in which an EWC operates is not static, the relationships of tension in the fields of interaction of an EWC will be ever changing as its internal and external environment changes. The characteristics of the four fields of interaction of the Forum Europe as discovered in this cross sectional case study are summarized in table 7 below.

Table 7 – Categorization of the Gate Gourmet Forum Europe

Gate Gourmet Forum Europe	
FE and the Management Representative	FE and National Level
Partially active EWC. Deficient information provision, but expected to become satisfactory. Some consultation allowed for but no negotiation.	Mutual exchange of information in some countries. In other countries only exchange of information from the European to the national level. Little European value added.
FE Internally	FE and Trade Unions
No structures for information exchange. Formal and informal communication exists. No parent-company dominance, but dominance by active FE employee representatives. No efforts to achieve cohesiveness.	No integration of trade unions. Trade unions only involved at national level.

Based on the above analysis it can be concluded that the Forum Europe is a hybrid between the Symbolic EWC and the Service EWC. The management representative is controlling the joint FE meetings and the meetings are primarily a forum where the central management can communicate information to the employee representatives via the FE employee representatives, since consultation only occasionally occurs and negotiation will not take place. Because of the FE’s inability so far to generate an internal coherence its power vis-à-vis the management representative has been limited. As long as not all employee representatives are active and those who are active focus on national issues internal cohesion among the FE employee representatives is unattainable. The FE employee representatives’ support and co-operation with their national employee representatives influenced by the whether such a structure exists. Where there is such a structure, the information exchange is reciprocal, while where such structure does not exist the information flow is primarily from the European to the national level. Trade unions are not formally integrated in the FE and only some of the FE employee representatives are involved in European trade unions.

8 – Discussion

The data of this research show that the actors of the FE are influenced by their country of origin and that the FE is a hybrid between a symbolic and a service EWC. In the following chapter it will be discussed how the FE can improve its ability to influence decisions made by the central management, how the country of origin of the different FE members is influencing its functioning, how the central management is utilizing the FE and whether the type that the FE has been defined as is the preferred one for the Gate Gourmet FE.

For the representatives of the EWC, it is not enough to be just accepted as important partners by management in their decision making process, they also need to be recognized. That is that the management actively includes them through the information and consultation procedure (Lecher et al. 1999). However, it cannot be expected that the management will spend much effort on including the EWC in the decision-making process if the EWC itself does not actively encourage the management to do so, since a passive EWC is more of an obstacle than helpful to the central management. Nienhueser (2009) argues that the more powerful a works council is, the more likely it is that it will be able to conclude agreements with the management. Therefore, for the EWC to be recognized by the management as an important partner in the decision-making process, the representatives of the EWC needs to actively ensure that they deserve to be recognized by management. To do so the members of the EWC needs to, on a continuous basis, ensure that the dimensions and indicators in the four fields of interaction are at all times being optimized so that the EWC is able to operate at the highest level of participation as possible.

For a works council to be powerful vis-à-vis the management representative, it must be internally coherent. Otherwise it is not likely that the management representative will perceive it as an important partner in the social dialogue within the corporation. A way to increase the internal cohesion of the FE is to provide the FE members with training on FE related issues (Miller 2001), as is also stated in the FE agreement. There are a number of ways in which this would increase the internal cohesion of the FE. If the training is organized so that the FE representatives will receive the training together, the training might not only improve the FE employee representatives' skills it may also serve as a team building seminar. Several of the employee representatives expressed that they found the socialization at and around the joint FE meetings to

be useful for them to build relationships with the other FE employee representatives, which they said made them more capable at working together as a FE. Improved skills of the FE employee representatives are also likely to help towards all the employee representatives understanding the information that is provided from the management. Thus the quality of the information communicated from the management representative to the employee representatives can better be ensured as the information is communicated by the FE employee representative to the national and local employee representatives and employees. If the training is provided by the trade unions, however, the training might not cause the FE to become more internally coherent. Miller (2001) argues that training provided by the trade unions often has a political undertone and the training aims at a wider perspective, while in-house training can provide more narrow and corporation-specific perspective. Therefore it is in the interest of both the management and the FE members that they receive training together on FE specific issues. Joint training is further highly likely to be a step towards the FE members overcoming the national differences which are influenced by the traditions of employee participation of their home country.

At the current state of the FE, the home countries of the FE members are influencing the employee representatives' ability to generate internal coherence negatively. The differences in the traditions of employee participation and the difference in the trade unions co-operation nationally means that the employee representatives possess different prerequisites for employee representation at the European level. Therefore the FE is dominated by the group of employee representatives from respectively Denmark, Sweden, Spain and Belgium who have the most developed employee representation skills as a result of their national industrial relations system and not the employee representative of the HQ (hypothesis 4). Lecher et al. (1999) argue that a way to overcome the works council being dominated by some employee representatives is through establishing a steering committee, whereby the leadership of the works council can be distributed. In the case of Gate Gourmet Forum Europe there has already been established a steering committee, however, most of its members are those who are dominating the FE. Therefore in this case the steering committee does not help to overcome the inequalities between the employee representatives. Rather it can be argued that because the members of the steering committee are the active ones and the committee meets more frequent than the FE, then the

steering committee in the case of Gate Gourmet has the opposite effect since the steering committee members thus are able to develop their formal and informal relationships better (Stirling and Tully 2004 and Timming 2006). Another action towards diminishing the inequalities that Lecher et al. (1999) suggest is to set up working groups consisting of both representatives from the management and the FE employee representatives. Such working groups could in the case of the Gate Gourmet FE reduce the dominance of the steering committee members since the members of the working groups are thus also able to generate better relations with the other FE members and to be more involved in the FE. However, such working groups have not yet been established in the FE. Including the management representative in such working group would further set up better prerequisites for developing trust between the management representative and the FE employee representative. The management representative does not trust that the employee representatives will keep the information he provides them confidential and thus the information is publicly available. A lack of trust between the management representative and the FE members can, however, also be overcome through establishing working groups since trust is a likely spill over effect of social relations (Timming 2006).

Because the management representative holds a positive attitude towards the FE, the employee representatives need to utilize that position to their advantage. This can only be done through generating an internal cohesion which is likely to make the FE more powerful vis-à-vis the management representative. However, as the FE has not done so, the positive attitude of the management representative means that the FE is utilized by the central management as a means of communicating corporate-wide information through the FE. This is reflected in the central management not taking part in the FE since the management representative is from the corporate HR department. This strengthens the argument that the FE in Gate Gourmet is more utilized by the central management as a corporate-wide 'ear' of the employees than as a 'voice' (Roger and Streeck 1995).

The hybrid between a symbolic and service EWC is not the type of EWC which is able to generate the most desirable results for the employees in Gate Gourmet. Rather, the FE members should strive to change the FE into a service EWC because then the FE is likely to become more

active and cohesive. The FE has already taken an important step towards becoming a service EWC since they have actively requested that the provision of information is improved. However, there is still a long way left, since the level of the FE members' skills and national support from both the national level of employee representation and trade unions is do different. Therefore, as stated in the beginning of this discussion, training of the employee representatives is very important for the FE to become internally coherent. If this is not developed the FE risks becoming a mere symbolic EWC with no representation of the employees' interests (Lecher et al. 2001). Thereby the FE is likely to become a mere expense to Gate Gourmet, from which little can be gained.

9 – Conclusion

Based on the present research it can be concluded that the home and host countries of Gate Gourmet in a number of ways are influence the functioning of the Forum Europe and its ability to influence the transnational decisions made by the central management. The differences in the national traditions of industrial relations means that the skills of the FE employee have been developed at different levels and that the support that the FE members receive from respectively their national level of employee representation and trade unions is unequal. Therefore it is argued that the home and host countries negatively influence functioning of the Forum Europe through preventing the FE from becoming internally coherent.

To determine what type of works council the FE is, its four fields of interactions have been analyzed. The relationship of tension between the FE and the management representative is characterized by a limited scope for activity, the information exchange being deficient and when the FE is consulted it is usually on the implementation of short-term issues. The employee representatives have, however, requested that the timeliness of the information provided is improved. Therefore it is expected that the information exchange may develop in to a satisfactory level. As argued in the discussion, for the FE to become recognized by the central management as an important partner in the social dialogue within the corporation it needs to become internally coherent. The internal relationship of tension of the FE is characterized by domination by one group of employee representative, which are those who come from countries with traditions of national employee representation. These employee representatives focus primarily on local issues and thus it is argued that the FE has not been able to generate an internal cohesion. The relationship of tension between the FE and the national level of employee representation differs between the countries. In some countries there is a well developed transfer of resources between the two levels, while in other countries there is little or no resource transfer. This is also likely to affect the ability of the FE to creating an internal coherence since the employee representatives from countries where the national level is co-operative are able to receive more support from these. The fourth relationship of tension which is the one between the FE and the trade unions is characterized by a lack of formal trade union integration. As only some of the employee representatives are able to receive support from their trade unions on EWC specific issues, it is

argued, that this may be influencing the lack of ability of the FE to become internally cohesive. Thus it is argued in the analysis that as long as the FE is not internally coherent and receives information at a deficient to satisfactory level, it may not become more than a hybrid of the symbolic and service EWC.

In the analysis it is argued that the management representative holds a positive attitude towards the FE and wish to include them more than they have been in recent years. The VP HR Europe & Africa who recently became the management representative and chairman of the FE, expressed that he wishes to change the FE from a dormant one to one that is informed and consulted more. It is, however, further argued in the discussion that as long as the FE is not internally coherent and thus powerful vis-à-vis the management representative, the FE is likely to only be used as a forum for communicating corporate information to the employees.

It is argued that for the Forum Europe to improve its ability to influence the outcome of transnational decisions made by the central management it is a prerequisite that it becomes internally coherent. The most obvious approach to this is to develop the skills of the FE members. In the discussion it is suggested that joint training provided to the FE by Gate Gourmet on FE specific issues is likely to help facilitate that an internal coherence is developed. Thereby the different country of origin factors affecting the employee representatives may be overcome. Once developed the FE is likely to become a stronger partner vis-à-vis the central management in the social dialogue within Gate Gourmet. The internal cohesion may therefore cause that the FE might become an active FE which is likely to promote European-wide, and not local, information and consultation.

10 – Perspective

The research in this thesis was a single-case study of an EWC established on a voluntary basis. Further research could take shape of a multiple-case study analyzing how influential the representatives of an EWC are on the outcome of transnational decisions made by the management of an MNC, based on whether the EWC was established on a voluntary basis as an article 13 agreement or if they were established after the implementation of the EU Directive 94/45/EC. Streeck and Vitols (1995) in such a study argued that members of an EWC which was organically grown were more prone to actively push the management to inform and consult the EWC in a timely manner. They further argued that representatives of works councils which had been established because of legal requirements were more likely to be passive, awaiting initiative from management. Since the study by Streeck and Vitols is now more than 15 years old and was published shortly after the implementation of the EWC Directive, further research in this area could thus be an updated study of theirs to clarify if there is still a significant difference in the level of activity among the representatives influenced by the reasons of the establishment of the EWC.

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12 – Appendices

Appendix 1 – Interview Guide, Employee Representatives

Relationship between the Forum Europe and Central Management

- How do you find the level of the budget available to the Forum Europe?
- Are you able to influence the size and use?
- If it was up to you, what would you change about the budget? I.e. the size, how it is used, how it is divided between representatives, the level of influence of the representatives on the budget and how it is spent.
- Prior to the joint Forum Europe meetings are you allowed enough time-off from your daily work to prepare for?
- Do you participate in follow-up meetings with the other employee representatives after the joint Forum Europe meetings?
- Do you experience that you have sufficient time available in between the joint Forum Europe meetings to perform your role as an employee representative on the Forum Europe?
- Do you have access to an administrative staff that can provide assistance when needed for you to carry out Forum Europe tasks?
- How do you communicate with the management representative between the joint Forum Europe meetings?
- What would you change about the communication between the Forum Europe employee representatives and the management representatives?
- In what way if any are you able to exert influence on the agenda for the joint Forum Europe meetings?
- Can you give me some examples of what type of information that the management provides the Forum Europe with at the Forum Europe meeting?
- Do you find that the information that the management provides is easy to understand?
- Is the information provided in time for you to process the data before the joint Forum Europe meetings?
- On what type of issues are you usually informed by management?
- How do you receive the information from management? I.e. in writing or orally?
- Have you experienced that the Forum Europe has been consulted by management on transnational issues as suggested in the “Forum Europe Agreement on the Transnational Information and Consultation with Employees of the Gate Gourmet Group”?
- Do you remember some issues that the Forum Europe has been consulted on? What was the outcome?
- Have you experiences that management has negotiated with the Forum Europe on issues that the management has consulted the Forum Europe on?
- Do you remember some issues that the Forum Europe was negotiated on? What was the outcome?

- In what way does the central management acknowledge the Forum Europe's need for information on transnational issues?
- Why do you think there is a need for consultation as suggested in the "Forum Europe Agreement of the Transnational Information and Consultation with Employees of the Gate Gourmet Group?"
- Can you give me some examples of how the central management acknowledges the need for consultation?
- In what way do you think that there is a need for negotiation as intended by the EU Directive on works councils?
- Have you experienced a change in the cooperation between the Forum Europe and the central management since the beginning of the financial crisis?

Interaction Internally in the Forum Europe

- Do you find that you are able to communicate both formally and informally with the other Forum Europe employee representatives?
- At the joint Forum Europe meetings are you able to socialize with the other Forum Europe employee representatives?
- Are there any procedures for information exchange, that is has a line of communication been set up for exchanging information between the Forum Europe employee representatives?
- Have you experienced that other Forum Europe employee representatives will – when this does not breach confidentiality – share relevant information with you which they, but not you, have access to?
- If you have gained access to information which other Forum Europe employee representatives do not have access to will you – when this does not breach confidentiality – share it with them?
- Can you give me some examples of what type of information is shared between you and the other employee representatives?
- Have you experienced competition among the Forum Europe employee representatives that keep you from co-operating with each other?
- If you are from a subsidiary: Have you experienced that the employee representatives from HQ have better access to information and the central management?
- If you are from HQ: Have you experienced that you have better access to information and the central management than the other employee representatives?
- Have you experienced situations where some Forum Europe employee representatives were better equipped as an employee representative than others because of greater support from trade union officials?
- Can you give me some examples of when language has been a barrier to communication within the Forum Europe?

- Have any interest groups been formed within the Forum Europe between employee representatives? That is, groups which focus on different issues to be dealt with, either competitive or supplementary.
- Have you experienced that trade unions influence the employee representatives to work in different directions so that they end up counter acting each other and the work that the Forum Europe wishes to perform?

Relationship between the Forum Europe and National Employee Representation

- How do you find the cooperation between the Forum Europe and the national body of employee representation to be working?
- Do you and the national employee representatives receive time-off from your daily work to cooperate as European and national employee representatives?
- Have you experienced competition between the Forum Europe and the national level of employee representation? That is, competition to represent the same group of employees, or do you complement each other them focusing on national issues and you focusing on transnational issues?
- How important is it to you to inform the national employee representatives on the work of the Forum Europe?
- Can you give me some examples of how the Forum Europe add a European dimension to the national employee representational structure? That is, how the Forum Europe brings about European results that the national level could not have brought about?
- Can you give me some examples of how the national employee representatives create legitimacy for the Forum Europe among the employees which you and they represent? That is, how the national employee representative structure create acceptance of the work of the Forum Europe among the employees?

Relationship between the Forum Europe and trade unions

- Are you involved with a national or European trade union or both?
- Can you give me some examples of the kind of issues that you seek support from the trade union on?
- Do you experience that other Forum Europe employee representatives who receive support from trade unions receive more or less support than you?
- Do you have a single contact person who supports you at the trade union? Or do they change regularly?
- Does the trade union provide training sessions and seminars to you?
- Are you able to seek support at all times of the year or is it limited to only around the joint Forum Europe meetings?
- Does the trade union organize contact with EWC employee representatives from other companies?

- Are the issues dealt with at the joint Forum Europe Meetings primarily regarding Gate Gourmet or of a sector wide character?
- Able to align the work that the Forum Europe is performing with the work that the union is performing? That is, do you focus on the same issues?

Appendix 2 – Interview Guide, Management Representative

Information

- On what type of issues do you typically provide information to the Forum Europe? I.e. strategic issues such as international restructuring, or safety and working environment.
- How relevant do you find it to provide such information to the Forum Europe?
- Do you find the Forum Europe capable of understanding the content of the information?
- Do you find that there is a need to inform the Forum Europe on transnational issues?
- Can you give me some examples where Gate Gourmet has benefitted from informing the Forum Europe on transnational decisions to be made?

Consultation

- When you provide information to the employee representatives of the Forum Europe do you also consult with the Forum Europe on the decisions made or to be made based on that information?
- How capable do you think the employee representatives on the Forum Europe are at understanding the issues that you consult them on?
- When you disclose information to the Forum Europe do you do so before or after the final decision has been made on that given issue?
- Do you find that there is a need to consult the Forum Europe on transnational issues?
- Have you experienced that the Forum Europe has changed the outcome of decisions presented to them at the joint meetings? Can you give me some examples?

Negotiation

- On the issues that you consult the Forum Europe on are you also open to negotiate with the Forum Europe on those? That is, make a joint decision on the issue based on an agreement between management and the Forum Europe and not solely based on the management opinion?
- How capable do you think that the employee representatives of the Forum Europe are at negotiation on the issues presented at the joint meetings?
- Do you find that there is a need to negotiate with the Forum Europe on transnational issues?

Employee Representatives

- Have you experienced that some Forum Europe employee representatives are significantly better than others as employee representatives?
- Do you have more contact with the Forum Europe employee representatives of the HQ than with the other Forum Europe employee representatives?
- In what way do you think that language can be a barrier of communication with some of the Forum Europe employee representatives?

Trade Unions

- Have you experienced that trade unions interfere with the relationship between the management and the Forum Europe employee representatives?

- Have you experienced that the trade unions interfere too much with the topics to be dealt with on the Forum Europe?

Appendix 3 – Interview with UK FE Employee Representative on May 3rd 2012

1 LM: So the first questions are about the budget that is available to the Forum Europe. And how do you find that level to be, the level of the budget that you have available?

5 KF: I have only actually attended one Forum Europe meeting and at that meeting there wasn't any discussion of what budget was to the Forum, I can only assume that the Forum Steering Committee would be aware of that. It wasn't spoken of at the meeting that I attended so I'm not sure what level of budget we have.

LM: Ok, so you are not directly able to influence the size of it and how it is used?

KF: No, obviously now that I'm aware that there is a budget allocated the Forum Europe at the next meeting I will try to find out some information.

10 LM: OK, so will you try to change how the budget is spend if you find some information on how it is used?

15 KF: Yes, I think that there needs to be more transparency being how the budget is used. Obviously a the moment I'm not aware of how any of the budget is spent, so I need to find out where they are using the money and whether I think that that is a justifiable expenditure.

LM: Ok, and moving on to the time that you have available. Do you find that you are able to take enough time off from your daily work to prepare for the meetings?

20 KF: Yes, in my current role I'm allowed to spend 60% of my working time purely on union matters and that I'm freely able to decide on how i wish to portion that. So obviously I do prepare for the Forum Europe meetings close to the time that they occur.

LM: Ok, and after the meetings do you meet up with the other employee representatives from the Forum Europe to follow up on the meeting?

25 KF: No, not normally because of obviously they are all in different countries in Europe we don't seem to have any other informal meetings to discus things so the only way that I keep in contact with them are via e-mails.

LM: Ok, so when you do meet it is only that formal meeting that you have with the management also?

KF: Yes.

- 1 LM: Ok. And are you able to seek advice from an administrative staff to carry out your tasks or do you perform all the tasks on your own?
- KF: Yes, I'm able to contact the company human resources department for information and the group level is very informative.
- 5 LM: Ok, and do you feel that the group level HR staff is sufficiently skilled on the Forum Europe matters?
- KF: Yes, I think they are.
- LM: How about the central management, are you able to get in contact with them between the joint meetings?
- 10 KF: I have that option via e-mail.
- LM: Ok, have you tried to contact them?
- KF: No. Obviously I'm in a position where I'm still trying to find out how Forum Europe works; the differences between local level representation and European representation, so I'm still in a learning situation on that.
- 15 LM: I can only imagine that it must be very different from the national level to the European level.
- KF: Yes, it does appear that there is quite a lot of difference and obviously how certain policies that the company institutes are varied because of different European laws.
- LM: So would you like it to change so that you are able to get in contact with management other than via e-mails so that for example you could call them up if you have a quick question you need answered?
- 20 KF: I think that would improve things.
- LM: So easier contact with management could ease the work of the individual Forum Europe representatives you think?
- 25 KF: I obviously think that the better the contact we have with management then the better the relationship will develop and obviously we'll achieve more.
- LM: Yes, so when you are at the joint Forum Europe meetings have you been able to influence the agenda for that meeting? Or is that set by the management or the steering committee?
- 30 KF: Yes, we have ... before the Forum Europe meeting we normally have a meeting

1 purely of the work force representatives to discuss our agenda that we wish to put for to Forum Europe and I am allowed to actually influence that should I wish to.

LM: So, when you do suggest some points for the agenda is that listened to by the management and put on the agenda?

5 KF: It is. The meeting, the last or the only meeting that I have attended, we made a list of things that we wished to talk to management. But unfortunately at that particular meeting we ran out of time and it was then left up to a steering group of the Forum Europe representatives to actually raise that with management.

LM: And would you have preferred that you could have extended the meeting or do you think that its fine that the steering group takes up those points with the management?

10

KF: I would have preferred that we would have been able to extend the meeting so that it could have participated in the actual agenda.

LM: Ok, so the information that management provides you with on Gate Gourmet, can you give me some examples of what type of information and what type of issues it's provided on?

15

KF: We get information on the financial state of the group, we get information on business trends, new contracts, how they see the group progressing, their business plan, we also get information on new policies, for example the group is in the process of instituting an alert line, a telephone system where people can alert the company to any malpractice or criminal activity – we've been fully consulted on that. Also their plans for changing (?? 09m53s) of communication within the group, so it was quite informative on those aspects.

20

LM: Ok, the information that they provided, did you find that easy to understand or was it very complex information?

25 KF: In most cases it was fairly easy to understand. Obviously the financial things for someone who's not used to dealing with that it was a little bit difficult. But they made every effort to make it as understandable as possible.

LM: Ok, and have the group provided you with some training to be able to better understand it?

30 KF: No. No, I haven't received a separate training on that.

LM: Do you know if you will receive that?

KF: It's unlikely.

- 1 LM: Ok, so the information provided was that provided to you in a timely manner so you had time enough to prepare for the meeting?
- KF: No, it was actually provided at the meeting whereas one of the points that was discussed was that we would prefer to actually have information supplied to us prior to the meeting so that we could spend some time on understanding it before we actually went into discussions
- 5 LM: So did management agree to changing that so that you receive it earlier?
- KF: They did, yes. They said that they will supply information prior to the meetings in the future.
- 10 LM: Ok, and do you think that will make it easier to understand some of the more complex parts of the information?
- KF: I do believe that will be the case.
- LM: Ok, and so at the meeting did the management provide you the information in writing or did they just pass it on by words?
- 15 KF: At the meeting they provided it as a presentation but subsequent to the meeting I was emailed that information so I do have a hard copy available to me.
- LM: Ok, before you talked about you were consulted on an issue at the joint meeting you were at...
- KF: Sorry?
- 20 LM: Before you talked about you were consulted on one issue at the meeting you were just at, I think it was about how customer could report more to you.
- KF: Yes, the alert line process.
- LM: Did they ask about your opinions and how to best make the change work best?
- 25 KF: It was a general discussion of which the company did take note. The policy was left for the steering group to suit out the finer details and I have been informed from Zurich that the policy is going ahead and we are to consult at national level to find out how that should actually be implemented and that's where I personally have problems because national level information is less forth coming.
- 30 LM: Ok, so you do feel that the management were listening to the voice of the Forum Europe on that issue?

1 KF: I do, yes.

LM: Did they consult you on other issues as well? Or did they just inform you on those issues?

5 KF: I think my perception was that on the other issues because it was information that was about how the company proceeding it wasn't so much regarded as an open discussion and therefore they were just informing us.

LM: Would you prefer that they were consulting more with you rather than just informing?

KF: Yes I would.

10 LM: How do you think that could change the work of the Forum Europe and what it brings to the company?

KF: I feel that if the members of Forum Europe felt more involved with the initial making process then we would be able to support the company more. And if it was possible to get us involved at the earliest possible stage so that we would have time to make it a sensible evaluation of any information.

15 LM: So including the Forum Europe in the initial phase you find would be more valuable to the company than just informing after decisions have been made?

KF: Yeah.

20 LM: Do you find that the central management acknowledges that there is a need for the Forum Europe in the company?

KF: I believe that they are aware of their obligations to consult the Forum Europe. It was difficult to tell obviously because the people that I met, it was obviously my first meeting with them to fully appraise whether it was a reaction to being required to consult or it was that they actually wanted our input.

25 LM: Ok, and in what way do you think that there is the need for the Forum Europe in Gate Gourmet?

KF: I think that the need is to improve working practices so that we are consistent across all aspects of the business and that there are comparable processes involved irrespective of national requirements.

30 LM: Ok, thank you. And now I will move on to the more internal interaction in the Forum Europe. So did find, at the meeting you were at, did you find that you were able to communicate both formally and informally with the other European employee

1 representatives?

KF: Yes.

LM And were they all able to communicate with you in an understandable English?

KF: All apart from one member.

5 LM: The Spanish member I think I've been told does not speak very much English.

KF: That's the Spanish member who had a interpreter.

LM: Did you find that having that interpreter left the Spanish member out from the conversation compared to the rest of you?

10 KF: No. The fact that there was an interpreter available made it acceptable. Should the situation have arisen that there wasn't an interpreter available, then there would have been a real problem with communication.

LM: Ok. And were you given time to also socialize with the other employee representative?

15 KF: Yes.

LM: Did you find that that made you able to learn more about them so future will be easier because you know who they are?

KF: Yes, it did.

20 LM: When you do communicate outside the Forum Europe meetings has there been set up a line of communication so that you are able to exchange information with the other employee representatives easily?

KF: We were promised that there would be video conferencing available but that hasn't happened to my knowledge.

LM: Ok, so when you do communicate, is that primarily via phone calls or via emails?

25 KF: Primarily via emails.

LM Ok, and do you find that that makes it harder to discuss issues with the other employee representatives?

KF: Yes I do.

- 1 LM: So having video phone calls could ease up that process?
- KF: I think it would, yes.
- LM: And would you use that if it became available?
- KF: I would, yes.
- 5 LM: Have you experienced that other employee representatives, when it does not breach confidentiality, that they share information to you that you would not have access to?
- KF: That situation hasn't arisen at the moment. I feel that providing that confidentiality was maintained they probably would.
- LM: And would you do the same?
- 10 KF: Yes.
- LM: And do you find that that would make the ... do you think that exchanging information that you or the other employee representatives would not have access to, do you think that that makes it more clear what goes on in the company, more transparent?
- 15 KF: I think it would be beneficial to the representatives if they had more information, yes.
- LM: Have you experienced have, I know that you are new in this, but have you experience that some information have been withheld because of competition among the different Forum Europe employee representatives?
- 20 KF: I haven't experienced anything being withheld at European level at all. They were very forthcoming and quite helpful on information such as current pay increases ect. In their individual countries which has been very helpful in pay negotiations that I have at local level.
- LM: So so far you have not experienced any intra Forum Europe competition?
- KF: No.
- 25 LM: Ok, so you being from a subsidiary, have you experienced that the employee representatives from the HQ have better access to the information and to the central management? That on a daily basis.
- KF: It does appear that that the closer you are to the central hub of the group the more information you are able to access.

- 1 LM: And do they then provide you with that information or do you have to seek it yourself from them?
- KF: No, I still have to demand information it's not volunteered from a local level.
- 5 LM: Would you like that to change so that it is distributed instead of you having to demand it?
- KF: Yes I would.
- LM: Do you feel that you are being left out some information because you only receive it when you demand it?
- KF: I do, yes.
- 10 LM: Ok. So have you experience that because of trade union support that some employee representatives are better able to perform the tasks that others?
- KF: I think it's not so much trade support as how the relationship between the management in the individual countries of Europe communicate with the reps. in their area.
- 15 LM: Ok, so do you find that the management in the UK, in you country, have access to more information than you do on the topics?
- KF: Yes.
- LM: Ok, do you have some working groups in the Forum Europe that work on different topics such as interest groups? And do you find that they are competitive or supplementary?
- 20 KF: I'm not really in a position to answer on that because I'm not aware of how the different interest groups work.
- LM: Ok. Have you experience that trade unions influence employee representatives to work in different directions that will counteract the work of the Forum Europe?
- 25 KF: I haven't experienced it, but I could foresee that the different employee representatives would have different agendas and that may prove counterproductive to Forum Euorpe.
- LM: Do you think that the different agendas are the result of trade union pressure or a result of the state of the local subsidiary?
- 30 KF: Probably from trade union pressure.

- 1 LM: Ok, so moving on the relationship between the Forum Europe and the national employee representation structure. You are also a representative of the national structure, is that right?
- KF: That's right. I am a lay member of a trade union.
- 5 LM: Ok, and do you also have a national employee representative structure in you country?
- KF: Yes.
- LM: Ok, and how do you find the cooperation between the Forum Europe and that national structure of employee representation?
- 10 KF: It's currently, it seems to be very hassard (? 28m20sec) and information isn't freely available.
- LM: Is that from the national level to you or are you not able to ...
- KF: At the local level I can communicate with other trade union representatives but information from the national level doesn't seem to be disseminated down to the lower levels easily.
- 15 LM: Ok, so when you communicate information from your Forum Europe meetings to the national level it seems to stop there and not reach the employees?
- KF: No, it doesn't reach the employees; it tends to stay with in the level.
- LM: Ok, do you experience that there is competition between the Forum Europe and the national level of employee representation to represent the employees?
- 20 KF: I haven't experienced it, but I would believe that it would be a problem, yes.
- LM: Why do you find that it might be a problem?
- KF: Because of the way that employment issues vary in different countries and how they are administered differently.
- 25 LM: Ok, do you find that it is important that you communicate to the national level about the work of the Forum Europe?
- KF: No, there is no structure in place for me to actually communicate outwards about the Forum Europe. (30m52sec – missing some words)

- 1 LM: Ok, so do you find that the Forum Europe adds a European dimension at all to the national level of representation structure?
- KF: I'm not aware of it. It may happen at a higher level within the trade union structure, but at my level, no.
- 5 LM: So do you find that the Forum Europe can create results that the national level could not create?
- KF: Yes, I do believe that information from Forum Europe about how other European countries work is very useful, certainly at my level of negotiations, yes.
- 10 LM: Ok, and so I will move on to the last part of the question, which are the relationship between the Forum Europe and trade unions. You said earlier that you are involved in a trade union, is that a national or European trade union?
- KF: Yes, it a national trade union that does have international links.
- LM: Ok. Can you give me some examples of the issues that you can seek support from your trade union on?
- 15 KF: Obviously I contact the trade union regarding issues of employment law, gathering information on how other employers make agreements with their workforce, current pay levels within industries and how national government affects workers rights.
- LM: Ok, so when you do contact them for support, do you find that they are able to help you at a sufficient level?
- 20 KF: Yes, I'm a member of Unite union which is one of the biggest unions in the UK and there is a very extensive structure to enable me to help, or help me to gather information and for them to support me.
- LM: Ok, and do you have one single person of contact who you seek support from or does it differ depending on the subject?
- 25 KF: There is an initial single person that we contact, but we can be referred to specialists if they decide that we need to speak to someone with more information.
- LM: Ok, and do you find that to be the best way of receiving support from the trade unions?
- KF: Yes I do.
- 30 LM: Ok. Do they provide you with training sessions or seminars on European works council specific issues?

- 1 KF: Not on European work. We have training and seminars on UK based subjects such as pensions negotiating practices, health and safety law etc.
- LM: Ok, so you only receive support on national and not European level issues?
- 5 KF: Yes, it's only national. My union doesn't have any separate training for European level.
- LM: Ok, do you know if the international link have, if that will be able to provide you with any European training?
- 10 KF: I'm not aware of any. All that they do mention is that they have links with various other trade unions around the world including the ((incomp)) and there's some unions in France but the information is not concise, it's very vague.
- LM: Ok, so does the trade union arrange that you can get in contact with other employee representatives on a European Works Council in another country?
- KF: No they don't.
- 15 LM: Ok. Do you find that you are able to align the work of the Forum Europe with the work that the union is performing?
- KF: Not at the moment. Obviously I'm still fairly new to being a European representative but obviously it is one of the tasks over the year or so that I will try to find out about and get more involved with.
- LM: Ok. Thank you. I think that concludes my part of the interview. Do you have anything you would like to add?
- 20 KF: This information is for what purpose?
- LM: It is for the analysis part of my master thesis.
- KF: Good.

Appendix 4 – Interview with Belgian FE Employee Representative on May 9th 2012

1 LM: What was your motivation to join the Forum Europe?

LP: Originally it started out with the local workers council and then I participated to get to know more about how finance in corporate level works. I have a financial background and I wanted to learn more about that and how it works internally. Later on it was asked if somebody was interested in Forum Europe and I found it interesting to see it all work in European level and try to do something more than just locally because they always have to ask approval anyway.

LM: Ok, so that sounds good. Those were just the preliminary questions and then I'll go to the interview that I also emailed you.

10 LP: Fine.

LM: So starting off with more budget oriented questions, how do you find the level of the budget available to the Forum Europe to be?

LP: What do you mean with budget, because I don't think... I don't have a budget at least. Whenever there is a meeting it's all arranged with the local companies and they pay for everything.

LM: So you are not able to change the money that you have available for the meetings.

LP: Physically I have no money available.

LM: Ok, so I it was up to you would you change it so that you could influence what would be available to you?

20 LP: Yes and no. Yes, it maybe would be easier if you could, and maybe cheaper for the company if you could buy your own ticket and see what is the best option. On the other hand, no, as now it is done by an internal person who is ordering tickets so you never have to question why you have to go is it really that expensive.

LM: Ok. Moving on to the time you have available prior to the Forum Europe meetings are you allowed time enough off from your daily work to prepare for the joint Forum Europe meetings?

LP: For Forum Europe, we do that after hours. For the local meetings, we have time off.

LM: Ok, so you have to work extra time to prepare for your Forum Europe meetings?

- 1 LP: Yes.
- LM: Ok, and do you participate in any follow up meetings with the other employee representatives at the joint Forum Europe meetings?
- LP: You mean the representatives from the Forum Europe?
- 5 LM: Yes.
- LP: We have contact later on via mail since usually after the meetings everybody is leaving home quite quickly so even the day of the meeting the people go home so there is not really time to have face to face follow up.
- 10 LM: Ok. Would you like that to change so you did have a meeting with only the employee representatives after the joint meeting?
- LP: It would be nice to have a small personal follow up and what everybody thought at that moment of the meeting because later on it's difficult to express yourself through mail.
- 15 LM: Ok. Do you find that you have sufficient time available between the joint Forum Europe meetings to perform your role as an employee representative of the Forum Europe?
- LP: You mean between the different meetings?
- LM: Yes.
- 20 LP: It's once a year, so yes I have time.
- LM: Are you allocated time off to inform about the agreements or what you were consulted on at the Forum Europe meeting or do you have to do that in your overtime also?
- LP: Say that question again.
- 25 LM: Are you allowed time off from your daily tasks between the meetings, not just prepare for the Forum Europe meetings but also to do the upcoming work of the Forum Europe?
- LP: That's also extra time.
- 30 LM: Ok. Would like that to change so that you are allowed time off from your daily work to perform your Forum Europe tasks?

- 1 LP: That's a difficult question. Sometimes it's handy but not always necessary.
- LM: Ok. And then moving to the infrastructure of the Forum Europe. Do you have access to an administrative staff that can provide you with assistance when you do so to carry out your Forum Europe tasks?
- 5 LP: What administrative staff do you mean?
- LM: For example the HR department, can you ask them for help for your Forum Europe tasks?
- LP: It depends on what kind of help. To book tickets and so on, yes, but for the rest they are part of the management team that we are negotiating with so it's a bit delicate.
- 10 LM: Ok. How do you communicate with the management representatives between the Forum Europe meetings?
- LP: That's with mail.
- LM: Only with mail?
- LP: We can also call them if we think that is better or sometimes we have a person in the local unit which is coming to visit and if you have a question you can also do that.
- 15 LM: Ok. And would you like something about the communication between the Forum Europe employee representatives and the management representatives to change? To ease up communication?
- 20 LP: I have no idea. It's a difficult question. I think it is up to the person himself to try and manage a bit of communication. From the management there's very little questions towards us, so if you have a question it is up to yourself to figure out how you want to do that.
- LM: Ok. At the joint Forum Europe meetings, in what are you able to exert any influence on the agenda?
- 25 LP: The day before the Forum Europe meeting we have our own pre-meeting with the employee representatives and there we can also add our own agenda points.
- LM: Ok, and what type of issues do you usually put on the agenda at that meeting?
- 30 LP: It depends. It's mostly local questions, since globally each person individually doesn't really have a view on what's really happening in Spain and what the problems are there for example. Since I'm from Brussels I don't know what they are

- 1 doing. Of course we talk but still you don't see problems, so there everybody tries to bring up individual points or concerns. We had a quite difficult period in Brussels and for example I asked what their plans are to try and change that.
- LM: Ok, and did you find that they listened to that?
- 5 LP: Yes. But not always. Maybe they will listen but... Let's say they hear it but not really listen maybe always.
- LM: OK. Can you give me some examples of the type of information that the management provides the Forum Europe with at the meetings?
- 10 LP: That's very different. It changes every time. They usually answer our questions, then they also present global changes or global things that are going to happen or plans they have of course the plans they can tell us because we are a stock marked company so they cannot give every information to us and also we get a financial of the past year, how well we did globally.
- LM: Ok, and do you find that information easy to understand.
- 15 LP: For myself, yes. I don't know for other people. I have a financial background so I can read the statuses.
- LM: OK. Is it delivered to you in time enough for you to process the data before the meeting?
- LP: I would say yes and no. We have to get it ourselves and we only get a copy on the
20 day of the meeting if we did not get it ourselves.
- LM: OK. Have you tried to change this so it would be provided to you beforehand?
- LP: Yes, and then they say that it is available in your local HR department but when you ask here, sometimes they not always know what you are talking about.
- LM: Ok, that can make it difficult.
- 25 LP: Yes.
- LM: So when you do receive the information from the management, is that usually in writing or is it presented on a slide show?
- LP: We get both. We get printout slide show, we also view it during the meeting on the
30 slides and the financial status that's a printout book that is also handed out to shareholders.

- 1 LM: Ok, and when the management provides you with some information, do they also consult the Forum Europe on the Forum Europe's opinion on the matter before the decision is made?
- 5 LP: I don't know. Maybe they already made the decision, but that's something we don't know of course. They can always ask our comments and ask how we see it even though they maybe already made the decision. But for some items I know for example that they did in fact ask for extra consulting to us maybe how they can arrange something.
- 10 LM: So when they do consult you, do you find that it's primarily on the content of the decision or the implementation phase on the decisions that they are making?
- LP: Usually on the implementation phase.
- LM: Ok.
- LP: Not really in the start up or in the development.
- 15 LM: Ok, and do you find that the management considers the opinion of the Forum Europe or do you find that it's more to inform and show you that they want to hear what you have to say?
- LP: Most of the time I have the feeling it is more to inform and only sometimes that they really want our opinion and change their course in that way.
- 20 LM: Ok. When they do try to consult you, do you receive information about that issue before the meeting or at the meeting?
- LP: We usually get the agenda points before we have our own meeting for the agenda points. And since recently we also asked to get the slide shows in advance so we can look at what they are going to tell us over a little bit more. That was not really the case in the past.
- 25 LM: So at the recent meeting you had did you receive the slide show prior to the meeting?
- LP: No.
- LM: So you expect that next meeting you will receive it prior?
- LP: I hope so, yes.
- 30 LM: Ok. So on the issues that you have been consulted on, have you experienced that the management are also willing to negotiate on the decisions with the Forum Europe?

- 1 LP: Yes, in a small way. That's mostly if there is something changing budget wise of if they want some savings to be done, then that is the case.
- LM: Ok. Do you find that both you and the other Forum Europe representatives are skilled to undertake the negotiations with management? Meaning that you understand the
5 issues that they present to you?
- LP: I usually feel that everybody understands the points and what the request is of the management but not always that they are strong enough to really negotiate in a hard way.
- LM: Ok. In what way do you find that the central management acknowledge the Forum
10 Europe's need for information on the transnational issues?
- LP: What do you mean with that?
- LM: Do you find that the management acknowledge that the Forum Europe should receive information on the company's transnational decisions and progress?
- LP: I don't really they see the need, I think they feel it more as an obliged necessity. I
15 wouldn't say rather not have but sometimes not to have.
- LM: Ok. And why do you find that there's a need for the Forum Europe?
- LP: Just to control that whatever is being decided in the corporate level can also be maintained in the local level because sometimes you have legal issues which don't really go together and then it has to be adjusted or spoken about. Also that we can
20 give our own opinion of the way of working of the general management that is in Zurich, since normally we don't see them, but everybody has a comment about them and also to control a bit of what they are doing and if they are saying locally that the company is not doing well, then we can see how the company is doing globally because that's actually the most important, not locally but globally. They don't really
25 care... well they care if one company is loosing money but it's better that one company is loosing money and two others are gaining.
- LM: Yes. Since the financial crisis started, have you experienced change in the corporation between the Forum Europe and the central management?
- LP: We feel a little cutbacks, yes. They tried to change on some small things: where
30 meetings are taking place, maybe how often or how many days. There is a small change in that.
- LM: Have you experienced that the issues that management inform about has that changed? Are they more controlling what information they provide you with?

- 1 LP: Yes, .but I think that's more to do with the fact that we are on the stock exchange. They are not at liberty to tell everything to us.
- LM: Ok. So now I will move on to the internal interaction in the Forum Europe. Do you find that you are able to communicate both formally and informally with the other employee representatives?
- 5 LP: Yes.
- LM: At the joint meetings are you able to socialize with the other employee representatives as well?
- LP: Yes. Before we eat breakfast together and in the evening we go for a drink.
- 10 LM: Do you find that the socialization helps you build a stronger relationship with the other employee representatives and with management?
- LP: Definitely. If you are a little bit more like friend, lets say, then I think you are also strong as a group.
- LM: Yes and do you have any procedures set up for information exchange such as a line of communication for exchanging information between the joint Forum Europe meetings?
- 15 LP: With the employee representatives that's with mail for those who have mail and we have also made a list with everybody's phone numbers just in case we would need them quickly to consult on something, but usually we use mail.
- 20 LM: Do you find that to be sufficient?
- LP: For what we need it's mostly handy since you can copy in everybody without really having to speak to one person ((incomp)) you just send a general mail to all representatives and ask their opinion on something.
- LM: Ok. So is there anything about that communication structure that you would like to change?
- 25 LP: I don't really see a lot of other options, so I would say no.
- LM: Ok. Have you experienced that the other Forum Europe representatives will – when it doesn't breach confidentiality – share relevant information which do not have access to but they do have access to?
- 30 LP: Yes. Usually also whatever we know is not confidential.

- 1 LM: Ok. And have experienced that you have shared information yourself that others did not have access to?
- LP: Yes, of course everybody have it's local issues.
- 5 LM: Can you give me some examples of the information that you do share with the other employee representatives?
- LP: Problems in the unit that we have, problems that change all the time, managers towards the employees – how they act or whatever, of if there is for example actual misconduct from management to personnel, or also for approval of code of conduct to inform did everybody approve this or did you change things or not.
- 10 LM: Ok, and with the other Forum Europe representatives, have you experienced that there have been some sort of competition among each other?
- LP: No .
- LM: Ok. Have you experience that the employee representatives from the HQ have better access to information about the company and the central management?
- 15 LP: Yes, but I think that's normal in a way. I also have better communication with my own management since I see them every day, so that is always personal contact where you get to know more and you also see what's happening in the unit.
- LM: Yes. Do those employee representatives from the HQ share that information with the rest of the Forum Europe employee representatives or do you have to ask for it?
- 20 LP: Of course I don't if they are sharing everything since I don't know what's happening in the local unit so it's based mostly on a trust whenever there is something needed to share that they offer it.
- LM: Ok. Have you experienced situations where some Forum Europe employee representatives were better equipped as employee representatives than others because of greater support from trade union officials?
- 25 LP: Yes. But that may be due to the fact that in each country the organization of representatives is different. For example, the person from Spain is a employee representative for all hospitality industry in the whole of Spain, not just for Gate Gourmet. I'm one of the twelve representatives I think. We have different meetings; we have a committee for safety here in Brussels and also workers council; they each have their own particular item they speak about, so I think it's normal that somebody with really country responsibility have more support than somebody that just has it's local unit. I think it has to do with how it's arranged in each country.
- 30

- 1 LM: So the different national subsidiaries of Gate Gourmet have different national employee representation structures?
- LP: Yes. For example, in Holland they don't have a council.
- 5 LM: Ok, so they only have the Forum Europe employee representative and not a national council.
- LP: No no, they don't even have a national council because they don't have a local representative.
- LM: Ok.
- 10 LP: So it's also origin wise and how the countries is build up of course we would like to have somebody of the Netherlands in the Forum Europe and we have been trying that definitely for some time, but they have no, in Holland they have no back ground of trade unions.
- LM: Ok. So can you give me some examples of when language have been a barrier to communication within the Forum Europe?
- 15 LP: There's not really a barriers. We only have one person that is not English speaking and he needs a translator. He is also the Spanish representative. But always during the meetings there is a translator present and some part of the evening after the meeting. And for the rest if you want to go have a drink more, then I pick up my best Spanish and we manage.
- 20 LM: Ok. So have you received any language training from Gate Gourmet?
- LP: From Gate Gourmet, no.
- LM: Ok. Do you know if any interest groups have been formed within the Forum Europe employee representatives?
- 25 LP: There is a steering committee and that steering committee consists of four members of the Forum Europe employee representatives. They are chosen by the representatives of the Forum Europe and they have four meetings a year – about three or four – with the management of the HQ.
- LM: Ok.
- LP: And I'm also part of that steering committee.
- 30 LM: Do you find that being part of the steering committee you have gained more insight to the work of the Forum Europe?

- 1 LP: Yes. I think that the steering committee can have a little more informal conversation with HQ management and I feel that there is more swinging power also because the group is not so big so not everybody has something to bring in and it's easier to make agreements.
- 5 LM: So do you find that the steering committee is taken more serious than the Forum Europe? Or not necessarily taken more serious but it has a greater power with the central management than the Forum Europe?
- 10 LP: Yes. That I think so. Not that they are taken more seriously as a group itself but they have more power since the fact that you just see the management more and you also get a little different relationship. If you see each other once a year, it's easy to say "no" and then think "now I'm rid of them for the rest of the year".
- LM: Ok. And have you experienced that trade unions influence the employee representatives to work in different directions so that they end up counter acting each other and the work that the Forum Europe wishes to perform?
- 15 LP: No. We are not really guided by our own trade unions. We have been received this possibility to go there and act with our own responsibilities and as we see best fit for the employees since we are in that meeting, we see how it's going, we what the possibilities are and we can also make our own decisions in that matter.
- 20 LM: Ok. Moving on the relationship between the Forum Europe and the national employee representation structure. How do you find the cooperation between the Forum Europe and the national body of employee representative to be working?
- LP: What do you mean with that?
- LM: Do you find that you are able to work well together with the national employee representatives in Belgium?
- 25 LP: Yes, since I'm also part of that. I'm also elected to go to the Forum Europe by those members so yes.
- LM: So after the Forum Europe meetings, do you have a meeting with the national body to provide them with the information you gained at the Forum Europe meeting?
- 30 LP: Yes. I usually wait till we get the overview or the summary of that meeting, then I give also the slides we can print from the sharepoint (? 34m29sec) website and then I go over the items we spoke about. Maybe sometimes items I remember which I wrote down myself which are not in the minutes, or as particular in the minutes of the meeting and I try to inform them as good as possible.

- 1 LM: Ok. And before the Forum Europe meetings do you meet with the national body to prepare for what you should take to the European meeting?
- LP: Usually one meeting before that since we have monthly meetings with the local representatives and usually the meeting before I go to the Forum Europe I ask them if they have items I should bring up or issues and then I take them with me.
- 5 LM: Ok. Do you find that that works well?
- LP: Yes. Only the fact that it's not always clear for them what they can ask from HQ management.
- LM: So do find that the national body understands the purpose of the Forum Europe?
- 10 LP: Now I think yes, because I explained it to them. But the first time since we are now doing this for three years I think – the Forum Europe – that Brussels is taking part – we are not so long in Gate Gourmet unit yet. When they asked us for a representative this was very unclear and not very... we didn't know what it would be and what the point of it was.
- 15 LM: But after having explained to them and you have experienced the Forum Europe, it's more clear now?
- LP: Yes.
- LM: Ok. Do you and the other national body receive time off to cooperate or is that seen as national representation time?
- 20 LP: We have two meetings every month. One is the pre-meeting for which we get time off from work. But we are in fact in the unit and we have our meeting in the unit. And then the after... but we also make the agenda points for the local management meeting the week after. So for the pre-meeting and the actual meeting locally we have the available time, yes.
- LM: Ok. And those three years that you have been in the Forum Europe have you experienced that there's been some competition between the Forum Europe and the national level of employee representation?
- 25 LP: No, not at all.
- LM: Ok. Do you find that the employees that you represent are aware of the Forum Europe? Do you find that the employees in Belgium are aware of the Forum Europe?
- 30 LP: Very little.

1 LM: Ok. So I will just ask you now about the value that the European Forum Europe adds. Can you give me some examples of how the Forum Europe add a European dimension to the national level of employee representation?

5 LP: We often get the message when we request something from local management that they say “yes but we have to ask HQ and we have to ask for approval” and then when in fact sometimes when you ask HQ “why is the approval taking so long or why are you not giving it or is it really the case” and it’s often that for items like that that HQ does not have to give approval and then I bring that to the local unit and ask why they said so or what may be misunderstood.

10 LM: Ok. You said before that the Belgium employees don’t know much about the Forum Europe yet. Have you or some of the other national employee representatives tried and informed the national employees about the Forum Europe and what it does?

15 LP: If we want to do that we have to do it a little bit individually actually because it’s difficult to get everybody together in the same place in the same time and have a general explanation about how the Forum Europe works and also the local trade union has been given not really a carte blanche but the responsibility to maintain the workers best interest in any way how it’s necessary, so we have a very high trust in the people to do what we do. We have been given the trust when they voted for us and they maybe sometimes ask questions about the Forum Europe. But in general I also feel they are more interested in the local and what is happening here. Because
20 for the worker in production he feels very little connection with the HQ.

LM: Ok. And moving on to the relationship between the Forum Europe and the trade unions. Are you involved with a national or European union or both?

LP: I am in both.

25 LM: Ok. And were you suggested for election but the trade union?

LP: What?

LM: Did the trade union suggest that the employees elected you for employee representative? Or did you run internally without the trade union suggesting you?

30 LP: In Belgium everybody who is having a small role function within the company or also acting like that can put himself on the list freely of not being blocked by the trade unions unless of course you are really an ass whole to say it like that. That you are just doing it to get the works... In Belgium if you are in a trade union as an elected member you have protection against resignation because we have to fight management and if they don’t really like you they can otherwise just fire you without any cause and we are protected from that. And so the trade unions try to avoid in that
35 way people who just want to be on that list to be sure of not being able to be fired.

1 That is the only restriction there is.

LM: Your cooperation with the trade unions is that close?

5 LP: Yes. We usually have our monthly representatives meeting. But since the fact that in Belgium for example we have the Dutch part and the French part and each part have their own workers council. And you also have the Christian and the socialist, the liberal parties, so there are a lot of different trade union parties and I'm part of only one.

10 LM: Ok. And do you also have close cooperation with your European trade union or is that connected to you national trade union?

LP: That is connected to the national trade union.

LM: Ok. Can you give me some examples of the kind of issues that you seek support from the trade unions on?

15 LP: That is usually regarding legal issues. I'm not a lawyer and if we have for examples they are going to implement... they are planning of implementing a kind an alert line and that is really bound with local legislation as well: what is possible and what is not possible. There I ask counseling from the local trade union since they have a lawyer in... they hired a lawyer for those items and they present it to him so he can look at it if there's really nothing in contradiction with the local legislation, and that I ask, yes.

20 LM: Ok. Do you experience that other Forum Europe Employee representatives receive more support from trade unions or less than you?

LP: That's difficult. Probably everybody receive support but that is then being done before the meetings we have so we just see what they bring forward and we are not really asking "is that coming from your local union or is that really you".

25 LM: Ok. So do you find that the trade union support create an unfair game between those that receive more support than less?

LP: No, that's just how the trade unions are working in each country because it's different everywhere so the support will be different as well.

30 LM: Yes. Do you have a single contact person who support you at the trade union or do they change regularly or do you have a contact person for each issue?

LP: I have one contact person and that is in Belgium we also have different... how to explain... for example I now work in hospitality so we have one being for hospitality in sub-regions. I work in Brussels so we have one for hospitality in Brussels. We

1 have one for hospitality in Antwerp, we have one for chemical works in Antwerp and in Brussels. So each sub-department has its own contact person and the one that I have is a person in hospitality in Brussels region.

LM: Ok. And does the trade union provide training seminars to you?

5 LP: Yes.

LM: And do you attend those?

LP: Not always but the ones I really find interesting I participate in, yes.

LM: Do you find that that develops you skills as an employee representative?

10 LP: Definitely.

LM: So are you able to seek support at all times of the year or is it limited to only around the joint Forum Europe meetings?

LP: No. I can do that everyday.

15 LM: Does the trade union also organize contact with other European Works Councils employee representatives?

LP: No. I never really been offered that anyway.

LM: Ok. So are the issues dealt with at the Forum Europe meetings primarily regarding they Gate Gourmet or of a sector wide character?

LP: Regarding do you mean that?

20 LM: Are the issues at the Forum Europe meetings primarily intra-corporation specific about Gate Gourmet or is it more of a sector wide character where they focus on what's going on within the sector?

25 LP: It's a Gate Gourmet Forum Europe meeting so that really is about Gate Gourmet. But of course they also inform us about how the competition is doing and how the sector is doing and how they are going to play in that market.

LM: Ok. Do you find that you are able to align the work that the Forum Europe is performing with the work that you union is trying to perform? Do you find that you are moving in the same direction or do you find that the Forum Europe is moving in one direction and the unions suggest a different direction?

30 LP: We are not working in different directions since the eventual goal is the well being of

1 the workers but the general way of working is a little different since locally you
really speak about the unit and you can negotiate more and harder than when you do
this on HQ level since they are there for more global items and if you have issues
that can be solved locally – the not really big ones – say not actual misconduct of a
5 manager but you say we want salary increase; that has to be dealt with locally and
then they will see on the corporate level how far they are allowed to go and that is
difficult to negotiate already in advance with corporate. It's best you have to involve
your management in that.

10 LM: Ok. Well that was the end of the interview that I prepared. Do you have something
you would like to add?

LP: No. Not that I know.

Appendix 5 – Interview with Belgian FE Employee Representative on 24th May 2010 (51m41s)

- 1 LM: How many years have you been with Gate Gourmet?
- LH: * I have been in the company- they have been bought by Gate Gourmet in 2007 so for Gate Gourmet since 2007 which is five years of so.
- LM: Ok.
- 5 LH: For the company, 24 years.
- LM: Ok. And what is your position in Gate Gourmet?
- LH: My function?
- LM: Yes.
- LH: I work in the factory, I am an operator.
- 10 LM: Ok. What was your motivation to join the FE?
- LH: *6* It was a chance to speak other languages, to see people from other countries and get news from first hand.
- LM: Ok. And so now I'll move on to the interview. Have you received the questions?
- LH: Yes, yes. ((incomp)).
- 15 LM: Ok. So I'll start with the relationship between the FE and the management. How do you find the level of the budget available to the FE?
- LH: *6* That's a difficult one. I don't know about a budget. So I think we get- ((incomp)). We can fly- * so difficult question. ((incomp)) When I fly to Zurich they want me to drive to Germany to fly to Zurich because flying from Brussels to Zurich is very expensive, there's only one carrier doing that. So it- I think there's a problem with this budget.
- 20 LM: Ok. So #do you#
- LH: #No#, I don't think the budget is ok.
- LM: Ok. So do you find that you are able to influence the size and the spending of the

1 budget?

LH: *5* I do think so, yes. If we convince management we need-. Yes I think so.

LM: Ok. If it was up to you, what would you change about the budget?

LH: *6* Well now?

5 LM: Yes.

LH: Now we are meeting in Switzerland so I would look where it's cheaper to meet. Maybe it's cheaper to meet in Spain or whatever. So ((incomp)). If we meet the first days of the week; Monday and Tuesday, and if we arrive on Sunday maybe. Traveling I think is the most expensive part of, for the company and maybe-.

10 LM: Ok. And so prior to the joint FE meetings are you allowed time off from your daily work to prepare for the joint meetings?

LH: I didn't see the need for taking time off. You don't have to prepare a lot, no I don't think.

15 LM: Ok. So do you participate in any follow-up meetings with the other employee representatives at the joint FE meetings?

LH: You mean the other employees in FE? Or my colleagues at home? It is the FE employees that you mean?

LM: Yes the other employee representatives from the other countries.

20 LH: Follow-up meetings we don't have. There is a plan of video conferencing but I think it doesn't really work. We do send some e-mails now and then but it's not very much.

LM: Ok. So do you have access to an administrative staff that can provide you with assistance when you need that to carry out your FE tasks?

25 LH: *6* Well the tickets, I don't have to buy the tickets my self, so that's taken care of. No other administration- No, I do it myself.

LM: Ok.

LH: I don't have to ask anyone.

LM: And how do you communicate with the central management between the FE meetings?

- 1 LH: By e-mail. We do send e-mail. I did send a mail to Jesper the HR-manager, it works fine.
- LM: Ok.
- 5 LH: They-. It's a new way to communicate. Just send e-mails and then we can answer the same day or next day.
- LM: Is there anything you would like to change about the communication between the FE employee representatives and the central management?
- LH: *9* No, I think it works fine.
- LM: Ok.
- 10 LH: We don't all speak English, that's difficult. The one from Spain he only speak Spanish and he sends us mail in Spanish.
- LM: OK.
- 15 LH: I did speak Spanish but it's been more than 10 years ago-. I think we all needed to have English skills. That makes it a lot easier to communicate, with management and with the other employees. But for the rest, everything is fine.
- LM: Ok. And in what way are you able to influence the agenda for the joint FE meetings?
- 20 LH: *7* Before we- when we were part of the Swedish ((incomp)) we met twice a year and we always ((incomp)) for the next meeting. So we- no, there were two meetings, the first one was in April/May in the results; the financial results and for the second meeting we should be informed for example safety and R&D. But I don't feel like we are a team at the meetings so- If we put something on the agenda we talk about.
- LM: Ok. Would you like it to change so you could influence the agenda more?
- LH: Can you please repeat the question?
- 25 LM: Would you like it to change so that you can influence the agenda more for the meetings?
- LH: I did like ((incomp)) to speak about safety for example. And everyone from the other countries say "in our country is't this kind of expense for the ((incomp))" We work with safety like- yeah.
- 30 LM: Ok.

- 1 LH: They could engage us more. Now we sit there and we listen, we don't have to really do something, we just have to sit and listen, ok.
- LM: Ok. Yes and can you give me some examples of the type of information that the management provides the FE with at the FE meetings?
- 5 LH: Yeah, we normally get the financial results. But because the company is listed at the stock market so they cant give us new information. So it's solely- Recently we talked about the wistleblower, wistleblower line, an alert line as they called it; ((incomp)) budget; and we spoke about investments.
- 10 LM: Ok. And do you find that the information that the management provides is easy to understand?
- LH: Yes, yes. I think their do the best to explain it at our level, especially the financial, I don't recall her name, but ((incomp)), the financial expert she explained it. ((incomp))
- 15 LM: And is the information delivered in time for you to process it in the data before the joint FE meetings?
- LH: Normally they do, but we have the last FE meeting in March and now in next week we have an extra meeting and we don't know what it's about, so yeah. But normally we get the information in time.
- LM: Ok. On what type of issues are you usually informed by management?
- 20 LH: Mostly it's financial and it's the alert line. But mostly it's just from the management. The management determines what to speak about, what the meeting is about.
- LM: Say that again please.
- LH: Normally we don't choose the issues. But mostly it's financial and investments.
- LM: Ok. Do you find that to be relevant for the FE and for you?
- 25 LH: *6*Relevant? Yes, it's- Not for our country, but still it's good to know. It's good to know about the company. What should be guarded in our units, so every unit that is different. So the company as a whole that is relevant. I do think we need that information, yeah.
- 30 LM: Ok. And how do you receive the information from management? Is it either in writing or do they present it orally to you?

- 1 LH: Last time they promised- normally the financial information is also available on the internet so they send an e-mail and we can find it. We get the information in advance, you know.
- 5 LM: Ok. And have you experienced that the FE has been consulted by management on transnational issues other than just being informed, but also consulted?
- LH: No.
- LM: Ok. Would you like it to change so they did consult you more and not just inform you?
- 10 LH: *10* Please can you repeat?
- LM: Would you like it to change so that the FE was consulted more by the central management and not just informed about the issues they take to the joint FE meetings?
- 15 LH: It's good to get information and it's good to be consulted but they don't have to listen to us, so again we can sit there and we can give our opinion but it's not more than just an opinion, so again they will listen to us, but-. I don't think they will make a lot of expenses, travel expenses and so on just to get an extra opinion, so I'm very-. I believe in works councils and so but you have to know your place and we don't make the decisions, so-. Ok, you get the information and sometimes can sit around the
- 20 table but it's not like we decide a lot of things.
- LM: So if the FE gives their opinion on an issue, do you find that the central management listen to that and take that into consideration?
- LH: Yes. It's ok to say so. But it makes sense that they will take it into account.
- 25 LM: Ok. And in what way do you find that the central management acknowledges the FE's need for information on transnational issues.
- LH: I didn't experience yet the need for this. So-. Now we are talking about the whistleblower line, but it's not transnational so-.
- LM: Or also just pan-European issues.
- 30 LH: So far I didn't * meet some transnational issues or pan-European issues. I'm still going to meeting for ((incomp)).
- LM: Do you think that the central management see- think that there is a need to inform the FE on European issues? Or the European state of the company?

1 LH: Well, I think- Yes, when we sit together from the countries, we all work, we all get
an income. So if you say “we’ll close this factory or this division and someone else
benefit, then we sit together, we see our colleagues from other countries, you know.
5 If they shut that factory we will get better for it-. You realize that you are always
talking about persons, about people and it’s-. Yeah, I think really that if we sit
together and then we see that, ok- then we hear stories that they do it this way and we
have been making an investment so it really works good or if it doesn’t work at all.
So you get- yeah.

10 LM: Ok. And why do you think that there is a need for being informed by the
management on European issues? For you as an employee representative?

LH: We can-, like in Belgium we have- our salaries- things get more expensive, food
becomes more expensive. Our salaries they follow the growth by inflation, and our
salaries they follow. We don’t have to fight for it, we don’t have to ask for it. When
the prices go up two per cent then we get two per cent increase in the salary. In other
15 countries they have to negotiate about it. “So what did you get? Yeah we got a raise
of two per cent or four per cent” or whatever. So people compare “oh we didn’t get a
raise in salary” and because we are one company that comes together in Switzerland,
so if we can get a two per cent raise they can give that to the people in Germany also.
That’s one reason, we can compare. Sometimes salaries, sometimes working
20 conditions. Yeah, a lot. And then it makes you strong at communication at local level
if you have to explain information.

LM: So do you find that the FE generates more communication between the different
European countries?

LH: Yes. It’s very easy to. ((incomp))

25 LM: Ok. In what way do you think that there is a need for the management to negotiate
with the FE?

LH: *8* Really negotiating well, *-

LM: Would you like that when the management informs and consult you on issues that
they would also negotiate with you so that you- the FE together with the management
30 came to an agreement on an issue and not just the management taking the decision?

LH: No, I don’t think that that would work. We could get some input on some items, yes.
But I don’t think that it’s the role for the FE that we are negotiating.

LM: Ok.

LH: For some kind of items maybe.

- 1 LM: What kind of items would that be on?
- LH: The pan-European. The whistleblower line is a global item, it also works in the United States and Europe. So we give them- we told that we were not happy with this whistleblower line and we got some things to change. And I think they adapted their proposal in some kind. I think that that's good item.
- 5 LM: Ok.
- LH: For the FE, the whistleblower, yeah.
- LM: Ok. And have you experienced a change in the co-operation between the FE and the central management since the beginning of the financial crisis?
- 10 LH: No, no. I didn't. They are a little more concerned about the expences.
- LM: Ok.
- LH: But ((incomp)) on the local management. In Belgium we have a kitchen unit in Brussels, Brussels Airport and when we went to Zurich in March the Brussels guy, he came from Brussels Airport, he paid €1,200 for his ticket and I flew from
15 Düsseldorf, Germany and I paid €16, so- I think we are the same company and I have to drive two hours to Germany- * so I see a little bit of change, yeah.
- LM: Ok. And So I'll move on to the internal interaction within the FE. Do you find that you are able to communicate both formally and informally with the other FE employee representatives?
- 20 LH: Yes. I don't see any difficulties in communicating, no.
- LM: Ok. And at the joint FE meetings are you able to socialize with the other FE employee representatives?
- LH: Yes, yes. We sit together, when we go to the airport after the meeting we are waiting for our planes and we sit together. ((incomp)) There's also time for sitting together.
- 25 LM: Ok. Do you find that the socialization helps you build stronger relationships with the other employee representatives and with management also?
- LH: *14* No.
- LM: Ok. Are there any procedures for information exchange, such as a line of
30 communication that has been set up for the exchange of information between the FE employee representatives?

- 1 LH: No, no procedures. We just send e-mails out. No, I don't think there's really a procedure for doing things like that.
- LM: Ok. And have you experienced that your fellow FE employee representatives, when this doesn't breach confidentiality, share relevant information with you which they but not you have access to?
- 5
- LH: No, no. That haven't happened, no. We spoke about the whistleblower, oh no, the- * there was a procedure of using Facebook and Twitter and this kind of things, a social media procedure. So they want us to sign the agreement so we each other from the other units "have you signed the agreement?" "No we didn't". But no, we don't share confidential- we don't have confidential information like that. ((incomp))
- 10
- LM: Ok. Can you give some examples of what kind of information is shared between you and the other employee representatives?
- LH: It's mostly about the company. It's not- * It's the social media procedure, * at the year end we send each other greetings for the next year, but-.
- 15 LM: OK. And have you experienced competition among the FE employee representatives that keeps you from co-operating with each other?
- LH: No.
- LM: Ok.
- LH: Not in that, no.
- 20 LM: And have you experience that the employee representative from HQ has better access to information and central management?
- LH: *16* No, not really, no.
- LM: Ok. Have you experienced situations where some FE employee representatives were better skilled as employee representatives than others because of greater support from trade union officials?
- 25
- LH: It's always difficult to know if they are an ((incomp)) from the company or from the union. So, no I don't see any- Some people but I wouldn't buy a computer just to put some union documents on, no. But some people are very, you know, they don't ((incomp)) with unions. Maybe they are but we don't know it.
- 30 LM: Ok. And can you give some examples of when language has been a barriers to communications with the FE?

1 LH: It's only the Spanish who doesn't speak English or very little. It makes it very hard to
understand, especially in the meeting when we sit together or at the breakfast. We
cannot understand him, its very difficult ((incomp)) when he cannot speak. It's a bit
annoying, with the translator next to him. She talks, she translate it, and-. We speak
5 in English, ((Incomp))I would like to-. I wouldn't care if he stopped, no.

LM: Ok. And do you think that there has been any action taken to break down that
barrier?

LH: No, it-. No. We have mentioned it, that we would have to speak English. But no,
they didn't care, so-.

10 LM: Ok. Have any interest groups been formed within the FE between employee
representatives, such as groups that focus on different issues to be dealt with, either
competitive or supplementary?

LH: No, no. I don't think.

15 LM: Ok. And have you experienced that trade unions influence the employee
representatives to work in different directions so that they end up counter acting each
other and the work of the FE?

LH: No, I don't think it's happened, no.

20 LM: Ok. And so now I'll move on to the relationship between the FE and the national
level of employee representation. How do you find the co-operation between the FE
and the national body of employee representation to be working?

LH: We always get note from the meetings, but when I get home I make notes from the
meeting myself in our language because the official notes come in English. So I
make short notes of the meeting and things for my colleagues the next week or the
25 same week. So that they know what the meeting was about. But most of them they
think the FE is really- has got a lot of decision power, but it isn't so. So they think
"oh, going to the FE and they ((incomp))". We mostly sit and talk and listen.

LM: Ok. So you provide the national level with information from the FE meetings. Does
the national level also provide you with information to take to the FE meeting?

30 LH: Yes, if I ask it, then they will give me, yes.

LM: Ok. Do you find that communication to be working well?

LH: Yes. Yes, I think here in ((incomp))

LM: Ok. And do you usually have a meeting with the national level before the FE

- 1 meetings where you receive that information or do you receive it via e-mails?
- LH: We meet at least every month and sometimes more, so we speak about, yes. And if they have question they want to know, they will give them to me. So no, the discussion is quite open, we don't-.
- 5 LM: Ok. And do you and the national employee representatives receive time off from your daily work to co-operate as European and national employee representatives for those meetings?
- LH: Normally we get the time we need. So if I call up my manager and say that I need time for union work, then I get the time I need. So normally it is no problem, but if I
10 did this every then I will have a problem. Normally if I convince my manager I need some time to do union work, then normally it's no problem.
- LM: Ok. And when you say union work, does that include both FE work and national work? When you say you get time off for union work, is that for both FE work and for the national union work?
- 15 LH: Yes, yes. It is in our legislation. So if we need time for union work we have to manage it. We have to show up and if I said to my manager that I need some time for this or that, it's no problem. But I have to-, I cannot just-, when they expect me at 8 o'clock in the morning at work I cannot just show up at 11 and say that I had some union work. No, I have to tell them.
- 20 LM: Ok. And have you experienced competition between the FE and the national level of employee representation?
- LH: No, no.
- LM: Ok. How important do you find it to inform the national employee representatives of the work of the FE?
- 25 LH: Very important. Normally they know that I'm going to a meeting, so they ask me. I think it's important to make notes of the meeting to send them. So I think it's very important to tell everyone about the meeting and what we talked about.
- LM: Do you find that the national employee representatives appreciate this?
- LH: Yes. They appreciate it, but sometimes they are a little worried that- they think is that
30 all? You go to Zurich for one day or for two days and is that all you talked about. So I think the meetings are not vey productive. But I think I can say that about ((incomp)). Normally we-, I think it should be more productive.
- LM: And how do you inform the national employee representatives? Is it in a meeting,

1 through e-mails or do you give them the minutes of the FE meeting.

LH: Yes, the minutes of the meeting, I send them via e-mail and distribute them to every worker, so that every worker in the company can read these notes.

LM: Ok.

5 LH: But first the works council members and afterwards everyone in the company.

LM: Ok. Can you give me some examples of you think that the FE adds a European dimension to the national employee representation structure?

LH: You hear about how some other countries deal with some issues, because you sit in company and you do a job for let's say 20 years and you think this is the way we do
10 it and you don't question it. It's just the way it is. But then you go to an other unit-, we always visit the units if we go to Zurich then we visit the kitchen and see "oh, they do it like this". So you see how other people do things, that's a good way to see how Gate works with this. So they have a best practice. But it's always nice to other
15 countries, how they do their work.

LM: Can you give me some examples of how the national employee representatives create legitimacy among the employees which you and they represent?

LH: It's a difficult one. They know it's expensive, meeting in an other country and traveling, but you come home and, if we say this trip it cost the company €1,000 but
20 the results are always poor. But if you have to convince that spending this money really works, I don't- But I believe that their reasons to say ((incomp)) these European meetings but if I have to convince my colleagues I would have difficulties.

LM: Ok. And so now I'll move on to the relationship between the FE and the trade unions. Are you involved with a national or European trade union or both?

25 LH: Both.

LM: Were you suggested for election by that trade union? Or did you run as any other employee in Gate Gourmet could? That is, did the trade union suggest its members to vote for you?

LH: We just had had an election in May, and yes I was on the list and I was out-elected.
30 So, but yeah-.

LM: Ok. Is the co-operation between you and the trade union close?

LH: Yes, we work together, yes. Sometimes it's difficult, but we manage to get along.

1 LM: And the #European tra-#. Sorry?

LH: At least, you know-.

LM: The European union is that separate form your national trade union or are they linked?

5 LH: It's separate, you know. Because in Belgium we have blue-collar workers and white-collar workers so the different unions-. And then we have the catholic workers. But it's not straight catholic, but-, we have catholic, social workers and even a liberal union. So there are three different unions for the blue-collar workers and for the white-collar workers there are also for the Christian workers, the socialist workers
10 and then we have the higher management, they also have their union. So we sit together in our works council and we have three different unions now, and before the election we had two different unions for the blue-collar workers, two different for the white-collar workers and a union for the management. So we had five different unions.

15 LM: Ok.

LH: It's easier to have less unions. If you have five different unions, it's difficult to get on one line, to make one point.

LM: Yes. And do you have a single contact person who supports you at the trade union or do they change regularly.

20 LH: No, we have one person. One person from the union that follow us.

LM: Ok. And does your trade union provide you training sessions and seminars?

LH: Yes, yes. A couple of days.

LM: Do you attend some of those?

25 LH: What did you say?

LM: Do you go to some of those seminars and training sessions?

LH: Yes, yes. They invite me and so they ((incomp)). Normally they ask do you come and normally the items they are all very interesting. So normally it is interesting enough to go to these sessions.

30 LM: Do they also offer you seminars on European works councils?

LH: Yes, next week, no the week after for three days-, ((incomp)) really on European

1 works council.

LM: Do you find those seminars that they offer to be helpful for you?

LH: Yeah, yes. You see how they do in other countries, so it helps you to-. Yeah.

5 LM: Ok. Are you able to seek support at all times of the year for FE issues or is it limited around only the joint FE meetings?

LH: No, I can call them whenever I want, no.

LM: Ok. And does the trade union organize contact with EWC employee representatives from other companies or other countries for you?

LH: Yeah.

10 LM: So have you contacted other EWC members of other companies or other countries to seek assistance or dialogue with?

LH: Yeah, we can discuss, yeah.

LM: Ok. And the issues dealt with at the joint FE meetings, do you find those to be primarily regarding Gate Gourmet or of a more sector wide character.

15 LH: Primarily it's Gate Gourmet, yeah.

LM: Ok.

LH: They stick to the company, just the company.

LM: And are you able to align the work that the FE is performing with the work that you find that the union is performing?

LH: Yes. But most of it, yeah.

LM: Ok. And so that was the last of the questions that I have prepared. Do you have something that you would like to add to the interview?

LH: No, no. It was good.

Appendix 6 – Interview with Swedish Employee Representative on 25th May 2012 (The audio file for this interview is broken, so it is only included in the transcribed form.)

- 1 LM: The first question is: How many years have you been with Gate Gourmet?
- BH: Oh my God. So many. I've been here for 37 years.
- LM: Wow, that's a long time.
- 5 BH: (laughter) I started when I just turning 15 so I've been here for a very, very long time.
- LM: So you are a really loyal worker.
- BH: Unfortunately yes.
- (laughter)
- LM: And what is your position in Gate Gourmet now?
- 10 BH: Well, I really work as operation in Malmoe but I'm just operation for the transport sector.
- LM: Ok. And what was your motivation to join the FE?
- BH: To join?
- LM: The FE.
- 15 BH: *3* That one I don't get. What do you mean?
- LM: What was your motivation to join the FE of Gate Gourmet?
- BH: Ah you mean why I started?
- LM: Yes, the reason why you started.
- 20 BH: The reason why I started was just because I was just financing my studies. I started when I was still going to school.
- LM: No. What I mean is when you joined the FE works council.

1 BH: Ah, the FE.

LM Yes.

5 BH: Ok. Let's put it like this. It was that the one who was before me, he retired and the other unions, not really my own union but the other unions wanted me to be the one going to FE because they knew that I was quite talkative and not really having any problems with the English language.

LM: Ok. Thank you. So I'll start with the interview that you received the questions on now. And starting with budget related questions. How do you find the level of the budget available to the FE?

10 BH: You know what. We are not- we never ever been involved in the budget of FE. That is company secret but, how do you say, it's always enough.

LM: Ok. So you are not able to influence the size and use of the budget?

15 BH: We can influence the use because sometimes we have the meeting in different places but we can't really influence the size. And I don't really think that there is an exact budget for FE. It's just counted in the top management, so-.

LM: Ok. And is there anything about the budget that you would like to change if you could?

20 BH: If I could I would put more money for educating those who are participating in the FE because a lot of people do not really know the formalia; how to act, how to say, how to- really how to keep the meetings. So I would put in educating the people participating, even the management.

LM: So moving on to more time oriented questions. Prior to the joint FE meetings are you allowed enough time off from your daily work to prepare for the joint meetings?

25 BH: For me I am, yes. Because no one is really deciding over my hours, so I just take the time that I need.

LM: And do you follow- do you participate in follow-up meetings with the other employee representatives after the joint FE meetings?

BH: We do have some meetings in between, a small group. So I participate but unfortunately not all. It's just few of us that are doing that.

30 LM: Do you find that you have time enough to spend for those follow-up meetings that you do participate in?

1 BH: *3* Not really. That is one of the things that due to priority usually comes second.

LM: Ok. And do you find that you have sufficient time available in between the joint FE meetings to perform your role as an employee representative on the FE?

5 BH: No I really don't, how do you say, if I could put away some of my other work I would have the time but since I have to give priority to, how do you say, to the daily work. It's usually one of those things that I don't take the time really for. Meaning it's partly my own fault but the job that I have, usually we are like a fire department, right. When something happens we have to act immediately. So I cannot really plan- I cannot really plan my time that well when it's the one in between.

10 LM: Ok. And do you have access to an administrative staff that can provide you with assistance when needed for you to carry out FE tasks?

15 BH: I have but unfortunately they don't have the knowledge. They don't know very much about FE. It's- in Sweden I think it's really only me who knows about FE really. What we are doing, how we work and so on. So I have the access to the staff but they don't have the competence to help me.

LM: And would like that you had access to a competent staff for FE oriented tasks?

20 BH: It's really just a no because if you want the administrative staff usually they are- the one that you have to use is quite high up and that means that they are really the opponents so it's a little bit hard- I should need union people who has the knowledge but there isn't any.

LM: Ok. And how do you communicate with the central management representatives between the joint FE meetings?

25 BH: We send emails when something is happening and I'm one of those few I think they are talking to in between so it really happens that they call me also even though it's not very often but I really have quite a good communication with the management, I do.

LM: Ok. And what would you change about the communication between the FE employee representatives and the management representatives?

30 BH: I would like be maybe on a monthly base that you send an e-mail once a month where you just had a few things that you just- either you ask or you answer.

LM: Ok.

BH: Do you understand what- It's kind of a meeting over the e-mail where you just have your standard question and standard things that you have to answer.

1 LM: Ok.

BH: Just to keep up to date, I mean what is happening in the company.

LM: Yes. And at the meetings, in what way are you able to exert influence on the agenda at the joint FE meetings?

5 BH: Some of the things are always the same but they are-. Historically they didn't answer all our questions but nowadays they-. Whatever we want to bring up, we can bring up. However, they are not under any kind of law to answer all our things or to even give the input to whatever we want to say. But it's working quite well. We can-. We influence the agenda quite a lot, we are.

10 LM: Ok, and on what type of issues do you put on the agenda as FE representatives?

BH: You mean the information that management is providing for us?

LM: No, the issue- the type of issues that the employee representatives add to the agenda.

15 BH: Ok, ok. Then it's usually specific questions, it is a lot of questions since Switzerland is not within the European market and most of the other countries are, there are some conflicts between the laws sometimes so it's a it's a lot of discussions about the law. We are also bringing up when we are dissatisfied with some management, can be manager for specific unit or country managers or general managers in different parts of the world. So it's a lot about management, it's a lot about laws and what do you call it, the conflict between laws in different countries.

20 LM: Ok.

BH: I mean, what is allowed in Switzerland is not allowed here and so on.

LM: Ok. And so do you find that the issues are more regarding individual countries or is it more of a European character?

25 BH: I just-. Before it was always really on the European level but it's getting more and more that sometimes we are discussing specific countries, specific units. If there is a problem in a unit and the problem concerns top management then we might bring it up. But if it is a problem in a unit that is on a little bit lower level, then we don't discuss it. That's just a matter for the unit.

LM: Ok.

BH: So it has to be the top management in that case.

1 LM: Ok. And can you give me some examples of the type of information that the central management provides the FE with at the meetings?

BH: Well, it's always the financial status, it's the status of all the ongoing projects, usually what other companies are we buying, what companies or what subsidiaries
5 are we selling, it is a lot of policies, company policies, there is some laws coming; some European laws, some laws the same as I said before the conflicts between laws in different countries and well-. Policies is a big thing for the company as well as the financial status.

LM: Ok. Do you find the information that they provide easy to understand?

10 BH: Me myself, I don't have too much problems with it. But there are some people who don't really understand it.

LM: Ok. And is the information delivered in time for you to process the data before the joint FE meetings?

BH: Let's put it like this. We wish sometimes that we get it earlier. So it's 50/50. It's really 50/50.

15 LM: Ok. And have you tried to change it so you would receive it earlier?

BH: Oh yes, (laughter) oh yes.

LM: But it hasn't led to a change?

BH: Come again?

20 LM: But the effort has not led to a change so you do receive it earlier?

BH: It's different in different matters.

LM: Ok.

BH: Because usually-. I think it's like this: some of the questions that we are dealing
25 with- since the people who are in the FE from the company is HR people some of the issues I think they are not too familiar with themselves. They just get report themselves and maybe they get it late.

LM: Ok.

BH: Meaning they will give it to us late. Meaning sometimes they don't have the time to
30 check it out before passing it down to us. But it's not getting worse, it's- the tendency is that it's getting a little bit better each time, a little bit.

1 LM: Ok. So do you think that if the top management was present at the FE, do you think that would improve the work that the FE is able to do.

BH: No I don't.

LM: Ok.

5 BH: I think that the very top management is- they really don't like us. I think we are just a pain in the ass to them.

LM: Ok.

(laughter)

LM: And on what type of issues are you usually informed by management?

10 BH: Once again. You have to say it again I have a lot of noise around me.

LM: I think I actually just asked you that question before, I'll move on to the next one. How do you usually receive the information from management? Is that in writing or orally?

BH: It's both. But usually they have some oral explanation to all what is written.

15 LM: Ok.

BH: And that part they are doing quite well, quite well.

LM: And have you experienced that the FE has been consulted by management on the transnational as suggested in the FE agreement?

20 BH: I have to read that question again, one minute.

LM: With transnational I mean more pan-European issues or if they also present global issues.

BH: I think they present local issues country-wise but not local issues, how do you say, unit-wise. It can be country-wise or area-wise. Like Scandinavia is usually treated as one part.

25

LM: Ok.

BH: Or as one country.

1 LM: And have management consulted with you on European issues that they inform you on?

BH: Sometimes but that is more, how do you say, that is usually non-official.

LM: Ok.

5 BH: Meaning that they ask unofficially.

LM: Ok.

BH: Meaning that we do not, how do you say, we do not write any reports about that, we do not make any protocols or anything.

10 LM: So is that usually at the joint meetings or is that in between the joint meetings that that happens.

BH: In between, in between.

LM: Ok. And on what type of issues would that usually be?

15 BH: Sometimes it's on policies, they might ask if it is legal, if think it is legal, if we are going to fight against or if we are going to be to push it forward, it might be *3* when there are changes within- usually, how do you say, when there is something happening within the European market, when there is new kind of laws that s supposed to be valid for all countries within the European market; who is going to pay for it if it's a special kind of skill that you have to give to everyone. You know when you work in an airport there's a lot of different rules you have to follow, and 20 when you drive a truck there's a lot of different rules you have to follow and sometimes they change, they change the demand on what you have to, what kind of knowledge you have to have. So it's about those kind of things usually. And then the policies when they want to change something, when they want to-. Well if they want to improve something they don't have to ask us because then that we will support. 25 But when they are trying to take away some of our "goodies" they are asking what will happen, bla. bla. bla. bla., or what will be the result if we do like this or like that.

LM: Ok. So do you find that it's usually on the content of the decision or the implementation phase on the decision that they consult you on?

BH: It's both, it's both.

30 LM: Ok. And if you could decide on what area of the content or implementation would you prefer to have an influence on?

BH: What do you mean? Do you have that question in-

- 1 LM: No, it's just a follow-up question that I have right now.
- BH: Ok, then you have to say it again.
- LM: If you could decide on what area of the content or the implementation of a decision would you prefer to have influence on?
- 5 BH: Both, both.
- LM: Ok. And do you find that the FE has the necessary skills to exert that influence?
- BH: You have to take that one again.
- LM: Do you find that the FE has the necessary skills to exert an influence on the decisions?
- 10 BH: Do you mean if I have the skills or if they have the skills or what do you mean?
- LM: Both. If you and the other FE members are capable of exerting an influence.
- BH: Sometimes and sometimes not. That is very different from different members of the FE.
- LM: And have you experience that the management has negotiated with the FE on issues that you were also consulted on?
- 15 BH: Yeah, it happens, yeah. It happens.
- LM: Can you give me some examples on the type of issues that has happened on?
- 20 BH: That was- the one coming to my mind is for instance there was a change in the law saying that if you are driving a truck on, what do you say, the official roads outside the airport area, you need to have a new kind of education which will take about one week to get and the cost for this is, the cost for the course is around 1,000€ and the cost for the company to let the drive off the regular work is another 1,000€ Then there was negotiations about who's going to pay for this.
- 25 LM: Ok.
- BH: But the outcome was very different in different countries at the end. In some countries the unions paid for the education, in some countries the company had to pay for everything, and in some countries the result was that you share the costing.
- 30 LM: Ok. And do you find that the- Is management willing to negotiate on the content or

1 the implementation of decisions or both?

BH: Usually they * usually they already made up their mind, both about the content and the implement. However, what they are really asking for is not really negotiation (incomp). It's more like they want our advice. If there is something we think is
5 totally wrong they are willing maybe to change the text or change the content. And if we have better ways of implementing it that the company itself, then they are going on our side with change. But usually, it's not a one way road, but they've already made up their mind.

LM: Ok.

10 BH: But we can- in some ways we can stop it because of the laws against or they cannot provide us with, how do you say, they cannot ensure that they are going to follow the laws or they cannot ensure the *4* how do you say, *3* the discretion in the matters because it depends what it is. Sometimes those people involved must be insured that they can stay anonymous.

15 LM: Ok.

BH: For instance. And if they cannot provide us with really clear rules or showing really that we can provide this and we can provide-. Then of course we are going to be against it. And if we are supported by the laws in each country, because then you have to look on the country-wise laws. Then we might stop it, which happens.

20 LM: Ok.

BH: So meaning that a policy might be accepted in 10 of the 15 countries because in those five countries it's against the law and then we cannot continue running it through.

LM: And in what way do you think that the management acknowledges the FE need for information on the transnational issues?

25 BH: I think they have a quite big understanding for that.

LM: And why do you think that there is a need to be consulted on transnational issues?

BH: Since we are a big company, we work all over the world we should have at about the same rules everywhere, at about, I'm saying at about. So I think it's good that we agree what is going to be the standard, so to speak.

30

LM: Do you think that management also acknowledges that there is a need for consultation?

BH: I think they do, yes I think.

- 1 LM: And do you think that there is a need for negotiation as intended by the EU directive?
- BH: It is sometimes. But in the matter that you bring up now, its-. The law in-. You know, we are not following the EWC rules because Switzerland is not part of the EU, so it's different. We don't work under those. How do you say, it would have been easier for us in the union if we worked under the EWC but we don't.
- 5 LM: Ok. And have you experienced a change in the co-operation between the FE and the central management since the beginning of the financial crisis?
- BH: Not really.
- 10 LM: Ok. And so now I'll move on the relationship internally in the FE. Do you find that you are able to communicate both formally and informally with other FE employee representatives?
- BH: Not to all. Not to all unfortunately.
- LM: So who are you able to better communicate with than others?
- BH: Let's say it like this: in some countries the representative has not been chosen by his or her colleagues, has been chosen by the company.
- 15 LM: Ok. And at the joint FE meetings are you able to socialize with the other FE employee representatives?
- BH: We are, yes we are. And the company just the past few years and now they understand how important this is to us.
- 20 LM: And do you find that the socialization helps you build stronger relations with the other employee representatives and with the central management?
- BH: Oh yes it does, yes.
- LM: Have you experienced that that had eased the work of the FE?
- BH: A lot, a lot.
- 25 LM: Ok. And are there any procedures of information exchange such as a line of communication that has been set up for exchanging information between the FE employee representatives?
- BH: It's only the set agenda for the meeting, what are supposed to inform about somethings always. Otherwise it's not really. Gate Gourmet it's top management is

1 not- they don't give a shit about the unions because they still do what they want to do.

LM: Ok. And have you experienced that other FE employee represent-

5 BH: Ah sorry, I misunderstood your question. Wait. We do have, how do you say, informal contact over the e-mail system.

LM: Ok. And is that with all the employee representatives or is it only some that communicate via e-mail?

BH: Hallo?

LM: Can you hear me?

10 BH: Hallo?

LM: Can you still hear me?

BH: Ok, I hang up.

(Connection lost)

(Connection re-gained)

15 BH: We try again.

LM: Hello, I don't know what happened.

BH: Anyway, I misunderstood your question there. It's between the FE employee representatives, right?

LM: Correct.

20 BH: We only have contact over the mail. There are no really line of communication been set up, not really.

LM: Ok.

BH: And that is a mistake by us, we should have that.

LM: And do all the FE employee representatives communicate via e-mail or is it only some that keeps the communication?

25 BH: Only some, those who are most active, yeah.

1 LM: Ok. And have you experienced that some of the other employee representatives will, when it doesn't breach confidentiality, share relevant information with you that they but not you have access to?

BH: Not, no. I have to say no to that one because we are very careful about that.

5 LM: Ok. So you do believe that it's because they keep the information to themselves.

BH: If it breach confidentiality we are-.

LM: It's only when it does not breach confidentiality.

BH: Ah, when it does not. Ok, then we share.

10 LM: Ok. So have you also shared that kind of information with the other employee representatives?

BH: Oh yes.

LM: And do you do so because you find it to be best for the company?

BH: No. Just for the people who works there.

15 LM: Ok. And can you give me some examples of what kind of information is shared between you and the other employee representatives?

BH: Well, you have the, for instance the salary negotiations. I think that's the most popular one. And then you have also, like what I said, the negotiations of some kind; who's going to be the one paying for something, if it is the company or employee. So those kind of-. It usually, usually involves money then we share those kind of

20 information. Sometimes also policies and results on negotiations.

LM: Have you experienced competition among employee representatives that keeps you for co-operating with each other?

BH: Yes. Unfortunately.

LM: Do you find that that prevents a coherence between the FE employee representatives?

25 BH: Well, it's- can you say it again and I'll try to understand exactly what you mean.

LM: Do you find that it prevents the FE employee representatives to work well together?

BH: It might, it might. Because it's very important for us not to have any inside conflict.

- 1 LM: Yes. Have you experienced that the employee representative from HQ has better access to information and to the central management?
- BH: Not really. Not in my ((incomep)).
- 5 LM: Have you experienced situations where the FE employee representatives where some of them were better equipped as employee representatives than others because greater trade union support?
- BH: Oh yes, oh yes.
- LM: And do you find that that creates, that it creates unfair competition, you could say, among the different employee representatives?
- 10 BH: Maybe not an unfair competition. You asked me before how I would spend the money and I said educate all those participating.
- LM: Yes.
- BH: I think all of them who are in this FE should be on the same level, well we cannot be really on the same level but we should have at least a foundation to be on, so that we have some knowledge; this how we do in this situation and this situation. It's the problem among the representatives from the company. Some of them have never ever been involved in anything like EWC something like that. So we have the same problem as the company has.
- 15 LM: And can you give me some examples when language has been a barrier to communication within the FE?
- 20 BH: Our chairman from the union speak only Spanish for instance. That is a huge problem for us.
- LM: Yes. And has any action been take to break down that barrier?
- BH: The company usually provides a translator but you know as well as me, in translation a lot of things might be lost.
- 25 LM: Yes.
- BH: It also means that it's very, very hard to socialize with someone when you cannot speak the language anymore.
- LM: Yes.

1 BH: If you- if this was 30 years ago I would say that I manage the Spanish language as well. Unfortunately I didn't use it for 30 years so I forgot most. So it's really hard. That means that * he's very skilled. Our chairman is very skilled. Unfortunately sometimes he has problems sharing because of the language barrier.

5 LM: Ok. And have any interest groups been formed within the FE employee representatives? Such as-

BH: I think the only thing that I really know about that is that we who are from Scandinavia we talk about things that concerns only Scandinavia.

LM: Ok.

10 BH: So that is really the only-. Officially the answer is no, but unofficially, yes the Scandinavian representatives do talk more I think than the others about issues, how do you say, common issues.

LM: Ok. And have you experienced that trade unions influence the employee representatives to work in different directions so that end up counter acting each other and the work that the FE wishes to perform?
15

BH: Yes, unfortunately I have.

LM: Has anything been done to change this?

BH: We cannot really change it because that is- * the matter that I'm thinking about is that in some countries if you are a representative in like a European council, that is very high on your CV that is very nice to have on your CV so that brings out the competition to be the one representing your country, meaning that unions compete in between going to be the one to send the representative, and that has happened which means that maybe not the one best suited for representing is representing.
20

LM: Ok.

BH: And also meaning that it's not as big as it sounds, meaning if you are part of the Gate Gourmet FE you don't have to enter the meeting wearing a suit or a tie but sometimes if everyone is wearing, what do you call, ordinary clothes and then someone is coming in, let's say a very fancy suit or something like that it might be misinterpreted, so-. And it also means that people think different about each other.
30 Why the hell is he here or why the hell is she here? Is she a spy for the company? Is he a spy for the company? Are they really part of our team or are they really just trying to climb in the hierarchy or what?

LM: Ok.

- 1 BH: So, it's affecting, it is yes.
- LM: Ok. And now I'll move on to the relationship between the FE and the national level of employee representation. How do you find the co-operation between the FE and the national body of employee representation to be working?
- 5 BH: What do you mean by that question?
- LM: In Sweden do you also have a national level of employee representation?
- BH: We were supposed to have but we don't.
- LM: Ok, #so#
- 10 BH: #So# the co-operation is working poorly, in my own country like Sweden it's working poorly. Not because I don't want to share or I don't want to inform, but there is really no one who are interested in listening when I want to talk about this. It's- I think it's the same in most countries. It's working quite poorly. Unfortunately. That is a union problem.
- 15 LM: So you do have national employee representatives, but they're just not co-operating with you?
- BH: If I want it I will get it and I am given all opportunities that I ask for from the company to do so. Unfortunately, as I said before, the interest from other unions, from other union representatives is quite poor.
- 20 LM: Ok. And do you think that is because they don't know much about the FE?
- BH: I think it's because they are afraid that they will get involved and have to give away some of their free-time.
- LM: Ok. And *6* so do you receive time off from your daily work to try and communicate to the-
- 25 BH: Yes I do, yes I do.
- LM: Ok. And have you experienced competition between the FE and the national employee representatives?
- BH: Both yes and no. *4* Before there was a fight between the unions on national level of who's going to be the representative. Now it's *, how do you say, as of now for me myself, I don't have someone to really to talk, to discuss with. I have within my own union but not from other unions. They are really not interested. Then we are having like- they are saying like this: "You fix that, we fix this."
- 30

1 LM: Ok.

BH: So it's- nowadays there's no competition, it used to be a lot of competition.

LM: And how important is it to you to be able to inform the national employee representatives of the work of the FE?

5 BH: I fight with it at every meeting.

LM: So it's #important to you?#

BH: #It's very important# to me. But it seems like not important to them. Some issues are, but usually they think that I'm just bla. bla. bla. bla.

10 LM: Ok. So do you wish to inform them on all the issues that you work with on the FE or the issues that related to Sweden only?

15 BH: I usually bring up the issues that are both on national level and within the whole of Gate Gourmet, like policies and so on. But it is very hard to find someone within the union who is willing to discuss it but I do find an interest within the company to discuss. And they have the same, I think the same opinion as I do but other representatives are not really so interested because they are- it seems like they are afraid of getting more work.

LM: Ok.

20 BH: I don't think they are aware that they will get time to do this work. But they are afraid that they are going to spend their own time.

LM: Ok. And when you say that you receive an interest from the company, do you mean the Swedish management?

BH: The Swedish, yeah the Swedish management.

25 LM: Ok. And do you experience that you have more knowledge about- that you know more about the information you receive at the FE than the Swedish management does?

BH: Yes I do.

LM: Ok.

BH: I sometimes- Sometimes I'm the one informing them.

- 1 LM: Ok. And when you do try and inform the Swedish representatives do you do so at a meeting or via e-mails or do you give them the minutes from the FE meeting?
- BH: I do all three.
- LM: Ok.
- 5 BH: And I can even see that usually they don't read- they might open the mail but they never respond. Usually I put in a small question just to make sure, to see if they read it.
- LM: Ok.
- BH: But I don't get any respond on that really. It's really quite lousy.
- 10 LM: Yeah, that's not very satisfactory.
- BH: Yeah.
- LM: And can you give me some examples of how the FE add a European dimension to the national employee representation structure?
- BH: Once again slowly.
- 15 LM: Can you give me some examples of how the FE add a European dimension to the national employee representation structure?
- BH: Ohhh, I really don't know if it does.
- LM: Ok.
- BH: So * no, it really doesn't, it really doesn't. It's very different.
- 20 LM: Have you experienced that the national employee representatives try and create legitimacy for the FE among the employees that you and they represent?
- BH: *4*
- LM: That is do they tray and create acceptance for the FE among the employees?
- BH: It's- as I said before, unfortunately it's the management who has to do that. They are interested in doing that, but they other unions are quite uninterested.
- 25 LM: Ok. And so * do you experience that the employees in Sweden do know about the FE?

- 1 BH: They know very little.
- LM: Ok. And #what they know is only from management?#
- BH: #It doesn't matter if they been# with us ever since it started. They still don't know very much about it.
- 5 LM: Ok. And do you think that what they know is what they have been told by management?
- BH: No. I don't think they listen to the management either.
- (laughter)
- LM: Ok. So now I'll move on to the relationship between the FE and the trade unions.
- 10 BH: Yeah.
- LM: Are you involved with a national or a European trade union or both?
- BH: With a national.
- LM: Were you suggested for election by that trade union?
- 15 BH: Come again.
- LM: Were you suggested for election for the FE by your trade union?
- BH: If I was suggested to be member of the European Union you mean- European Coun- Of the FE?
- LM: Sorry. FE yes, I'm sorry.
- 20 BH: * The strange thing about me is that I- the union that I am involved in, it's not the biggest within Gate Gourmet in Sweden, so I was really elected by another union because they didn't like the one wanted to go from them. Because the one who said "I'd like to be that" didn't know * well let's ((incomp)) not, not too well spoken in English and had problems in opening the mouth, very quiet. So they really asked me
- 25 if I'm not interested to take over, and I said maybe because I wasn't really quite sure what it was about the first time.
- LM: Ok.
- BH: But I'm glad I accepted. So I was voted really from that union. And then we actually

1 we have three units in Sweden and the rules here are that all three units have to vote
and then all the votes are being put together. But since the one in Stockholm is so
many times bigger than the one in Gothenburg and the one where I am outside
5 Malmoe together that meant that the biggest union or the one having the most
members in Stockholm will always be the one deciding who's going to be in the FE.

LM: Ok.

BH: And when they voted strangely enough they didn't vote for their own, they voted for
me. So that's how I was voted in to the FE.

10 LM: So the unions do have a lot to say in who is a member of the- who is the Swedish
member of the FE?

BH: Yeah, I our country it's like that. In Denmark and Norway I think it's the same.

LM: Ok.

BH: Some countries in Europe, it's really the company just deciding "you are the one
going to this". And that's what I said before we don't like that of course.

15 LM: No. And do you co-operate closely with your union?

BH: Yes I do.

LM: And can you give me some examples of the kind of issues that you seek support from
your trade union on?

20 BH: Everything that has to do with transport, when its about *, how do you say, when we
are going to put policies of how the trucks are going to look, when we are going to
decide who's going to pay for *4* education and * all kind of education that you get-
you need to get to work within the airport or driving on the roads or whatever it is.
So everything that I can get help or get support from the trade union I do.

LM: Ok.

25 BH: And then you know, in Sweden we have on the national level we have, how do you
say, an over union so to speak, where all the other unions are members and I try to
follow what the-. Since I don't represent myself , I represent all of our members,
meaning that sometimes I have to say thing I don't support myself. But I'm not
representing myself, so I have to follow what they tell me. "This is the way we want
to go, this is the way we want thing to change". So I'm trying to work that.

30 LM: Ok. And do you also seek support on FE specific issues?

- 1 BH: Yes I do.
- LM: And do you find that your union is capable of supporting you on those types of issues?
- BH: No. Not even in half of the cases.
- 5 LM: Ok. Do you experience that other FE representatives who receive support from trade unions receive more or less support than you?
- BH: Oh yes. As I told you some work for their CVs.
- LM: Yeah. And do you have a single contact person who supports you at the trade union or do they change regularly?
- 10 BH: Well, in my case I have one that I usually discuss things with or, I wouldn't say negotiate, but we are trying to look at what is the best for the employees. And in my case it doesn't change very often in that way, no it doesn't.
- LM: Ok. And does the trade union provide training seminars or training sessions to you?
- BH: They do. Not for FE exactly but to be members of the board and so on they do, yes.
- 15 LM: And do you attend some of those?
- BH: Unfortunately I spend too much time in those things, yes.
- LM: Ok. Are you able to seek support at all times of the year or is it limited to only around the FE meetings?
- BH: No, I can do it anytime. I no problems whatsoever with that.
- 20 LM: And does your trade union organize contact with works council employee representatives from other companies or other countries?
- BH: Not that I know of. We suggested that a few years back that we should start having a small, how do you say, an organization where all those involved in EWC and all EWC look-a-likes like ours is. But I don't think anything happened to that one.
- 25 LM: Ok.
- BH: It happens once in a while that when I am- if I am in a meeting it might someone else who ((incomp)) from EWC or is a part from an EWC. But it's very rare, it's still very rare.

1 LM: Ok. And the issues that are dealt with at the joint FE meetings, are they primarily regarding Gate Gourmet or of a sector wide character?

BH: It's primarily Gate Gourmet.

5 LM: And how are you able to align the work that the FE is performing with the work that the union wishes to perform.

BH: That is, as I said before-. In the FE of course I have to deal with all the matters which are brought up. But I usually, if it is something that is the same as we work with here in Sweden in the union, I follow the union's directions really, rather than my own, because I don't always agree with the union either, so-.

10 LM: So #do you find#

BH: #But I do not# represent myself, I represent a lot of people, so-.

LM: Ok, so do you find that the FE and your union is trying to focus on the same issues?

15 BH: *5* I don't- that's just-. Whatever issue the FE is looking into it doesn't really *-.
Sometimes it's the same and sometimes it's not. So it's very different, I can't answer that question really.

LM: Ok. So that was the last of the questions that I had prepared. Do you have anything you would like to add?

BH: Yeah, what are you going to be?

LM: Say that again.

20 BH: This interview that you are doing, what will it lead to?

LM: I'm writing my Master's thesis at the moment so that will help me for my analysis for my Master's thesis.

BH: Ok. Is it just Gate Gourmet #you are focusing on# or is it all EWCs or-?

25 LM: #It's just Gate Gourmet# No, it's just Gate Gourmet. So aim of the thesis is to see first of all how the country of origin of the different employee representatives influence the functioning of the works council and then I look at how the central management is utilizing the works council and how the employee representatives can improve its influence on the work of the FE.

30 BH: Ok. So how about you yourself? Because the way I understood, did you get support from Joanna for this or-?

- 1 LM: Yes, she's my contact person and I had an interview with her and Jesper the other day.
- BH: Ok.
- LM: So I'll also take that into my analysis.
- 5 BH: Ok.
- LM: So hopefully I will end up with some recommendations for how to improve the work of the works council.
- BH: Are you going to university or where are you going?
- LM: Yes, I'm studying a master degree in international business at the moment.
- 10 BH: Ok. Where?
- LM: In Copenhagen Business School.
- BH: Ah, ok. So you are from Copenhagen, ok.
- LM: Just across the water. (26m38s)
- BH: Så hvorfor snakker vi ikke normalt?
- 15 LM: I have a hard time understanding Swedish.
- BH: Det er ok, jeg snakker lidt mere så du forstår hvad jeg siger.
- LM: Det kan jeg godt forstå, ja.
- (laughter)
- BH: Jeg snakker Dansk.
- 20 LM: Ok, men dit engelske var meget flot.
- BH: Hver dag.
- LM: JA.
- BH: Ok, men du bor i København altså?

- 1 LM: Det gør jeg, ja.
- BH: Har du snakket med Jens-Otto I København?
- LM: Nej, jeg har ikke hørt fra ham.
- BH: Ok. Har du hans direkte e-mail adresse?
- 5 LM: Nej, for det er Joanna, som har sendt e-mailene ud for mig.
- BH: Ok. Ved du, at vi har et møde i København d. 5. juni.
- LM: Øhh ja, det sagde *3*Leeroy. Leeroy snakkede om, at i havde et steering committee møde.
- 10 BH: Ja, præcist. Hvis du spørger Joanna, så kan du være med. Jeg ((incomp)) det er et vældigt uformelt møde.
- LM: Ok.
- BH: Og du kommer til at se alle ((incomp)) som jeg har snakket om som eksempler. Der findes ingen som arbejder for sig selv der i denne lille gruppe, men du kan se problemet med sprog for eksempel.
- 15 LM: Ok.
- BH: Ja, og du kan også se og høre ((incomp)) folk, høre ((incomp)) sådan- (dem bare ligger frem sine- en del snakker præcis som de siger hvis snakker med deres kollegaer ((imcomp))) Men på det andet møde snakker de meget formelt og meget eftertænksomt. Og det egentlig det, som er det mest interessante i det her.
- 20 LM: Ja, ok.
- BH: Så du kan få lov at tale klart, kan man sige det sådan. Hvis én person fremsiger en sag når vi har FE møder, så får han et blankt nej til forslaget. Så fremligger næste person præcis samme sag, og det ved alle som sidder der, at han fremlægger præcis samme sag men fremlægger den på et andet sted, så får man normalt et ja.
- 25 LM: Ok. Det er interessant.
- BH: Det er det man kaldet spillet bagom galleriet.
- LM: Ja.
- BH: Som er vældigt, vældigt vigtigt. Og det er også det jeg sagde, det er så frygtelig

1 vigtigt for os at vi ikke har en konflikt i alle vi som er med i-, eller (3F) hvad det nu er vi er med i. Således at vi ikke spørger inde i mødelokalet. Men det er sket det der, og det forstyrrer alt.

LM: Ok.

5 BH: Ja, Vi må altså have en ((incomp)). I Danmark er det jo således, at i har jeres regler når man arbejder. Altså at arbejde i lufthavnen i Danmark er ikke medlem i ((incomp)).

LM Ja.

BH: Det synes jeg er ganske godt, men desværre fungerer det ikke i Sverige.

10 LM Nej.

BH: Her kæmper vi som skøre for at folk skal gå med i (fagforeninger)

LM: Ok

15 BH: Så vi det er altså ganske, ganske anderledes. Jens-Otto har sin stil, jeg har min stil, det sidder en nordmand også og han har en helt anden stil og så har vi vores ordfører som har sin vældig, vældig specielle stil.

LM: Ja.

20 BH: Jeg tror at det kunne være meget ((incomp)) og meget interessant for dig at se hvordan det i virkeligheden går til, for du kan næsten- når du sidder i det her lokale når alle er det, så kan du næsten efter en time fornemme, at den her person hader den person, og den her person hører kun på hvad den person siger, og den her person sidder og tænker på nogle helt andre ting han er slet ikke nærværende, eller hun. Så der er meget, meget, meget mere. Du vil få meget mere kendskab ved at se spille bag om galleriet end mange af spørgsmålene som du stiller.

LM: Ja, men det vil jeg lige prøve at finde ud af.

25 BH: Ja. Snak gerne med Joanna. Jeg kan ikke forestille mig, at nogen af dem, i hvert fald af vores arbejdere, skulle have noget imod at du sad med. Men det eneste vi antageligt kommer til at bede dig om, det er at det som siges i lokalet bliver i lokalet. Du får altså ikke lov til at videreføre #og# citere nogle ting som ((incomp)) #((incomp))#.

30 LM: #nej, det er klart# #nej, det kan jeg heller ikke have nogen interesse i#. Nej, det er klart. Det er forretningshemmeligheder, kan man sige.

- 1 BH: Ja, det er det. Og så ved jeg også, at den som leder FE det er Jesper Bulskov, han er jo også dansk.
- LM: Ja.
- BH: Har du talk med ham?
- 5 LM: Ja, jeg har snakket med ham også.
- BH: Ja, det har du gjort, ok.
- LM: Ja.
- BH: Fordi jeg tror at han også vil synes at det kunne være vældig interessant at have en udenforstående som studerer hvad der sker i lokalet. #Ingenting er perfekt#.
- 10 LM: #Jesper snakkede-# Jesper snakkede også om, at i har et møde d. 30. i Zürich.
- BH: Ja, vi skal- vi er blevet kaldt derned d. 30. for at- virksomheden har nogle informationer som vil komme ud til alle.
- LM: Ja.
- BH: Og der har du ((incomp)) vi kan ikke ændre nogen ting, de har allerede bestemt sig.
- 15 LM: Ja
- BH: Ja. Jeg ved nu hvad det er, men jeg er blevet underlagt ikke at tale om det for på dagen, og det gør jeg ikke. Det er a matter of trust.
- LM: Ja, det er selvfølgelig alt sammen forretningshemmeligheder og det er jo noget som skal blive inde i virksomheden når det er man er børsnoteret.
- 20 BH: Præcis.
- LM: Ja.
- BH: Nu har jeg lige fået en mail fra Joanna, som siger nogle ting.
- LM: Ja.
- 25 BH: Jeg må se hvad hun skriver. ((incomp)) til mødet i næste uge eller næste uge igen.
- LM: Ja.

- 1 BH: Hvis jeg har fået besked, så er du velkomme til mødet i København. Nu bliver det et vældigt uformelt møde eftersom man indkalder os med meget kort varsel til Zurich.
- LM: Ja.
- 5 BH: Men der er en ting som du må vide, og der er, at Schweiz følger altså ikke reglerne som gælder for EWC.
- LM: Ok, det er godt at vide.
- BH: Så det her er altså en speciel aftale mellem de faglige organisationer i Gate Gourmet og Gate Gourmet.
- LM: Ja.
- 10 BH: Så vi er altså meget (hjemmebygget og hjemme-) Vi har de samme rettigheder, men nu er det sådan, at Jesper tænker mere i EWC termer end hvad hans forgænger gjorde, eller hans forgængers forgænger gjorde.
- LM: Ja.
- BH: Så vi gør det ((incomp)) og det er det vi vil, få så får vi flere rettigheder.
- 15 LM: Ja. Det er også det jeg har kunnet fornemme mig frem til.
- BH: Ja, og det er senere det som- Hvis man siger det således, de seneste år siden vi har fået skandinavere i ledelsen, så er det blevet meget lettere at arbejde i FE. Tidligere, frem for alt, da vi havde briter, som sad som højeste hoved, så var det skide svært. #Dengang var det sådan, at så kom alle i skjorte og slips, og så er det ikke ((incomp)) at fungere. Meget ((incomp)) af hvordan virksomheden selv stiller op. Altså hvordan de ser ud når man kommer til mødet. Man er ordentlig klædt, men intet specielt.
- 20 LM: Ok.
- BH: Du kan faktisk godt komme i shorts og en t-shirt. Der er ikke noget til hindre for at folk gør det.
- 25 LM: Nej. Så det er lidt mere laid back end da det var briterne som ledede det.
- BH: Ja. Tidligere var det briter som sad i højeste ledelse af Gate Gourmet og de er frygtelig formelle og de er tilbage til den tid da man havde, ja hvad kalder i det for i Danmark, kan man sige patrionen eller noget lignende.
- LM: Ja.

1 BH: Ja, sådan var det dengang. Det var altså vældig, vældig, vældig besværligt at gøre
noget som helst. Og vi ((incomp)) Vi burde kunne spørge hvad der sker eller hvad
der sker i alle andre virksomheder man ((incomp)) ledelsen. Men Gate Gourmet
5 stadig så stor en organisation, så det der sker længst oppe, det ved vi ikke noget om
ude i (team'ene) i princip.

LM: Ok.

BH: De ((incomp)) på virksomheden i princip i Schweiz, eftersom vi findes på børsen. Så
der findes meget information som er besluttet meget tidligere. Så kan man i princip
bare spekulere i aktierne osv. Og det er lavet både for vores ((incomp)) og
10 virksomheden, som ved mange ting, men som ikke beretter dette.

Appendix 7 – Interview with Spanish FE Employee Representative on 31st May 2012. Simultaneously translated by the HR Director, Spain

- 1 LM: First of all I would like to ask Tomas if he has something he would like to add to questions that he answered. Any questions that he found that I did not ask, that he would like to talk about?
- 5 SL: Tomas is telling me that more or less it's really complex. He's- * sorry because I'm not a professional translator, so I forgot (the specifics) of the comments.
- LM: No, it's ok.
- SL: More or less, in general it's ok. There is a normal relationship between the, in this case, his level, between the company and the unions.
- 10 LM: Ok. So what I will do now is just to ask some additional questions to the answers that he gave.
- SL: Ok, Louise.
- LM: Ok, so a lot of the questions were answered very thoroughly but I have a question regarding the agenda to the FE meetings-.
- SL: Ok, wait, wait. (translating) Ok, Louise go ahead.
- 15 LM: Would Tomas like to have more influence over the agenda that is put up for the FE meetings?
- SL: Can you repeat again the question? Didn't understand very well, Louise.
- LM: Ok. Would Tomas like to have a greater influence on the topics put on the agenda for the FE meetings?
- 20 SL: Tomas said that the majority of the points on the agenda are suggestions of the company mainly. Tomas said that the topics that the unions are giving in the meeting are later in the question and answer points because they are not part of the official agenda of the meeting. In other words, they are informal points that the unions tell to the, in this case, to the management team after covering the official points in the
- 25 agenda.
- LM: Ok. And what type of issues would he like to add to the agenda?
- SL: Ok, Tomas is telling that they are asking about some issues in the meetings that they

1 don't have any answer from the company, more or less ((incomp)). And are postponed to other meetings. He gave me an example about one topic in Germany and on other about audit in the airport, European security audit that are going to be discussed in September, ok?

5 LM: Ok. And so I will go down to the questions about the information that the management provides to the FE.

SL: Tomas is telling me more or less-, the points that they want to incorporate in the agenda should be more or less like for example how to support other unions that they don't have union representatives or are related with new positions, about payroll.
10 And to look for new jobs about the people, ok?

LM: Ok. Sounds good.

SL: Ok.

LM: So I have another follow-up question regarding the information from-, provided to
15 the FE from the central management. And he said that the information was delivered shortly before the meetings. Would he like the information to be delivered earlier?

SL: Tomas is telling that obviously the confidential information is not possible to send in
advance before the meeting but the complementary information or documentation they are receiving the information just before the meeting and they want to receive it more or less 10 days in advance in order to prepare, to co-ordinate the potential
20 answer to be expressed in the FE by the unions.

LM: Ok. So have Tomas or other FE employee representatives asked management that they will receive it earlier?

SL: In the March meeting they asked for the same topic: in order to receive the
25 information in advance with enough time to prepare for the agenda. He is telling me that for example that for the held yesterday they didn't receive any information about the topics to be discussed in the meeting.

LM: Ok. And I understood that Tomas said that the FE is not used for consultation. Would he like that the FE is consulted more and just informed?

SL: Tomas is agreeing with that. It's more information or about some ((incomp)).

30 LM: Would Tomas like it to change so that the FE would be consulted on those issues also?

SL: Tomas is telling me that the union and obviously he, wants to be more active in the debate of the topics that the FE can discuss; about the performance of the company in

- 1 future. Not only the proposals that the unions can give to the meetings, but also those proposals that the management team can offer to discuss with the unions.
- LM: Ok. And since Tomas does not speak much English, does he find it hard to socialize with the other FE employee representatives at the joint meetings?
- 5 SL: Tomas says that: nothing. There's no problem in order to maintain a normal and a stable contact with the rest of the members.
- LM: Ok.
- SL: In addition he's telling me that he maintains a normal and a standard contact, not only in the meetings but also by phone. They have a very close contact.
- 10 LM: Ok. And does Tomas think that the socialization at the meeting helps build stronger relationships with the other employee representatives?
- SL: The possibility they have in order to meet in the FE, to meet obviously the unions reinforce the capacity to increase the relationship between them and obviously to increase the capabilities between all the unions among the European countries.
- 15 LM: Ok. And So after the FE meetings does Tomas inform the national employee representatives of the information he gained at the FE meeting?
- SL: Tomas sais that at the meeting yesterday the management team of Gate Gourmet that the topic of the agenda was confidential. Tomas sais that there is formal communication about the topics of the agenda of the FE to the unions here in Spain, both here in Madrid but also in Barcelona.
- 20 LM: Ok. And do you have a national level of employee representation in Spain?
- SL: No, there is not a committee of Gate Gourmet in Spain. There is one in Barcelona and the other one in Madrid. But there is not a national works council in Gate Gourmet in Spain.
- LM: Ok. And does Tomas inform the employee representatives in Barcelona and Madrid of the information from the FE when it's not confidential?
- 25 SL: Yes, Tomas is informing about the results of the meeting which are not confidential.
- LM: Ok. And is that usually in a meeting or via e-mails?
- SL: He told me that meetings are not possible because there is not enough resources to go to Barcelona. It is mainly via e-mail.

- 1 LM: Ok. And does he find that those employee representatives appreciate the information that he passes on from the FE?
- SL: Tomas is telling me that there are two types of information. One of them, that is obviously the general information that obviously they receive more or less, ok-. Then
5 the general overview about the commission because it is not affecting general to the company but they all obviously have an impact in Spain and Tomas receives feedback about the impact locally, ok?.
- LM: Ok. And so does- is he able to contact other employee representatives of European
10 works councils through his trade union?
- SL: Companies different from Gate Gourmet?
- LM: Yes.
- SL: Tomas sais, yes.
- LM: And does he contact those to learn from each others' experiences?
- 15 SL: He's telling me that obviously he is very, how to say, he is looking more for the other companies information, more that giving away information to others.
- LM: Ok. So to learn from the other works councils experiences?
- SL: Ok, Louise. I a general overview about Tomas. Tomas is, because I don't know if
20 you know, Tomas is a member of one most union representatives in Spain and he is also working in the union with the other most import unions in Europe in order to coordinate information about negotiations of ((incomp)) the adjustment employment and the adjustment in other companies and activities that relates to the business Catalin and Alactin in Europe in order to be updated about how the unions are acting in other countries and to coordinate it.
- 25 LM: Ok. So that was very, very helpful. Those were the follow-up questions that I had. Has any of this generated any questions with Tomas?
- SL: Ok, Tomas is telling that he want that the FE will be more that a meeting where they receive information but also a place where they can discuss with the company subjects about the future of the company; and topic related with relevant issues.
- 30 LM: Ok.
- SL: More effective than now because in fact Tomas (think that though they are to be reported about topics they are not really-) To be more involved in the business.

1 LM: Yes.

5 SL: Ok, Tomas is telling that the business is globalized and obviously we are talking about problems about the division. At the end the division is a sum of different countries that have problems and the FE could also be a place where unions can transmit local problems, because at the end a local problem could be a division problem, if nobody is taking action or solving the problem that one country can have in order to avoid the future impact in the rest, ok?

LM: Ok.

10 SL: Then Tomas' impression is that sometimes the FE is having meetings in order to cover formalities more than to have the opportunity to solve the real problems of each country that at the end are the real problems of the division. Ok?

LM: Ok. Thank you very much for this and thank you for taking the time out to be interview, again.

Appendix 8 – Interview with Belgian FE Employee Representative on June 1st 2012

1 CS: The company has only been a member of the Gate Group since 2007, if I'm not mistaken. So since that time we are a member of the Gate Group.

LM: Ok. And what is your position in Gate Gourmet now?

5 CS: Well, I am a customer services responsible for middle east customers. So we supply catering equipment to all kinds of airlines globally and my job is to handle all customer service related issues for the middle eastern region.

LM: Ok. Interesting. So now I'll move on to the interview, to the questions that I e-mailed you. And the first couple of questions are rather budget oriented and I'm not sure that you have any knowledge about that yet.

10 CS: Well, I don't have any knowledge on the budget that is available for this Forum, but I have the feeling that they really want to do their utmost to involve us in all kinds of things. If you think that all representatives are flown in throughout Europe to Zurich, I think that they really want to do something to involve us.

15 LM: Ok. And I'll go to the fourth question, which is about: Do you receive time off, or do you know if you will receive time off to prepare for the joint FE meetings?

CS: Well this meeting was an extra meeting for which we didn't receive an agenda because the content of it was confidential, so we didn't have time to meet with the representatives beforehand. But normally I think it is the habit that we meet before we go in to the meeting.

20 LM: Ok. And back in Belgium will you have time to prepare for that pre-meeting?

CS: I think we will have the time for that, yeah.

LM: Ok. And have you been provided with an administrative staff that can provide you with assistance when you need that to carry out your FE tasks?

25 CS: At the moment that hasn't occurred yet. But I think that if it is necessary and I ask for it that I can get it, yes.

LM: Ok. And have you been able to communicate with management before or after the meeting you just had?

CS: You mean with my direct management or the management of Gate Gourmet?

- 1 LM: The management of Gate Gourmet.
- CS: We communicated with them during the meeting and afterwards we had lunch together, so of course you talk more in an informal way. So yeah, they really are making the time to answer some questions.
- 5 LM: Ok. And did you find that they would be open for you to communicate with them until the next meeting?
- CS: Normally we will have some conference calls to update each other and to follow-up also with the management and the other representatives before we will have the next meeting in Zurich again.
- 10 LM: Ok. And is there anything that you would like to change about that way of communication?
- CS: Not really. I think it's very good that we can have conference calls which save on travel costs and I get the time here from my management to participate on those conference calls, so I think it's very well organized.
- 15 LM: Ok. And I know that the meeting you just had, that that was confidential information so the management did not send out an agenda prior to the meeting. But did you find that at the meeting you were able to exert an influence on the agenda and put some points from the employee representatives on the agenda?
- CS: Yes. There were some people who had some additional questions which were answered. So if we had some points that were not on the agenda we could ask them.
- 20 LM: Ok. And did you find that the information that management provided was easy to understand?
- CS: Yes, yes.
- LM: Ok. And on what type of issues do you expect to be informed on by management? In the future.
- 25 CS: I think all HR related issues; changes in policies; other kind of things they are supposed to inform us about or involve us.
- LM: At the meeting you just had, did you receive the information from management in writing or was it solely a presentation?
- 30 CS: We had a presentation and we received some information in writing as well, but that was only the agenda that we got when we arrived in the meeting room, not prior to

1 CS: I don't really-. Oh yeah, here I have it on the top. They do acknowledge our needs, but I haven't experienced yet a transnational issue actually, something that involves every country.

LM: It can also just be pan-European and not outside Europe.

5 CS: I do think they acknowledge it and they do their utmost to respond to the issues, but of course they can't solve everything. So I think they are open to it but sometimes they can't solve everything.

LM: Ok. And why do you think that there is a need for consultation as suggested in the FE Agreement of the Transnational Information and Consultation of Employees of the Gate Gourmet Group?
10

CS: I think there is a need for the consultation as we representation a large group of people, so that all want to have their say and I think it is good that we are consulted because sometimes decisions are made that are not really workable for employees or not really good so that we can actually have our opinion on that and that maybe decisions are changed or adapted a little bit.
15

LM: Ok. And the next question I'll skip since you were only informed at the meeting. And in what way do you think that there is a need for negotiation as intended by the EU Directive on works councils?

CS: Well, it is, I think normal-. In Belgium we have quite a large tradition on negotiations between management and employees, so for us it's actually normal that representatives of the workers are consulted whenever management is doing something. I'm not really familiar with that European Union Directive or what exactly is in it, but I do think that if we can negotiate and have a proper understanding of certain decisions, then we can go back to the people that are affected and to explain or maybe to search for other solutions.
20
25

LM: Ok. And since You are only new with the FE I will skip the next question. And so I'll move to the internal interaction in the FE. And did you find that you very able to communicate both formally and informally with the other employee representatives?

CS: Yes, absolutely. We had, well of course the formal meeting. During that we had a break in which we communicated amongst each other and then we had lunch in which we communicated to each other as well, so- and during the meeting of course formally you communicate with each other and you anticipate (answer) on each other's questions.
30

LM: Ok. And so you were also able to socialize with the other employee representatives?

35 CS: Yes, yes.

- 1 LM: Ok. And do you think that having socialized with the will help you in your future work with the FE?
- CS: I think so too. We have been e-mailing each other as well. Now since we had a meeting on some issues we are trying to inform each other as much as we can. So I do think that is a very positive thing.
- 5 LM: Ok. Have you experienced that there is any procedure for information exchange, such as a line of communication?
- CS: Well there are procedures that are followed by the management to invite us to meetings and to invite us to conference calls. Amongst each other we usually communicate in a more informal way. But if something serious is up, we can also attend in a conference call.
- 10 LM: Ok. And have you experienced yet that other FE employee representatives have, when this does not breach confidentiality, shared relevant information with you that they, but not you, have access to?
- 15 CS: Yes.
- LM: And did you find that helpful?
- CS: Yes.
- LM: Do you think they did that because it was best for the company as a whole or was it to share information with you only?
- 20 CS: Well, I think it is very important that you are all informed on equal levels and sometimes because of the functions that people have or in the companies where people are, that you get different angles on certain information, and if you can all share that, then you have a wider picture on certain thing. So that can only help in going into a debate or having arguments.
- 25 LM: Have you experienced yet that you have had information that you have shared with the other employee representatives that they did not have access to?
- CS: Well, because I'm new it hasn't occurred yet, but I think that it will be in the future.
- LM: Ok. And can you give me some examples of the type of information that has been shared between you and the other employee representatives?
- 30 CS: Well, for example we had some things that were policies that Gate wants to implement for all European companies, but some of those polices or parts of that

1 policies was not complying with local laws and then we consulted each other and ask
“well, will we accept it or will we not or what will we do about it” and things like
that.

5 LM: Ok. And have you experienced that there was competition between FE employee
representatives that kept you from co-operating with each other?

CS: No, not at all.

LM: Ok. And did you experience that the employee representative from HQ had better
access to information and to the central management?

CS: No, not exactly. I think it's all about the same level.

10 LM: Ok. And at the meeting did you experience that some FE employee representatives
were better equipped as employee representatives than others because of greater
support from trade union officials?

CS: No, I couldn't say that.

15 LM: Ok. Can you give me some examples of when language was a barrier to
communication at the FE?

20 CS: Well, there was someone attending who can only communicate with a translator.
Now that is not a problem but when the translator is constantly translating a
presentation from the managers or something, well you can constantly hear two
voices going between each other and that is sometimes a little bit confusing, you
need to pay, especially when you are sitting next to them, pay really good attention to
understand what the person who is giving the presentation is saying and not to be
distracted by the translator who is communicating with just one person.

LM: Yes.

CS: In a language that you don't understand.

25 LM: I think it was Spanish.

CS: Yes.

LM: And did you experience that any interest groups have been formed in the FE between
the employee representatives?

CS: No, no. I couldn't say that. Maybe, no-.

30 LM: Ok. Did you experience that trade unions influence the employee representatives to

1 work in different directions so they counter act each other and the work that the FE wishes to perform?

CS: Of course in Europe you have two big streams. You have the socialist stream and a more liberal stream. And of course you have union representatives who follow the socialist stream and you have people who are more, let's say liberal. Of course then sometimes someone is giving a remark they think "ok, I wouldn't have said it like that or maybe I would have communicated it differently, or-" Of course we are living in a very turbulent period and of course you have to be a little bit, how should I say, down to Earth. The old days will not come back. So you have to be sometimes, accept what needs to be done and make the best of it. You can also do damage control but you can't avoid it. Maybe that is sometimes, but of course everybody is entitled to his own opinion, so I also do not think that when you are sitting with the management on one side and you are an employee representative sitting on the other side of the table, that you need to be- or not go as one group with one voice to the management because I don't think it's a good signal if they feel that you are divided within. I think you need to avoid that.

LM: So do you think that the support from blue-collar unions and white-collar unions create a divide in the FE?

CS: No, that I don't think because I don't know who was, at the table, who was a blue-collar worker and who was a white-collar worker. So that I don't think is (it). I think it's more a debate between the different stream that you have, different visions that you have on the economy. I think that is more something.

LM: Ok. And before you became a member of the FE were you an employee representative at the national level as well?

CS: No, it all came together actually. I am only that since middle of May, I am an employee representatives here in Belgium, so it's is all kind of linked together in Belgium.

LM: So you have not worked as an employee representative before in Belgium.

CS: Well, three weeks before, but no.

LM: Ok, so you jumped right into the whole thing.

CS: Yes, indeed.

LM: Ok, that's good though. Fresh eyes.

CS: Yes.

1 LM: So the next questions about the relationship between the FE and the national
employee representatives, I'm not sure if you will be able to answer them but I'll
ask-, I'll still ask them and you'll see if you'll be able to-. How do you find the co-
5 operation between the FE and the national body of employee representation to be
working?

CS: Well, actually I am the only representative for our company in the FE, so I actually
brief my colleagues who are national representatives, I brief them and we use that
information to go-, we have a meeting each month with our management, with our
10 direct superiors, and we take that information with and we discuss thing and we ask
them what direction they want to go with the company and all that, so-

LM: Ok. And when-. Do you and the national employee representatives receive time-off
from your daily work to co-operate as employee representatives?

CS: Yes we do. It's obligated by law here.

LM: Ok, and also for the European part.

15 CS: Yes.

LM: Do you utilize the time that has been made available?

CS: Yes we do.

LM: And have you experienced that there is competition between the FE and the national
level of employee representation?

20 CS: No. Not really, no.

LM: How important is it to you to inform the national employee representatives of the
work of the FE?

CS: Well, for me that is very important. I would like to have an open communication.
And of course since I'm the actually the representative of the representatives, within
25 the FE I really do want to be the voice for them and when I receive information I
will- I want to communicate it to them as quickly and as much as I can. So I also
write reports on it that is available to them. So they don't need to miss out on any
information that was share in the Forum.

LM: Ok. And that report, will you share that with them in a meeting or cascade through an
30 e-mail, or-?

CS: Normally we- I have share it in a meeting already, we had a meeting on the day after
I returned, so I gave them an update and the report I will write this weekend I think

- 1 and send it out by mail and then it will be saved in a database.
- LM: Yes. And can you give some examples of how the FE adds a European dimension to the national employee representational structure?
- 5 CS: Examples I can't really yet give. We de- when I speak to my colleagues at the Forum we speak about differences in local habits or local laws. As we are a company from Gate that is not really involved with their core business which is catering, we only produce catering equipment, so that is actually a side business for them, it is sometimes different how we work and that is very useful to share that information with each other.
- 10 LM: Ok. And can you give me some examples of how the national employee representatives create legitimacy for the FE among the employees which you and they represent?
- 15 CS: The fact that I am a representative is stated by the responsible of the national unions here, so we have representatives within the company that are linked to a union which is organized nationally and the ones responsible from that national office come to our company like three times a year, and when they came here the last time they officially declared that I would be the representative for the FE. So it is all stated on official documents so it is all made legit actually.
- 20 LM: Ok. And do you find that you and the other national employee representatives are able to create acceptance for the FE amongst the employees.
- CS: Yeah, sure yeah. They of course take it very seriously. They create for me the support that I need and they accept that there is some work to do on that and they appreciate it.
- 25 LM: Ok. And so I'll move on to the relationship between the FE and the trade unions now. Are you involved with a national or European trade union or both?
- CS: Actually national.
- LM: Ok.
- CS: Because it is obligated in Belgium to be a member of it before you can be a representative for your colleagues.
- 30 LM: Ok. And was it that trade union that suggested you or election for-?
- CS: Yes in deed.
- LM: Ok. And is you co-operation with the trade union close?

- 1 CS: Well, normally we co-operate here internally with our colleagues from the same trade union. If there is a problem or something that is beyond our power so to say or beyond our knowledge, we get support from the national head offices who have trained people who have all knowledge of social law and all that kind of things.
- 5 LM: Ok. At you trade union do you have a single contact person who supports you r do they change regularly?
- CS: We have a single contact person who is in charge for-, it is divided on a regional level, so depending on what town or what region the company is located in, there is someone. And then it is also divided on the type of business that the company is in.
- 10 So for example there is someone who is responsible for all building companies within a certain region or for all companies that produce plastic or in chemicals or that kind of- That is how it is divided, so each representatives from the national level has a number of companies within the same branch for which they are responsible.
- LM: Ok. Does the trade union provide you training sessions or seminars about EWC?
- 15 CS: Yes. We receive training, this year is my first year, so this year I have five days of training and then I think for the following years it's three per year.
- LM: Ok.
- CS: And then we also get training sessions on, let's say hot topics that are controlling political topics or economical topics, we get some lectures about it or training sessions in the evenings.
- 20 LM: Ok. And are you able to seek support at all times of the year or is it only limited to around the FE meetings?
- CS: No, it's all they year. It's all days of the year.
- LM: Ok. And do you know if your trade union organizes contact with other employee representatives from other countries or companies?
- 25 CS: I think they do, but I'm not sure.
- LM: Ok. If they do is that something that you would find interesting to utilize?
- CS: Well, as every company is different, so I think it's not really useful to communicate about that with each other because everybody is representing another company with other issues, with other rules. So I think the information would go- well, it wouldn't reach the right people because everybody have different things to be aware about.
- 30 For example, the business the Gate Gourmet is in, airline, it's very different than for

1 example Philips, you know it? It's TVs and all this kind that they produce. It's a very large company here in the region as well.

LM: Yes.

5 CS: They also have European meetings but what they- but the issues that they have are very different from the issues that we have. Now of course in the training that we get, we have people from all kinds of companies that are attending so then you are exchanging information. But on a European level I don't know. Yes, maybe it could be interesting, worth to try maybe.

10 LM: Ok. And so those were the questions that I have prepared. Do you have something you would like to add?

CS: No, not really I think.

Appendix 9 – Questions in Interview Guide Answered by the Spanish FE Employee Representative Prior to the Phone Interview.

Relationship between the Forum Europe and Central Management

- How do you find the level of the budget available to the Forum Europe?

El presupuesto destinado al Foro Europeo, no ha sido modificado desde la constitución del foro, el presupuesto esta anticuado y con los recursos insuficientes para que el Foro Europeo y sus componentes, puedan realizar, el trabajo que deberían hacer con suficiente garantía

- Are you able to influence the size and use?

La influencia de los representantes de los trabajadores en el Foro Europeo es muy deficiente, las propuestas que se hacen no se tienen en cuenta.

- If it was up to you, what would you change about the budget? I.e. the size, how it is used, how it is divided between representatives, the level of influence of the representatives on the budget and how it is spent.

El Foro Europeo, es el órgano de representación de las unidades de Europa, El comité director es el órgano de representación del Foro Europeo, la representación del comité director se destina poco presupuesto, debido a esto es escaso o nula la comunicación y el conocimiento de las unidades de Europa a las que representamos, El Comité Director deberíamos de disponer de recursos para, poder hacer visitas a todas las unidades y poder conocer por sus representantes, los diferentes problemas.

- Prior to the joint Forum Europe meetings are you allowed enough time-off from your daily work to prepare for?

No tenemos el tiempo suficiente, deberíamos al menos tener un día antes del encuentro antes con todos los convocados en el Foro, para poder debatir, aquellos temas que sean presentados por la Empresa, y poder trasladar aquellos que los trabajadores propongan,

- Do you participate in follow-up meetings with the other employee representatives after the joint Forum Europe meetings?

La Falta de medios nos hacen difícil el seguimiento

- Do you experience that you have sufficient time available in between the joint Forum Europe meetings to perform your role as an employee representative on the Forum Europe?

Si el tiempo es suficientes, los medios no.

- Do you have access to an administrative staff that can provide assistance when needed for you to carry out Forum Europe tasks?

No, el trabajo que existe entre reunión y reunión y una vez de vuelta al destino de origen queda paralizada la actividad del Foro y del Comité Director, debido a la falta de medios y participación de cada una de las unidades

- How do you communicate with the management representative between the joint Forum Europe meetings?

La comunicación, son las vías normales, teléfono, mail

- What would you change about the communication between the Forum Europe employee representatives and the management representatives?

Los cauces de la Comunicación son normales, la disponibilidad para la comunicación en los medios son mas defectuosos

- In what way if any are you able to exert influence on the agenda for the joint Forum Europe meetings?

Las reuniones, se supone que se hacen por consenso pero la ultima palabra la tiene la empresa, pero podemos proponer, fechas y lugares de encuentro

- Can you give me some examples of what type of information that the management provides the Forum Europe with at the Forum Europe meeting?

Los temas e información que se presentan en el Foro son:

Económicos

Estudios y proyectos.

Planes de empresa

Organigramas y organización

- Do you find that the information that the management provides is easy to understand?

La información presentada es fácil de entender, y esta presentada adecuadamente, por personas conocedoras de los temas presentados

- Is the information provided in time for you to process the data before the joint Forum Europe meetings?

Las documentaciones e información presentadas se dan en poco espacio de tiempo, no se puede valorar con suficiente antelación los temas a tratar

- On what type of issues are you usually informed by management?

Financiero, se supone de carácter global y en la misma medida que a los accionistas pero mucho mas tarde.

Organizativos, cambios en la organización las diferentes direcciones

Información de viabilidad del mantenimiento de algunos clientes

Información sobre aperturas y cierres de nuevas unidades

- How do you receive the information from management? I.e. in writing or orally?

Se realizan presentaciones en power-point, no se dan todas las presentaciones

- Have you experienced that the Forum Europe has been consulted by management on transnational issues as suggested in the “Forum Europe Agreement on the Transnational Information and Consultation with Employees of the Gate Gourmet Group”?

Hay una gran dificultad de comunicación para los asuntos transnacionales, y el Foro no se emplea como foro de consulta es como foro de información y no toda la deseamos.

- Do you remember some issues that the Forum Europe has been consulted on? What was the outcome?

El Foro no es consultivo, es de información, todas las políticas organizativas y de gestión se informan con posterioridad, no da lugar a la consulta ni a la propuesta.

- Have you experiences that management has negotiated with the Forum Europe on issues that the management has consulted the Forum Europe on?

No en ningún caso se ha negociado en el Foro Europeo ni tampoco en el Comité Director, ni temas de gestión, ni de organización, ni de Finanzas

- Do you remember some issues that the Forum Europe was negotiated on? What was the outcome?

Nunca que yo recuerde se ha negociado nada

- In what way does the central management acknowledge the Forum Europe’s need for information on transnational issues?

La dirección creo que mantiene el Foro por imagen y aproximarse a las normativas europea, pero creo que no mantienen el foro porque en tiendan de la necesidad del mismo.

- Why do you think there is a need for consultation as suggested in the “Forum Europe Agreement of the Transnational Information and Consultation with Employees of the Gate Gourmet Group”?

La participación de los representantes en los órganos de participación de la empresa, siempre es necesaria, es una forma de tener otra perspectiva, de los temas de importancia en la empresa creemos que el capital humano es el mas importante valor que una empresa tiene y las decisiones que se toman unilateralmente repercuten en todas las partes, por eso la aportación y debate de los trabajadores debería ser fundamental para la gestión y organización

- Can you give me some examples of how the central management acknowledges the need for consultation?

No puedo darla porque la dirección central hasta ahora no ha consultado nada.

- In what way do you think that there is a need for negotiation as intended by the EU Directive on works councils?

En Gate Gourmet no hay constituido un comité europeo. Porque el comité europeo esta regido por normativas europeas, se sule por un foro con un reglamento interno hecho por la empresa para su funcionamiento

- Have you experienced a change in the cooperation between the Forum Europe and the central management since the beginning of the financial crisis?

He notado un pequeño cambio de intenciones con el cambio de responsables directivos.

Interaction Internally in the Forum Europe

- Do you find that you are able to communicate both formally and informally with the other Forum Europe employee representatives?

Como hemos dicho anteriormente no es lo mismo el Foro Europeo que el comité director, la comunicación con el comité director es mas fluida y posible, con los representantes del foro europeo, es mas complicada debido a la falta de información de domicilios correos electrónicos teléfonos etc., de los representantes en el Foro.

- At the joint Forum Europe meetings are you able to socialize with the other Forum Europe employee representatives?

Como norma General en los encuentros de los Foros las relaciones con los demás representantes son bastante fluidas

- Are there any procedures for information exchange, that is has a line of communication been set up for exchanging information between the Forum Europe employee representatives?

Con los representantes del Comité Director la comunicación se realiza por correo electrónico, algunos representantes también se pueden comunicar por la red interna de Intranet

- Have you experienced that other Forum Europe employee representatives will – when this does not breach confidentiality – share relevant information with you which they, but not you, have access to?

Hay representante que por el puesto que ocupan en sus unidades tienen más posibilidades de información, los representantes de los trabajadores guardan la confidencialidad y siglillo que les corresponde

- If you have gained access to information which other Forum Europe employee representatives do not have access to will you – when this does not breach confidentiality – share it with them?

La confidencialidad se debe de guardar de puertas para fuera y solo aquellos que puedan perjudicar a imagen de la empresa o puedan ocasionar favores a los mercados u otros el resto de información y sobre todo la derivada de los trabajadores no debería existir confidencialidad. De puertas para dentro no debería existir confidencialidad escudándonos en ello se ocultan todos los datos que no se quieren dar

- Can you give me some examples of what type of information is shared between you and the other employee representatives?

Toda la información que deriven de los recursos humanos, y tengan implicación en la viabilidad de la empresa y de los trabajadores

- Have you experienced competition among the Forum Europe employee representatives that keep you from co-operating with each other?

Entre los trabajadores no hay competencia.

- If you are from a subsidiary: Have you experienced that the employee representatives from HQ have better access to information and the central management?

Por norma general los representantes de los trabajadores tienen más posibilidades de acceder a la información

- If you are from HQ: Have you experienced that you have better access to information and the central management than the other employee representatives?

La información disponible es mas completa y con la suficiente antelación y siempre previo a los representante de los trabajadores

- Have you experienced situations where some Forum Europe employee representatives were better equipped as an employee representative than others because of greater support from trade union officials?

Yo no he experimentado que haya mas y mejor información de unos con otros.

- Can you give me some examples of when language has been a barrier to communication within the Forum Europe?

El ejemplo mas significativo es el mío, ya que todas las reuniones son en ingles y yo no lo domino, mi apoyo es con interprete ya que soy el presidente del comité director.

- Have any interest groups been formed within the Forum Europe between employee representatives? That is, groups which focus on different issues to be dealt with, either competitive or supplementary.

No nunca se han hecho grupos específicos derivados de temas centrales y de conocimiento.

- Have you experienced that trade unions influence the employee representatives to work in different directions so that they end up counter acting each other and the work that the Forum Europe wishes to perform?

Los Sindicatos son organizaciones que están para la defensa de los trabajadores por eso deben jugar un papel fundamental en el asesoramiento de los representante del Foro-

Relationship between the Forum Europe and National Employee Representation

- How do you find the cooperation between the Forum Europe and the national body of employee representation to be working?

Hay representantes de países que los asistentes no son sindicalista y alguno puesto por decisión de la empresa, eso es uno de los inconvenientes de que no sea Comité Europeo, en otros casos si son representantes de sindicatos, en aquellos países que los representantes están sindicados las relaciones son optimas.

- Do you and the national employee representatives receive time-off from your daily work to co-operate as European and national employee representatives?

Si todo el tiempo necesario para mi labor de representante Europeo

- Have you experienced competition between the Forum Europe and the national level of employee representation? That is, competition to represent the same group of employees, or do you complement each other them focusing on national issues and you focusing on transnational issues?

La representación del forum los elige el sindicato en relación a la representación en Gate gourmet en el país y estos en base al numero de votos de los trabajadores, por lo tanto no hay competencia entre los representantes de los trabajadores

- How important is it to you to inform the national employee representatives on the work of the Forum Europe?

Cada representante en el Foro representa a su país y en su país representan a su unidad, pero hay unidades que no tienen representantes en el foro de hay la necesidad de informar a las diferentes unidades que no tienen representación directa en el foro.

- Can you give me some examples of how the Forum Europe add a European dimension to the national employee representational structure? That is, how the Forum Europe brings about European results that the national level could not have brought about?

La coordinación de los diferentes países en un objetivo común, hacen necesaria la comunicación y toma de decisiones a nivel Europeo, las diferentes normativas existentes en los diferentes países hacen a veces inviables las políticas comunes a nivel general, pero respetando esto, habría muchas medidas conjuntas que podrían favorecer las relaciones y el bienestar de los trabajadores.

- Can you give me some examples of how the national employee representatives create legitimacy for the Forum Europe among the employees which you and they represent? That is, how the national employee representative structure create acceptance of the work of the Forum Europe among the employees?

En España los participantes de los foros, y los Comités Europeos se designan entre los representantes de los trabajadores de las unidades y estos a su vez han sido asignados por los trabajadores en cada unidad, la designación se hace por votación en lecciones sindicales cada cuatro años, los representantes de Foro son de los sindicatos mas representativos en las votaciones.

Relationship between the Forum Europe and trade unions

- Are you involved with a national or European trade union or both?

En España si tiene relación con los sindicatos nacionales y europeos

- Can you give me some examples of the kind of issues that you seek support from the trade union on?

Las organizaciones sindicales deben de servir de apoyo y asesoramiento sobre las normativas nacionales y europeas.

- Do you experience that other Forum Europe employee representatives who receive support from trade unions receive more or less support than you?

Tendrán las mismas pero mas no, quizás en España están las organizaciones sindicales mas, presentes que en otros países

- Do you have a single contact person who supports you at the trade union? Or do they change regularly?

No solo una persona tenemos toda la organización ya he dicho antes que los que estamos en el Foro además de ser trabajadores en Gate Gourmet somos el sindicato

- Does the trade union provide training sessions and seminars to you?

El sindicato realiza cursos de Formacion tanto sindicales como profesionales con el añadido que yo que soy el presidente del Comité director, del foro Gate Gourmet en representación de los trabajadores y soy el secretario de Formacion del sindicato de toda España

- Are you able to seek support at all times of the year or is it limited to only around the joint Forum Europe meetings?

De todo el año como le He dicho soy parte del sindicato

- Does the trade union organize contact with EWC employee representatives from other companies?

El sindicato como sindicato más representativo, tiene representantes en todos los comités europeos y en todos los foros constituidos de todas las empresas de Europa que tengan domicilio en España.

- Are the issues dealt with at the joint Forum Europe Meetings primarily regarding Gate Gourmet or of a sector wide character?

Los temas tratados son de carácter global de Gate Gourmet, sin entrar en problemas personales, y/o de unidades individualmente ese es un requerimiento que hacemos ya que el foro representa a todas las unidades de Europa, por lo tanto se debería de debatir de los problemas que existan en cada una de las unidades de Gate Gourmet.

- Able to align the work that the Forum Europe is performing with the work that the union is performing? That is, do you focus on the same issues?

Soy capaz de separar los trabajos sindicales que no afectan a Gate Gourmet. También soy capaz de realizar el trabajo del foro Europeo de los temas que afectan directamente a Gate Gourmet.

Appendix 10 – Interview with the FE management Representative on 24th May2012

1 LM: On what type of issues do you typically provide information to the Forum Europe?

JB: Historically the FE has sort of met maybe once a year but in all honesty until recent years we haven't really used it as the Forum it could and should be used for. It's been kind of dormant for a number of years to be honest, even though that I think our
5 agreement goes back to 1994 so this is really prior to when the EU directive came out and it was more on a voluntary basis where companies could join and Gate did that back in 1994 and I think it's been- I mean HR has been sort of living different lives in Gate Group over those years and I think honestly that also that has reflected in the way we have engaged with the FE. Now I took over the chairmanship about a year
10 ago and my view is that either we use them or loose them so let's make the best out of it and that is what we are doing. So we are having probably two meetings a year with them and what we have invested quite a bit in is to bring them up to speed on the strategy but also on financial information so that they understand what the performance of the company is. Of course we can only share publically available
15 information because we are a publically traded company so we can't give them last month number etc. or disclose information that we haven't disclosed to the market. But that works pretty well, so we have had our CFO there to go through the financial numbers, we have had a number of other business people, our president has been there, so we are on the one we are trying to give them as much general information
20 about the company as possible but then we also bring in specific issues. One example is that we are right now implementing a whistle blower hotline across Gate Group world wide and this is of course a hot topic for the unions so we brought in the last meeting we had someone in from Group to talk about this whistle blower; what is it, what's its purpose etc. So it's a mix, Louise, about general information and specific
25 sort of updates on projects that are right now running that we need them to be aware of. Ok?

LM: Ok. And do you then provide the employee representatives with some education to be able to better understand the information you provide them with?

JB: Yeah, I mean the financial part- The meeting we had with our CFO, it was kind of a
30 training because she really went back to the ABC and told them; how do you read profit and loss statements, how do you decipher a balance sheet, what is an EBITDAM, so she went through and explained sort of- not just show the numbers but also to show them do we get to the numbers and why are these numbers important. So it was a training session I would call it.

35 LM: Ok. How relevant do you find it to provide such information to the FE?

1 JB: I think as I said before, either we use them and we involve them or we don't. And so
we provide them with sort of publically available information and I see some of you
questions we'll come into that but for me this is also about building trust and
confidence with these people. And if we do that by sharing, by involving them, we
5 will gain credibility with them which we can use later on. So it's a very- you can say
it's a very conscious decision from my side to involve them to involve them, to share
with them these type of information.

LM: Ok. And as you said before you did try and educate them in how to understand the
information you provide them with. Do you find that has made the FE employee
10 representatives capable of understanding the content of the information?

JB: I think time will show. I think it's too early, Louise, to say "yes" or "no" to that. I
think time will show and I think this will take time because again in all fairness these
are blue collar people so their educational level is fairly low but some of them are
really sharp, so one shouldn't just judge the book by it's cover and for some of them
15 they will never be able to understand it and- but I will say quite few of them are
beginning to grasp information and really they- overall I will say they appreciate the
openness that we are now showing them which they have not seen in the past.

LM: Ok. I will skip the next question since you already answered that before on the need
to inform the FE. Can you give me some examples where the Gate Gourmet have
20 benefitted from informing the FE on transnational decisions to be made?

JB: * I think it's too early. Because we have- It's less than a year ago that we really
started informing them and I think this- * I think we can harvest the benefits from
that maybe later this year or early next year. We have a meeting with them next week
which I cannot talk about because this is still confidential, Louise, but that type of
25 meeting I think we can benefit from later on because it involves some
(distructions...) that we will have on a local level. In many cases it is the same
people we will meet on a local level. So I think in essence the more we can give them
the more we can benefit from on a local level, when sit down and negotiate with the
local trade unions.

30 LM: Ok. So moving on to the consultation part. When you do provide the employee
representatives with the information, do you also allow to consult with them on
decision to be made?

JB: Yeah we do. A good example is- we call it the "Alert line", that's our whistle blower,
where we have had a- when we presented this to them last time there were a number
35 of questions and comments that came up from them in terms of data protection
basically and some of that actually meant that we had to go back and have a re-look
at some of the confidentiality around a whistle blower. So I would say, yes we do
that but I also, and I see again it's part of the questions you come with later on, I am
very clear that this is information and consultation and not negotiation. This is a very

1 strict line that I'm keeping, because the day that we start negotiating with them, then
we have lost power. And the mandate, you know, on the EU directive as you
probably know, Louise, is rightly to say is information and consultation and it is not
negotiation. Now I'm aware that in the EU, the EU Directive means that you will in
5 fact start negotiating, so it's taking a step further but since we are under the voluntary
scheme, you know, prior to 1994, it means that we still follow the original scheme so
we do not have to comply. We can if we want to but we are not forced to comply
with the new EU Directive. And to be perfectly honest, and that's my own personal
view, is that we do not want to go into negotiations with them at any stage because
10 *4* And why don't we want to do that? I think it's- the moment we start negotiating
with them is also the day that, as a corporation, we will lose our ability to maneuver
across the whole company. As long as we do, and we totally respect and we do that
very happily, negotiate on a local level, and that is where we want to keep it, yeah.

15 LM: Ok. And when you do provide them with information to consult with them do they
receive that information before the meeting or at the FE meeting?

JB: Well it's an interesting question because they have actually asked for that, that we
provide them information before meetings and we will do that. Now when it is sort of
information sharing when we need to consult with them on decisions we are about to
take, we would normally not do it and the reason for that is that I am not yet totally
20 convinced that these guys can keep a secret.

LM: Ok.

JB: So the whole area of confidentiality, something that we will discuss with them, you
know, we will continue to do that because it is like a board, you know, so when you
sit there this is confidential information and you need to treat it as that and we are not
25 there that I fully trust that I can do that so I wanna take this ((incomp)) as the French
says.

LM: Yeah. So how capable do you think that the employee representatives on the FE are
at understanding the issues that you consult them on?

JB: Pretty well I would have to say. I mean some of these guys, they may be blue collar
30 workers but some of them are very sharp. And *3* had they wanted to they could
have taken a different career, I'm absolutely convinced of that. Some of the other
ones, they are there and they will not be able to do it. But we have quite a few
members on board that are really sharp and asking really good questions. Some of
them, and I'm particularly thinking about Swedish employee rep. but also the guy
35 from Denmark, they are well prepared and sometimes they are even more prepared
than we are. Which, don't get me wrong Louise, I find that good because that gives
us get into a dialogue.

LM: It's very common for Northern European for the employee representatives to be so

1 prepares.

JB: Ok, so that's also what you see elsewhere.

LM: Yeah. It's just the structure of the industrial relations system, the history of that that
5 has- Northern European countries are just more used to questioning than Southern
European countries.
So do you find that there is a need to consult the FE on transnational issues?

JB: When you say transnational issues you mean across Europe basically, huh?

LM: Correct.

JB: Or do you mean across the world?

10 LM: Primarily European but if you also consult them on world wide issues, those
included.

JB: I mean- the scope is clearly, this is Europe, but if we go back to the whistle blower,
that was global thing that we also consulted them on and *3* ((incomp)) The answer
is yes to that and again the meeting we have next week, and again I cannot go into
15 details on that, Louise, for confidentiality reasons, but that is a clear case where we
want to inform but we also want to consult them.

LM: Ok. So have you experienced that the FE has changed the outcome of a decision
presented to them at the joint meeting?

JB: Yes, I think the Alert line is a good example where we had to go back, particularly in
20 Sweden, and re-check and re-do some of the confidentiality around a hot-line, sorry a
whistle blower hot-line.

LM: Ok. And so is it primarily on the content of the decision or in the implementation of
it that they influence the outcome?

JB: In this case it was mostly on the content. *2* was mostly on the content.

25 LM: Ok. So the next part about negotiation I will skip since you already answered those
questions. So I'll move on to the employee representatives. Have you experienced
that some FE employee representatives are significantly better than others as
employee representatives?

JB: *3* When you say other employee representatives, you mean those that we meet
30 locally or the other ones in the FE?

LM: In the FE.

1 JB: Ok. Absolutely, I said before, some of them are really sharp; good questions; they are
well prepared. We have some of them who are extremely political, politically correct
in their views, which makes it more tricky to deal with them, I'm thinking about our
5 Spanish employee representative. Some of them are extremely quiet and some of
them they haven't spoken a word in our Forum; contributed asked questions and so it
is really very different. And I think out of the, how many do we have Jo? 10?

JM: Something like that.

JB: It's really sort of the three to four of them every time that are doing the talking.

LM: Ok.

10 JB: The rest are quiet, the rest are quiet. And so big difference. It's not a united FE in
that sense. Of course they have got the steering committee meetings, not quite sure
what they discuss in there but we don't really sort of get anything back from them as
a united team. I think in that sense they are still very much looking at in from their
own national countries, that might change, but that's how it is at present.

15 LM: So you'd like to see it as more of a European Forum than different national employee
representatives coming together at the meetings?

JB: Yeah, I think at the end of the day each of them represent his or her country. I think
that's their main focus, their main interest. Having said that I think also for us it
would be nice that they- maybe they came to us with requests, demands for different
20 things as a team because I think that would also for us mean that we have a sort of a
united partner in the other end. I mean that could make it difficult in some cases but
at least it would make it more sort of easy for us to identify what are the collective
views, whereas today there might be five or six different views and they are different.

LM: Ok. Do you find that you have more contact with the FE employee representatives at
25 the HQ than with the rest of the FE representatives?

JB: Well, the HQ here in our case is in Zurich and that is the only female member that
we have in fact, Louise.

JM: There's another one. An other one has been appointed today.

JB: Alright, then we have two.

30 LM: Ok.

JB: No, I would actually say the opposite. I would say the opposite because *2*
personally for me I have more contact with the Swede, the Dane, a little bit the

1 Spanish representative, a little bit the Belgian, so I would say no to that one. I mean the HQ person here virtually no contact.

LM: Ok, that's interesting. In what way do you think that language can be a barrier of communication with some of the FE employee representatives?

5 JB: To most of them it is pretty ok. I mean, most of them have a pretty good English, we have probably three or four out of the 10 where the English is insufficient and we have one, our Spanish representatives where he doesn't speak a word of English, so he has his own translator that comes every time so she does a simultaneous translation for him. It's a bit of a ((incopm)) because that they haven't selected
10 someone who speak English. Both for him and for us because it really puts a tremendous barrier on everything.

LM: Yeah. Have you taken any steps to try and break down that barrier other than an #interpreter#?

JB: Go on.

15 LM: Other than the interpreter such as language training?

JB: No. No, we haven't. We haven't. We haven't even discussed that, so no. We haven't done more than that, Louise.

LM: Ok. Do you see that as a possibility or do you think that it works well as it is now?

20 JB: I don't mind if we were to sort of give them some language training. Actually ((incomp)) *3* and it's maybe something that we could check with them at some point in time. And I do not mind that we did that for them. So if they came to us tomorrow and say "would you be happy to support some language training?" then I would be quite positive to get that done.

25 LM: Ok. Moving on to the trade unions. Have you experienced that trade unions interfere with the relationship between the management and the FE employee representatives?

JB: Not really. We have one guy, again our Spanish colleague who many times try and bring in sort of local issues that he wants to bring up and I push back every time and say "this is not the place where we negotiate or discuss local issues". So apart from this one incident I would say no to that.

30 LM: So other than him do you find that the trade unions interfere too much with topics dealt with at the FE?

JB: No. I wouldn't say that.

1 LM: Would you like the trade unions to be more active, either national or European trade unions?

JB: If we were in a situation where we could not get on with the FE then I think it would be something that we definitely want to have. But I would say at resent we are
5 actually building up some good relations with the FE and I am actually quite positive that this will, over time, become a good Forum where we are discussing, sharing, challenging. We are on the way with these guys, absolutely.

LM: Ok. And just to round up the interview, you just touched upon it a little. How do you see the future of the FE in Gate Gourmet?

10 JB: Well, I think it really depends on who is the chairman of the FE. But now that's me, I have my style, you know, I drive it openly, I want the best out of this for both of us; I want an open dialogue; I want to share with them. Next time, you know, it may be someone comes on board who has a completely different view on this one here. So I think it is really up to sort of fundamentally what is the belief from the chairman who
15 drives this one here. Because the rest of FE is a little bit lost because if the chairman doesn't really wanna drive it, of course they can go to management, they can complaint, etc. So since we are a very labor intensive business, I would like to think that, you know, going forward we will have a positive relationship with the FE. Does it mean that we love them all the time? No it doesn't. But for me as long as we can
20 keep it on the information and consultation I see a huge value in us building up good relationships with and informing them; involving them because we will benefit from that, you know, on the local level.

LM: Ok. That was what I had prepared. Do you have anything to add to that?

JB: No. Jo?

25 JM: No, I don't think so.

LM: Ok.

JB: So Louise when will you be done with this because as we talked about originally it will be very interesting to see what your findings are.

30 LM: I don't know when my oral defense date is and it should be in early July that I defend it. I have to turn it in on June 13th.

JB: Alright.

LM: So that's when the report will be done. So I can either send the report to you as I turn it in to the school or I can send it to you with the comments from my oral defense. That's all up to you.

1 JB: Ok. With the comments, that would be nice. You know because then we can see that as well.

LM: Yes. And also would you like the report to be confidential or be public?

JB: When you say public what does that mean?

5 LM: That it will be accessible from the library at school.

JB: Yes, I think that there's no confidential information in this one here. So that's quite ok, Louise.

LM: Ok. If you change your mind just let me know and Ill send you a confidentiality form.

Appendix 11 – FE Specific Questions Answered by the Management Representative

- Who suggested that the Forum Europe should be established? Was it based on a request from the employees or by initiative of the management?
September 1994 – EU Commission directive 94/95. At this time companies were not obliged to have a FE but those that did undertake this had the right to maintain to the original directive and were not accountable to future directives.
- How many members are there on the Forum Europe?
 - Number of employee representatives - 11
 - Number of management representatives – 1 plus FE secretary
- Who are the Forum Europe employee representatives?
 - What is their nationality (if more than one from some countries, how many)? – *representatives from across Europe e.g. Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, UK&I, Spain, Norway, Denmark*
 - What is their employment position in Gate Gourmet? - *Varies – mostly operational staff e.g. drivers / production etc but also Customer Services*
 - How many are men and how many are women? *2 women and 9 men*
 - How old are they? - *Varies from mid 20's to mid 50's*
 - For how many years have they been an employee representative on the Forum Europe? - *From 1 week to 18 years*
- Who represents the Gate Gourmet executive management in the Forum Europe?
 - What position do they hold in Gate Gourmet? – *Jesper Bulskov, VP HR Europe and Africa*
 - In what country do they work? - *Switzerland*
 - What is their nationality? – *Danish*
- Do the different national managements send a representative to the joint meetings as they are entitled to according to the Forum Europe agreement?
 - If yes, do they participate on a regular basis or only occasionally? *Yes – there is a FE rep for each country and some have 2 rep depending on size of population.*
- Where are the joint Forum Europe meetings held? At HQ or does it rotate? – *mostly in Zurich.*
- Who are the members of the steering committee?
 - What is their nationality? – *Spanish, Swedish, German, Belgian*
 - How many years have they been a member of the Forum Europe? – *up to 18 Years*

- How many years have they been a member of the steering committee? – *up to 18 years*
- Does the Forum Europe have access to its own budget? – *no – travel expenses from the local budget and other expenses e.g. hotel accommodation from the central E&A HR budget*
 - If so, are they able to influence the size and how it is used? *n/a*
- Has the Forum Europe organized itself into working groups focusing on different issues? If so, which issues are those groups working on and who are the members? - *no*
- Is there a databank, i.e. a database, to which the Forum Europe members have access to receive and share information? – *we have an on line portal where information can be viewed by FE reps. All notes and information from the meetings is posted on this site and the reps can view the information only. They are unable to upload information.*
- Are there trade unions involved with the Forum Europe? - *no they are country reps. They may also be a staff rep and represent the local union.*
 - If so, which trade unions and from which countries?
 - If so, are they trade unions present at the Forum Europe meetings? – *not in their own right*
 - If so, do the trade unions hold seats on the Forum Europe? - *no*