

## **Germany - Trade unions get digital access to worker in chemical**

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In the old world of work, trade unions had many ways of promoting concerns and recruiting new members: an information stand outside the factory gate, a notice on the bulletin board, shop stewards in the company etc. In the new world of work, where many employees work on the road or from their home offices, communication is much more difficult. If purely analog access is maintained, entire groups of employees could be excluded from trade union communication. The potential for conflict in the plants could thus increase.

That's why trade unions have long been calling for digital access rights to the workplace, so that employees who are not regularly on site can also be reached via the intranet or e-mails. Recently, the employers' association BAVC and IGBCE have reached an agreement on digital access rights in the chemical-pharmaceutical industry with some 580,000 workers. In May last year, an agreement was reached in the rubber industry, which employs around 30,000 people.

Under the chemical agreement, the union can rely on communication channels that have already been set up. Possible access channels include a digital bulletin board on the intranet or links to union information in company information systems. The union can also use existing video conferencing systems for online meetings. The concrete arrangements will be decided by the companies and the relevant local unions.

The German government also has the issue on its agenda and plans to create a contemporary right for trade unions to digital access to workplaces that corresponds to their analog rights. An ongoing union dispute with Adidas shows that new agreements or laws are probably needed to ensure access in all sectors.

**Edited by industriAll Europe**