

Recommendations/ tips for the supervisory board (Edith Pohl, Chamber of Labour Austria)

Preparation

- Prepare carefully for the meeting of the supervisory board. Examine the documents of the meeting in detail and obtain information on unclear points before the meeting (for example, from the company management, the trade union).
- If there are several workers' representatives on the supervisory board prepare yourself for the meeting as a team as far as possible.

Documents of the Meeting

- Insist on receiving the documents of the meeting in good time (that is, at least one week in advance). Only then can the duty to exercise due care be fulfilled. If necessary, demand the documents and do not wait for them to be offered.

Agenda

- Objections to agenda items should be made in advance.

Room documents

- Request a break if a room document is presented. If this is not possible consider an abstention from voting.

Circular resolutions

- Circular resolutions can be necessary in exceptional cases. Important topics should not be dealt with in this manner, however. In the run-up to the meeting
- At many enterprises supervisory board meetings are more or less formalities. In that case it is all the more crucial that important topics and problems are discussed in the run-up to the meeting or continuously.
- Ask, if need be, for preliminary discussions with the managing board.
- Build up over the long term the best possible basis for discussion with the enterprise management, but also with the chair of the supervisory board.
- Contacts with the shareholders' representatives can also be worthwhile.

Contributions to the meeting

- Speak at the supervisory board meeting and make sure as far as possible that all workers' representatives make a contribution. Show that you have something to say.
- Ask questions and make sure that your questions are really answered.
- If anything is obscure keep asking questions until it is cleared up.

Detailed knowledge of the workplace/Advantages of the workers' representatives

- One of the biggest advantages which workers' representatives on the supervisory board have is their detailed knowledge of the workplace. ("No one knows the workplace as well as the works council.") Make conscious use of this exclusive knowledge in the supervisory board. The supervisory board chair and also the shareholders' representatives will certainly be interested in what you have to say.

Networking in the workplace

- Maintain close personal contact both with your colleagues on the works council and with the workforce. This gives you security and support and at the same time the possibility to keep up your detailed knowledge of the workplace.

Minutes

- Take notes on difficult resolutions and have them copied; read them through and only then vote on them.
- Make sure that important points of criticism and objections are included in the minutes.

Unanimous resolutions

- As a rule unanimous resolutions are desirable. This gives you a certain negotiating latitude. Get in touch with the supervisory board chair in the run-up to the meeting in order to explore this negotiating latitude.