

## Towards a progressive agenda to democratise firms: revisiting worker representation in company boards

Event co-organised by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), Economic Democracy Platform (PxDE) and CEHI University of Barcelona.

Venue: Espai Assemblea, CCOO Via Laietana 16, Barcelone (and Zoom)  
Thursday 16 January 2025 – from 9.00 to 18.15 (CET), lunch included.  
Interpretation English-Spanish

After the Covid-19 pandemic and the Spanish presidency of the EU, the importance of democratizing firms has returned to the political agenda in Spain. Worker representation on company boards or supervisory boards, as one of its best known dimensions in Europe, is still not legislated in Spain. Despite existing experiences in this regard, they are largely unknown and underutilized. This issue was also debated in the Parliament of Catalonia after the 2008 financial crisis, driven by the major trade unions.

This conference seeks to improve the understanding of codetermination and its social significance to make of this institution an active and normalized part of labour relations in Spain. Understanding the historical and current debates, institutions, perceptions over codetermination, and its practices, as well as its difficulties of success in the peripheral economies of the EU, is key to assessing the prospects for developing worker participation on company boards as a dimension of a broader progressive agenda to democratize the economy.

The conference will begin with a panel presenting an ETUI collective and comparative book, 'Revisiting worker representation on boards: the forgotten EU countries in codetermination studies', which analyses the representation of workers on company boards in ten European countries little explored in codetermination studies, including Spain. Then, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) will provide its vision on a European agenda for democracy at work after the European elections of June 2024. A second panel will follow, involving social partners and political representatives at the Spanish State and Catalonia level. It will discuss their positions and perspectives on concrete ways to develop and deepen worker participation in company boards and the democratization of firms from political and legislative action. In the afternoon, concrete experiences of worker participation in company boards will be presented in a third panel, including perspectives from trade unionists and company managers. Finally, the day will close with a panel of academic papers to promote research and dialogue on board-level worker participation and the democratisation of firms in Spain.

*Please find the **draft agenda** here below.*

*Places at the event are limited to a maximum of 90 participants on site. Participation online will also be possible. If you are interested, **please register by 7 January 2025** [HERE](#). ETUI can book hotel rooms and cover travel costs for participants according to the European Commission travel rules based on one-way distance. For additional information on ceilings and amounts, or queries about the event organisation, please contact Angélique Vanhoutte: [avanhoutte@etui.org](mailto:avanhoutte@etui.org)*

## AGENDA

- 8.30- 9.00**      **Registration**
- 9.00 – 9.15**      **Welcome and introduction**  
**Marc Andreu** (Cipriano García Foundation), **Sara Lafuente** (ETUI), **Bruno Estrada** (PxDE), **Javier Tébar Hurtado** (University of Barcelona)
- 9.15 – 10.45**      **Panel 1: Presentation of ETUI book ‘Revisiting worker representation on boards: the forgotten EU countries in codetermination studies’**  
Chair: **Sophie Rosenbohm**, University of Duisburg
- Book general overview and chapter on Spain: **Sara Lafuente**, ETUI  
Chapter on Belgium: **Stan De Spiegelaere**, UniEuropa and University of Ghent  
Chapter on Finland: **Maria Jauhiainen**, Finnish Union of Professional Engineers
- Discusión
- 10.45-11.15**      **Lecture : The policy agenda on democracy at work in Europe**  
**Stefan Gran**, European Trade Union Confederation
- 11.15 – 11.45**      **Coffee break**
- 11.45 – 13.30**      **Panel 2: Perspectives towards a political agenda in Spain and Catalonia on worker participation on boards and the democratization of firms**  
Chair: **Ricard Bellera**, Government of Catalonia
- Joaquín Pérez Rey**, Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Economy (tbc)  
**Aina Vidal**, Comunes  
**Susana Martínez**, PSC (tbc)  
Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (tbc)  
**Javier Pacheco**, CCOO Catalunya  
**Camil Ros**, UGT Catalunya  
**Luis Jesús Pérez López**, Foment
- 13.30 – 14.30**      **Lunch**
- 14.30- 16.00**      **Panel 3: Experiences of worker participation on company boards in Spain: company practices**  
Chair: **Gemma Fajardo**, University of Valencia and PxDE
- Juan Antonio Vázquez Real**, UGT FICA in Navantia  
**Pedro Suárez**, CCOO in State Ports  
**Esther García Torralbo**, Ferrocarrils
- Exchange of experiences and discussion

**16.00 -16.30**    **Coffee break**

**16.30–18.00**    **Panel 4: Promoting democracy in firms and worker participation on company boards through research**

Chair: **Javier Tébar Hurtado**

**Sophie Rosenbohm**

**Manfred Wannöffel**, University of Bochum

**Alex Sans Dalmau**, University Pompeu Fabra

**Gemma Fajardo**, University of Valencia

Discussion

**18.15**            **Closure**