

Abstract

Dissertation: **The Role and Activities of Employee Representatives in Labour Relations**

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The subject matter of this dissertation is the analysis of the role and activities of individual employee representatives in labour relations according to the Czech legal order.

The first aim of the dissertation is to find out and identify the similarities and differences between employee representatives with regard to their legal status under Czech labour law. The second aim of the dissertation is then to analyse the mutual interaction between employee representatives carrying out the activities at the same employer, including the scope of tasks that employee representatives can perform in promoting and protecting the economic and social interests of employees.

The results of the research mentioned above, are used to verify the fundamental hypothesis of the dissertation that trade unions have a privileged position among other employee representatives. The dissertation also describes the causes and consequences of the given position of trade unions and compares the position of trade unions with the position of other employee representatives.

Regarding the structure, the dissertation is divided into six chapters. The first chapter defines the term "employee representatives" and the meaning assigned to it by the Czech legislation and used for the purpose of this dissertation. In the dissertation, the term of employee representatives covers trade unions, works councils and employee health and safety representatives. The second chapter of the dissertation describes and analyses the elemental sources of legal regulation of employee representatives at the national, European and international level.

The third chapter of the dissertation researches differences in the role of individual employee representatives when focusing on the following aspects: (i) legal capacity and legal agency; (ii) the process of establishment; (iii) the minimum number of members and the creation of a membership base; and (iv) the existence of protective provisions. These aspects are considered by the author to be crucial, as they define the basic character of employee

representatives and thus, predetermine their activities. Following the research results stated in the third chapter, the fourth chapter of the dissertation analyses the individual authorisations of employee representatives, including their functions, which are granted to them according to Czech law.

The fifth chapter of the dissertation consists of the analysis of a questionnaire prepared by the author in order to find out how the Czech public perceives employee representatives and their activities. The conclusions arising from the questionnaire are compared with the research results presented in the third and fourth chapters of the dissertation. In general, it can be summarised that the respondents of the questionnaire have a mostly positive attitude towards employee representatives and support their activities.

The sixth and final chapter of the dissertation contains a comparative overview concerning German labour law in order to provide a further possible perspective on the matter of employee representatives. The reason for the choice of the German legal order is, firstly, the classification of both legal orders (i.e., the German and the Czech legal order) as European continental legal systems, and secondly, the fact that Czech employees often enter the German labour market and vice versa. In the sixth chapter, the subject matter of the research is the German legal regulation of trade unions and works councils and their activities.

As the basic research method for the purpose of this dissertation, the method of qualitative analysis was chosen, namely the method of data collection consisting in the analysis of documents. This approach was supplemented by the quantitative research method of survey by questionnaire, the analysis and results of which are presented in the fifth chapter of the dissertation. Based on this, the dissertation is complemented with practical research. Lastly, the dissertation uses aspects of comparative analysis in the form of an overview concerning German labour law.

Key Words: employee representatives, trade unions, works councils, employee health and safety representatives, activities of employee representatives, role of employee representatives, German collective labour law