

Self-representation in sheltered workshops

Participation - the basis of democracy

Participation is the basis of democracy and a basic human need. Especially in our day and age this is of high political relevance.

Whenever a decision is made which affects the life of a person, this person should obviously be part of the decision-making process. This applies more than anything on people with disabilities because they have a long history of decisions made over their head. "Not without us about us" therefore is one of the most important principles of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UN-CRPD).

Participation in working life

Value of work and self-determination of workers are inseparably linked because working life is intertwined with working life decisions. Where work is done, there must be workers' self-representative organisations in order to address the power imbalance between employer and employee, trainers and trainees and also sheltered workshop and person with disability.

Studies show that enterprises with a strong employee representative are more productive and more successful. The steady interaction and joint decision-making processes are of great worth for the enterprise's success and work satisfaction.

Self-representation in sheltered workshops

Sheltered workshops should provide self-representatives elected by and out of themselves. People with disabilities, same as every other worker in Europe, must have the possibility to speak with a stronger voice through this organ.

Sheltered workshops are more in duty than other enterprises, even more where self-representation is not (yet) a legal obligation. People with disabilities need the right support, be it through enabling and empowering them or be it through the willingness to work together on an equal footing.