



Titel: BoBaKom
Duration: 3'42''

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Jaroslav Krupicka – BoBoKom Pilsen
Vladislava ěernochová – Seminar-Participant
Johannes Bayer – Head of CESDA GmbH

Music: Dave Brubeck Quartet – Blue Rondo a la Turk

Content:

On May 1, 2004 the Czech Republic will officially become a member of the European Union. Especially the employees in the Czech Republic and Germany do not know what exactly will change for them. At the moment 3.500 Czechs are working in Bavaria and about 5.000 Germans in the Czech Republic. In order to be able to answer their questions in the border region, the German federation of trade unions (DGB) and its Czech counterpart, CMKOS, have founded a joint consultancy initiative. BoBaKom, is the abbreviation for Bohemian Bavarian Communication and Information Office. Its offices in Weiden and Pilsen are open for everyone who seeks to find answers. Moreover, the BoBaKom offers trainings there. We have watched their work in the office and during training.

Text:

representing 400 staff members from the region and wants to get information about how workers are normally represented in the Czech Republic. BoBaKom stands for Bohemian Bavarian Communication and Information office, an initiative of the German federation of trade unions, DGB and the Bohemian Moravian federation of trade unions, CMKOS. The EU supports this project of the German Czech trade unions with €70,000. Its most important objective Martin Bodensteiner on his way to the BoBaKom office in Weiden. He is a member of a work committee: communication:

QUOTE Helmut Fiedler, DGB region Upper Palatinate



“10 years ago we started cooperating with the Czech federation of trade unions, CMKOS, and have realized that the more we talk with each other and the more time we spend with each other, the smaller our own fears seem. We all had fears.”

Trying to promote dialogue and get direct contact with employees – beside the consultancy work in the office.

Sokolov, the former Falkenau. German Czech participants of a training session for members of work committees. At the moment, 5,000 Germans are working in the Czech Republic. They also have to be informed about the representation of the workers' interest. Therefore, the BoBaKom offers these weekly training sessions for consultancy. The Czech federation of trade unions – CMKOS – is responsible for informing German employees in the Czech Republic. There are no big differences in the way the workers' interests are represented:

QUOTE Jaroslav Krupicka, BoBaKom Pilsen

“There is only one big difference: Czech workers still fear that somehow their rights are not respected. And sometimes they are not aware of their legal status. That is actually something we still have to teach them. Apart from that, the legal possibilities of employees in Germany and the Czech Republic are quite similar.”

About 3.500 Czech are working in Bavaria at the moment. Experts expect that this number will not increase considerably even as of May 1, 2004, when the Czech Republic will become a member of the EU. For the living standard in the Czech Republic has been increasing for years and wages have become five times higher in the last 10 years. However, the unemployment rate in the border region is 20%. As far as jobs are concerned, Germany seems not to be in vogue at the moment:

QUOTE Vladislava Ěrnochová, participant

“Of course, it is still interesting to work in Germany because the average wage is still higher than in the Czech Republic. And as taxes and deductions are rising here, the possibility of working in Germany will remain interesting. Yet, you can earn a lot of money here, too, you just have to find the right job.”

The events of the BoBaKom are also interesting for employers. German entrepreneurs in the Czech Republic use the opportunity to prepare themselves in terms of workers' representation. For at least 800,000 Czechs are members of the CMKOS:

QUOTE: Johannes Baier, Manager CESDA



"With the European Union expanding, works committees and trade unions come to see companies. We just want to get to know the other side in order to be able to lead fair negotiations. You have to know what is different in Germany in order to be able to satisfy both sides."

Getting to know and understanding both sides – the BoBaKom leaflets convey binationality. And the fact that Petr Arnican, a Czech, is head of the BoBaKom office in Weiden, makes it clear that the working together of Germans and Czechs has, in the meantime, become natural on both sides of the border.