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How OeGB (Trade Union Federation of Austria) works

The Austrian Trade Union Federation - called OeGB - is a federation of seven trade unions.

The structure of the organisation of the OeGB has several levels:

- national level - one central organisation with its headquarters in Vienna
- regional level - eight regional offices (according to the nine regions in Austria; but there's no regional office in Vienna)
- district level - district offices

According to the Austrian right of association, the OeGB has the legal status of a juridical person. The individual trade unions, however, are member organisations of the OeGB, as determined by the Constitution of the OeGB. The OeGB confers certain rights upon its member organisations, which operate according to the general principles and guidelines of the federation. The structure of the seven trade unions is similar to that of the Austrian Trade Union Federation. In addition to the regional and economic structures, some unions have created economic substructures, e.g. sectors, trade groups, branch groups, sub-trade groups or work groups.

There are political factions in the OeGB, which are linked to the political parties to a considerable extent. The most important by number are the Social Democratic Unionists and the Christian Unionists. However, union members are not obliged to join a group.

There are special departments for women, pensioners and youth within the OeGB.

The women's departments of the OeGB and its affiliated unions examine women's issues raised by the female members of the OeGB. We are part of the OeGB but we have own tasks and decision making bodies, specified in the rules.

Decision making bodies are nominated by the trade unions and the nominees are staff representatives in their company, union members and members of a political faction. In the Styrian women's committee, experts such as a trustee for disabled persons, or the ombud for Equal Treatment, Ms. Elke Lujansky-Lammer, also attend the meetings.

We can generally say that most members of works councils and staff representatives are union members and also member of a political faction.

Social Partnership

Austria enjoys a particularly well-developed system of cooperation between the major economic interest groups and the government, called Social Partnership. The four large representative organisations are the Trade Union Federation (ÖGB), the Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ), the Federal Chamber of Labour (BAK) and the Chamber of Agriculture (LK).

The social partnership does not only deal with industrial relations – collective agreements are negotiated on the employer side, usually by the relevant suborganisations of the Federal Economic Chamber, and on the employee side by the Trade Union Federation. It is estimated that 90 % of private-sector employees are covered by collective agreements.

In the decision making bodies of this organisations, women are in the minority. In the Trade Union Federation, we have a relatively new gender proportion for the decision making bodies. However, not all of the seven trade unions have adopted these rules at this time.