



Articulation meetings minutes – H1 2021 Switzerland, Ireland, Germany, Portugal & Spain

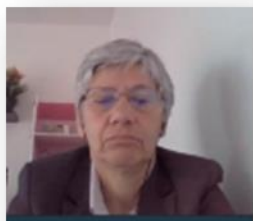


The EWC Secretary, **Hedi ben Sedrine**, resumes the course of the articulation meetings by country between the AXA EWC and the local representatives for this 1st half of 2021. A calendar and a common agenda for all these meetings were defined beforehand. The items are:

- **International New Market:** mergers-acquisitions of the AXA group in Europe, social impacts followed up by the AXA EWC
- **AXA Partners**
 - Greece: Hellas withdrawal
 - Spain: reorganisation, departure plan and negotiations
 - Annual meeting of the Europeans representatives' network with the management
- **AXA EWC Prospects**
 - Construction et prospects of transnational entities articulation meetings (AXA XL, AXA GO, AIM...)
 - 2021 roadmap and 2022 prospects
- **Delegates training**
 - Training for new members of European Works Councils
 - Webinar to introduce representatives to the role, rights and obligations of employee's representatives at company boards
- **Organisation of the June and November 2021 plenary meetings, themes and questions**
- **Countries & local entities news, negotiations in progress, Covid19 situation**



Switzerland – 3rd March 2021

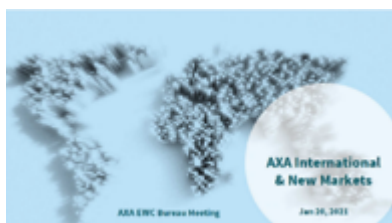


For this first meeting, the Swiss representatives, **Rolf Schneider**, **Harrald Bekker** and **Kilian Inwinkelried** welcomed us remotely on 3rd March 2021 as Switzerland, like France, is still facing the health crisis and applies the Group's instructions.

The first two points were developed by **Patricia Nunez**, Deputy Secretary of the CEG AXA. The first point was an update on the sales in INM scope and their social impacts. For AXA Bank Belgium, whose sale to Crelan was signed on 24th October 2019, the European Central Bank had already issued a negative opinion on this operation for 3 main reasons

- the financing of the acquisition by Crelan,
- IT integration that required more know-how and investment than expected,
- The lack of expertise of the future governance of this new entity.

AXA and CRELAN worked jointly to fix these items however the ECB required additional guarantees before approving this deal.



In respect of the integration of AXA Poland and AXA Czechia into the UNIQA Group, the EWC is in contact with our former delegates who confirm that everything is going well. AXA's building and IT infrastructure as well as the expertise of its employees are the strong points of this acquisition.

Finally, the sale of AXA Greece to the Generali Group announced at the end of December 2020 is underway. There has been no contact between the two parties, as the transitional phase is extremely constrained by the law. However, working groups will be set up and the INM HR Director confirmed at the January Bureau meeting that information meetings will be set up at AXA Greece to inform the staff on the progress of the sale as far as can be legally communicated.



For its part, the EWC Secretariat contacted the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary of the Generali European Works Council in order to discuss this subject and to allow **Stratos Kefalas** to anticipate the support and integration of the employees.

The 2nd item on the agenda was related to AXA Partners.

At the beginning of 2020 the insurer Hellas had entered into an agreement to acquire AXA Partners Greece. The transaction was in progress and the transfer of employees was imminent. Hellas has just withdrawn, probably following the sale of AXA Greece to Generali. Indeed, AXA Partners relies in part on the local General Insurance entity for the distribution of its products. The Group therefore recovers the activity and its employees without any major distribution channel.



At AXA Partners in Spain, 54 positions were to be eliminated following the transformation of part of the home and legal activity. Spanish trade union organisations (UGT et CCOO) and the Management of IPAs were brought to the negotiating table to avoid a redundancy plan. The EWC Secretary, through **Daniel Folgado** closely followed the evolution of these negotiations

The negotiations finally resulted in a voluntary redundancy agreement for 51 positions, with very good compensation level. The Spanish delegates worked hard to identify volunteers who were interested in the conditions offered by the voluntary redundancy agreement and the evolution of the management's position in a positive direction allowed both parties to find common ground.

On 24th March, as every year the European representatives of AXA Partners will meet the Management of this entity to discuss the strategy and its impacts for the company's employees in Europe. This meeting will be preceded by a preparatory meeting with the 27 representatives invited, coordinated by the Secretary of the EWC, **Hedi Ben Sedrine**, who will organize the exchanges on the news of the countries and the questions to be asked to the Management.

Hedi Ben Sedrine then outlined the following points :



First, the prospect of developing transnational entities networks meetings (XL, AXA GO, AIM...) which will enable representatives to share their cultural diversity and good practices with each other, and to exchange views on global and country-specific strategy and local issues with the management of these transnational entities.

The EWC Secretariat must work on the construction of this project until it is sufficiently mature, and the various parties are on board. The EWC will then coordinate these meetings with the representatives and the Management to facilitate exchanges as well as the work of the representatives at local level.



Harrauld Bekker (AXA GO) supports this idea of European cooperation and collective work through these meetings. **Rolf Schneider** (AXA Switzerland) informed the Secretary that XL has just created a staff delegation in its Swiss entity, which will allow to have also an XL representative in the next meetings with the EWC. The EWC Secretary continued with the prospects for the evolution of the EWC's work. First, the extension of the articulation meetings to all the entities present in the same country, which must all have

the right level of European information and which will be able to provide the EWC with local information.

For Switzerland, the project of moving from Extra-European to a more complete integration could be considered; it requires a reflection on the meaning to be given to it and to convince stakeholders of this progress. The retention of the British in the EWC remains a priority and must be resolved before going any further.

Kilian Inwinkelried confirms that Switzerland is a small country but has an important place in the Group and is a member of Europe. The local management must find it worthwhile for the Swiss representatives to participate more actively in the EWC and understand its role in the Group.



Patricia Nunez then mentioned the strong appetite from newly elected EWC members for a European training. As she attends the European Works Council exchange meetings organised by ASTREES and IRSHARE, she was able to propose a training course for European Works Council members organised by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI). A total of 33 AXA EWC members representing 11 countries will take part in this training.

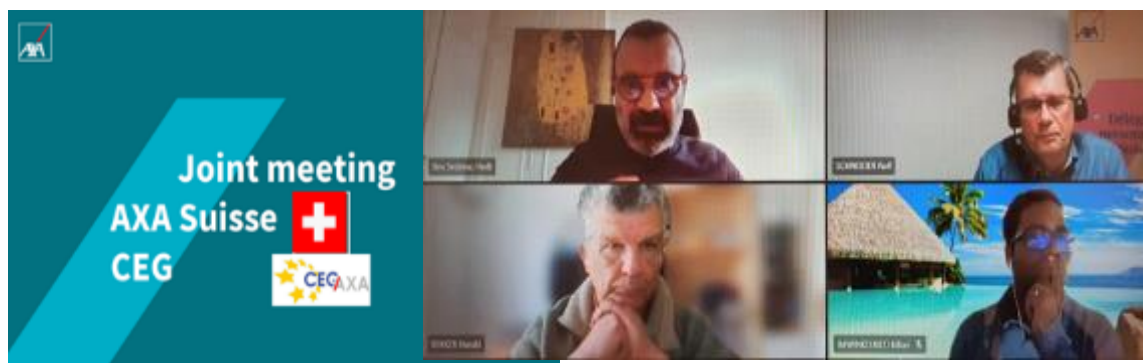


Rolf and Harrald who attended the first session gave a very positive feedback on the organisation, the content and the exchanges with delegates from other companies. They stressed that the AXA Group and its EWC were clearly ahead of their peers in respect of social topics.

A second training session will be offered to the delegates on the subject of employee representatives on the Management Board, in particular on their role, their rights and their obligations.

Concerning the plenary meetings, **Patricia Nunez** said that discussions were under way with management on the organisation of the plenary meeting from 15 to 17 June, either in person or remotely. The end-of-year plenary meeting (29/30 November and 1 December) would probably be held face-to-face, which would allow us to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the EWC, among other things.

Swiss News:



Covid19 update

- mandatory remote working; employees who go to the office must wear a mask,
- Mandatory mask in public indoor or outdoor spaces as well as in public transportations,
- As from 01.03.2021, re-opening of shops, museums and libraries. Restaurants, bars and fitness centres remain closed,
- Covid 19 figures in Switzerland (as of 02.03.2021): Swiss population 8.57 million inhabitants
 - 557 500 positive cases,
 - 10 000 deaths,
 - 808 000 doses of vaccine inoculated; 260 000 persons had 2 doses

- Closing of schools/day-care centres: employees can work from home while looking after their children and AXA grants a quota of 5 days of work as an exception.

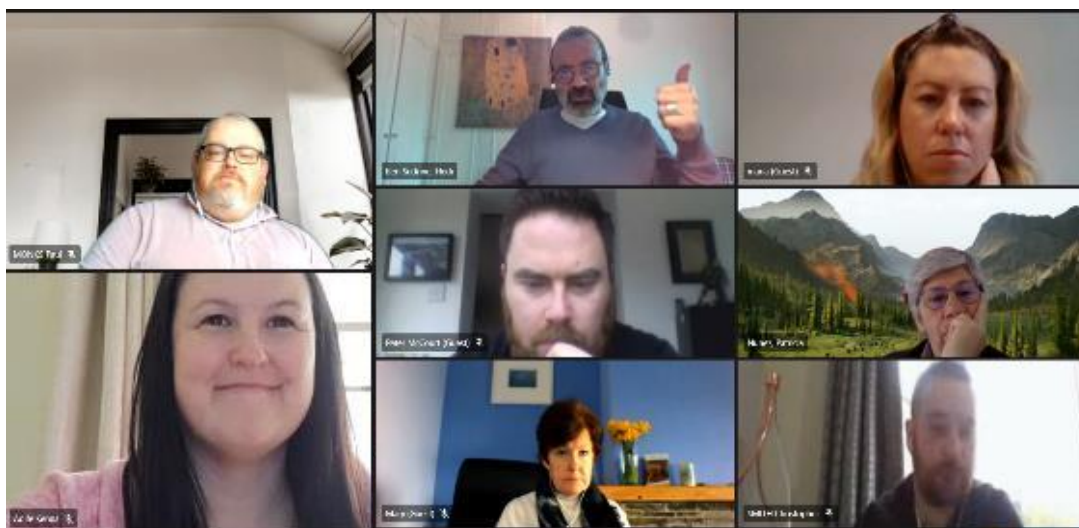
Smart working:

- Coverage of teleworking costs: CHF 200 (€ 180) per year,
- Smart working and on-site working are deemed equivalent,
- In general, teams decide on the number, choice and distribution of days of on-site work and Smart Working,
- Reflection on the occupation of workspace, buildings, management of the company restaurant and car parks.

Finally, **Harrald** gave an update on the progress of the AXA GO strategy in Switzerland.

Ireland – 5th March 2021

On 5 March, it is Ireland’s turn to welcome virtually **Hedi Ben Sedrine**, Secretary of the EWC, **Patricia Nunez**, deputy Secretary and **Pascale Rauline**, in charge of CEEC and Social Dialogue. Representatives from Northern Ireland were invited to participate in the meeting.



Hedi ben Sedrine proceeded with the agenda. One point of particular concern to the participants was the fate of the British delegation as a result of Brexit, which worried the Irish delegates. **Hedi ben Sedrine** recalled the importance of the UK within the EWC and explained the work underway with Management to ensure the sustainability of this delegation



Pascale Rauline then reviewed the ETUI training session for the members of the European committees, which presented a good balance between the theoretical parts, the workshops on the participants' agreements and a role-play to simulate a lively plenary session. Beyond the content, it was an opportunity to exchange with representatives from other European works councils in the industry and services sectors, and to appreciate the quality of the social dialogue within the AXA Group, several times mentioned as an example by the session leaders. The Irish participants confirmed that they found the training very useful and appreciated the exchanges.

Irish News:

Covid19 update: participants pointed out that employees had been working remotely since the beginning of the pandemic, that there had been a number of IT issues and that the situation of employees did not always allow them to work remotely peacefully. Employees had an exceptional day off due to the situation.

Smart-working: participants raised many questions about how this policy would be implemented locally, particularly with regards to covering the costs incurred by employees.

Finally, the representatives stressed the need for interconnection with other Irish entities, notably AXA Partners and AXA XL, some of which have no representatives although they have many employees. **Hedi Ben Sedrine** discussed the plan to set up country meetings with all the entities present locally but also specific meetings for transnational entities like AXA XL, AXA GO or AXA IM, like what is done for AXA Partners, to promote exchanges between local entities and between European delegates of the same entity.

Germany – 8th March 2021



The next articulation meeting was organised by **Andrea Wolf**, Treasury of the EWC, that **Hedi ben Sedrine** thanked. The members of the German delegation of the EWC attended this meeting as well as **Joerg Schmidt**, AXA Konzern AG HR Manager who joined the beginning of the meeting for a presentation.



Joerg Schmidt detailed the group’s strategy in Germany and explained that the objective was to be the preferred employer on the German market. He continued by highlighting the importance of diversity and inclusion in Germany, including multi-generational inclusion, and explaining the initiatives taken during the pandemic to facilitate the balance between work and personal life, especially for employees with young children. In particular, in agreement with local representatives, there were donations of overtime to allow employees who had a lot of constraints to free up time.



Hedi ben Sedrine spoke again for a session attended only by the German representatives who wished to invite **Bettina Cramm**, employee representative at the Group Board. **Pascale Rauline** updated the participants on the disposal of entities in the scope of INM, followed up by the EWC. **Patricia Nunez** detailed AXA Partners situation and the up-coming network meeting.

Following an update on training by **Patricia Nunez**, **Bettina Cramm** encouraged representatives to attend the ETUI training on Employee Representatives at Company Boards to fully understand the terms and conditions. **Pascale Rauline** gave a feedback on the ETUI training for Members of EWCs. The German delegates who attended this training confirmed that it was very rich, and they greatly appreciated the interactions with the other participants.





German News :

Andrea Wolf said that the situation within the AXA entities had not changed: employees could come on site but were asked to work remotely as far as possible. In Cologne, a maximum of 10% of the workforce is on site. The Occupational Health department is very active in organising the vaccination, which should start in the company at the beginning of April.

Joerg Primke added that having up to 95% of employees working from home at AXA Partners complicated social relations somewhat and that some employees left the company because they were demotivated. He reported that negotiations were underway on the application of the insurance collective bargaining agreement.

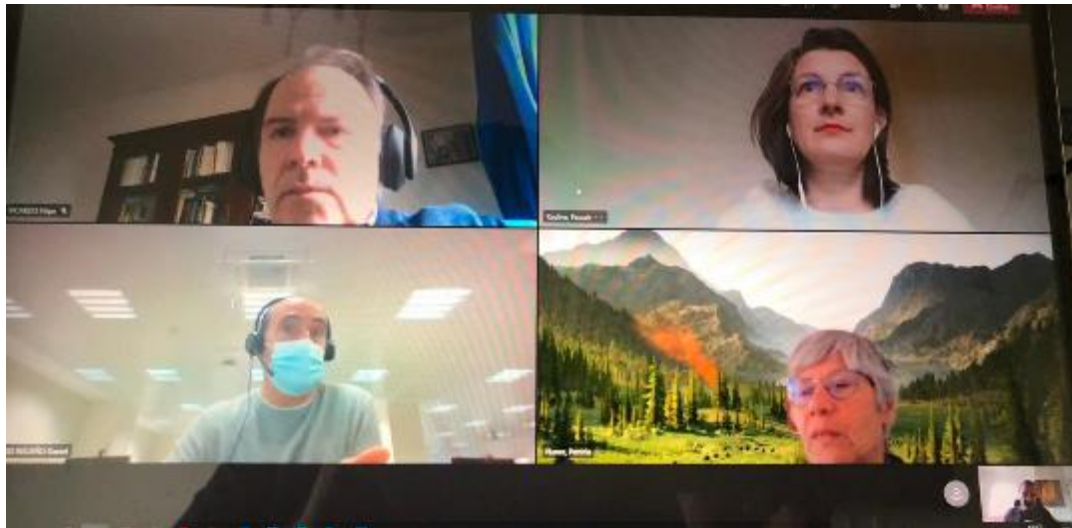
Alexandra Muermans reported on the situation at AXA XL, which had also been working remotely for over a year. This does not facilitate the integration of employees from the different original entities, since the moves from one site to another took place during the lockdown and employees had never been able to work physically side by side. Many employees left the company following the merger: there is a significant workload, which is exacerbated by the impact of the migration. This is impacting the quality of the service. **Hedi ben Sedrine** pointed out that these topics were escalated to **Xavier Veyry**, CEO of APAC – and that management was fully aware of the difficulties on the ground, especially in France and Germany, and committed the necessary means to resolve them.

Portugal – 11th March 2021

Joint meetings continued with Portugal. In addition to the items on the agenda, **Hedi ben Sedrine** said that **Thomas Buberl** attended the EWC Bureau meeting, the day before. He presented and commented the group results to the members of the Bureau.

Hedi ben Sedrine referred to the items discussed at the Bureau meeting and that got **Thomas Buberl**'s full attention:

- The importance of coordination at group level when launching and monitoring the various projects to ensure smooth implementation;
- The need to fine-tune the cost reduction policy to consider the situation of local entities,
- The need for vigilance in the face of the suffering of employees in several entities due to the pandemic, reorganizations, integration, workload, etc.



Portuguese News:

Felipe Ricardo explained that Portugal was attached to the AXA Iberian Peninsula region and would be transferred to a newly formed region for the assistance scope, including Italy, Spain and a few Latin American entities as part of the SEILA (South Europe, Iberia, Latin America) programme

In terms of activity, things are going rather well as key contracts were renewed. Lastly, an automated invoice processing tool has been implemented, which allows for productivity gains, but the calibration is still perfectible.

Covid19: the health situation is slowly improving after a very difficult start to the year. Most of the employees are working remotely, except for a few people who expressed difficulties in working from home. The elected representatives regretted that there was no agreement on a financial support scheme for teleworking, especially as the winter was particularly cold and wet in Portugal and houses are not designed for this type of weather.

Smart-working: there was a first meeting on the subject with the management. The Parliament has taken up the subject of teleworking to regulate it.

Espagne – 17 mars 2021

Daniel Folgado welcomed the local representatives, the EWC delegates, **Hedi ben Sedrine**, **Patricia Nunez** and **Pascale Rauline** for the Spanish Joint Meeting.



Spanish News

Beyond the items on the agenda, the main topic of discussion was the voluntary departure scheme at IPAs (Inter Partner Assistance Services). **Daniel Folgado** and **Hedi Ben Sedrine** stressed the work carried out on the ground by local representatives with the employees concerned and the construction of a positive social dialogue with the management in a difficult context, which made it possible to transform a redundancy plan for 54 people into a voluntary redundancy plan with compensation allowing the 51 volunteers to leave under the best possible conditions.



Sandra Gomez Martin and **Enriqueeta Pardo Miras** thanked the representatives from AXA Seguros for their solidarity as well as **Daniel Folgado** and **Hedi ben Sedrine** for their support throughout the negotiation process. They added that the local Management clearly set a return to profitability within two years as a goal.

Daniel Folgado continued with the organization of the AXA Partners network meeting to be held the following week and invited IPAs representatives to share their feedback during the preparatory meeting. He then discussed the health situation in Spain with the start of a voluntary return to the office. **Nieves del Moral** stated that there is a high expectation among employees of a return to normal, but that attention should be kept to the situation.

Daniel Folgado added that the collective bargaining agreement was finalized at AXA Seguros last year and renewed for one year. There are currently 14 topics on the negotiating table.

The session ended with a discussion on smart working. The representatives agreed on the great fatigue of the employees while noting that absenteeism was lower than in non-Covid times. They also mentioned of the lack or inadequacy of compensation for the costs incurred by employees who have been working remotely for more than a year. They referred to possible agreements by sector, failing which this will have to be negotiated company by company. **Patricia Nunez** stressed that the subject of the costs of remote working had been raised by **Daniel Folgado** since the beginning of the pandemic and that, if the Group is attentive to it, a coordinated response compatible with local regulations, in particular taxation, is still to be brought.