

Let me first of all greet President Kostantinos and also my friend Vassilis with whom we have known each other for many years as I am also the chairman of Heineken's European Works Council.

I would like to bring you a direct testimony of what type of work the EWC has to do, and I had prepared a presentation but I see that there is no need for it.

For years, I have been a united trade union representative at the Heineken factory in Comun Nuovo, Bergamo, and I was confronted first hand with the pandemics, as Bergamo was the epicentre of the pandemics in Europe, a sort of Wuhan of Europe, and I was at the factory with the person who was then its director, a Greek colleague of yours, Nikos Paraschopulos, whom Vassilis knows very well because he worked with him for years.

In my experience, Bergamo was practically the most affected city and I found myself as a workers' representative in the factory having to guarantee production but also workers' safety.

We found ourselves in a peculiar, I would say rather complicated, situation with the director, also new, coming from Greece.

We were fourth-term representatives who had some experience but in fact the virus was unknown to all of us and there was no benchmark.

There was no possibility of copying from other countries because, unfortunately, Bergamo was the first country affected.

So, indeed, we had to resort to the rule of information and consultation.

I would say that was quite appropriate as we had the opportunity to draw up a protocol with the management, but we built it from scratch, i.e. we sat with the management for three hours a day for a month and a half to create rules out of thin air, as government had not yet formalised any rule.

So, we worked with common sense and with the tools available at that time to define what could be protocols of action, beginning with the basic rules, distance, sanitisation, masks...

Consider that masks came in from the Netherlands but we didn't have masks for everyone, so we also had to prioritise.

Then there were all the rules related to common spaces: canteen, break areas, changing room areas: all these areas that could be contact areas, where the virus could spread.

At the beginning of February we had a technician from Codogno, the town where the virus was later isolated, who came to assemble a stretch wrap machine in the factory, and in these operations contact with the technicians is very close.

This resulted in several workers having direct contact with this technician. We had to implement a preventive isolation procedure and this caused a problem, i.e. the lack of the necessary workforce to run the production lines because the management, in coordination with the united union representative, decided to keep people at home on a preventive basis and therefore lacked the necessary workforce.

So, for two months there was this continuous dialogue that led to the creation of a protocol and this protocol was also the basis for what the government then did at a national level because, since we were the first, even Heineken then copied our protocol in the various factories and made it possible to guarantee safety but also continuity of production because this continuity was necessary to be able to pay the wages to the employees.

So, in these terms digitisation has helped us because through the use of innovative tools we have changed the way we work.

We have in any case maintained the level of contact and communication that is fundamental to our work, because being union representatives is certainly an activity that requires face-to-face interactions, by looking at each other face-to-face. This is the only way to achieve the trust that allows us to obtain results at an agreed table that guarantees production, which is the company's priority, as well as the safety and health of workers.

I thought that telling you this story, our story, would be a valuable contribution.

I wish everyone a productive work session, so that today we can collect good practices to upload on the websites that Sofia showed us