



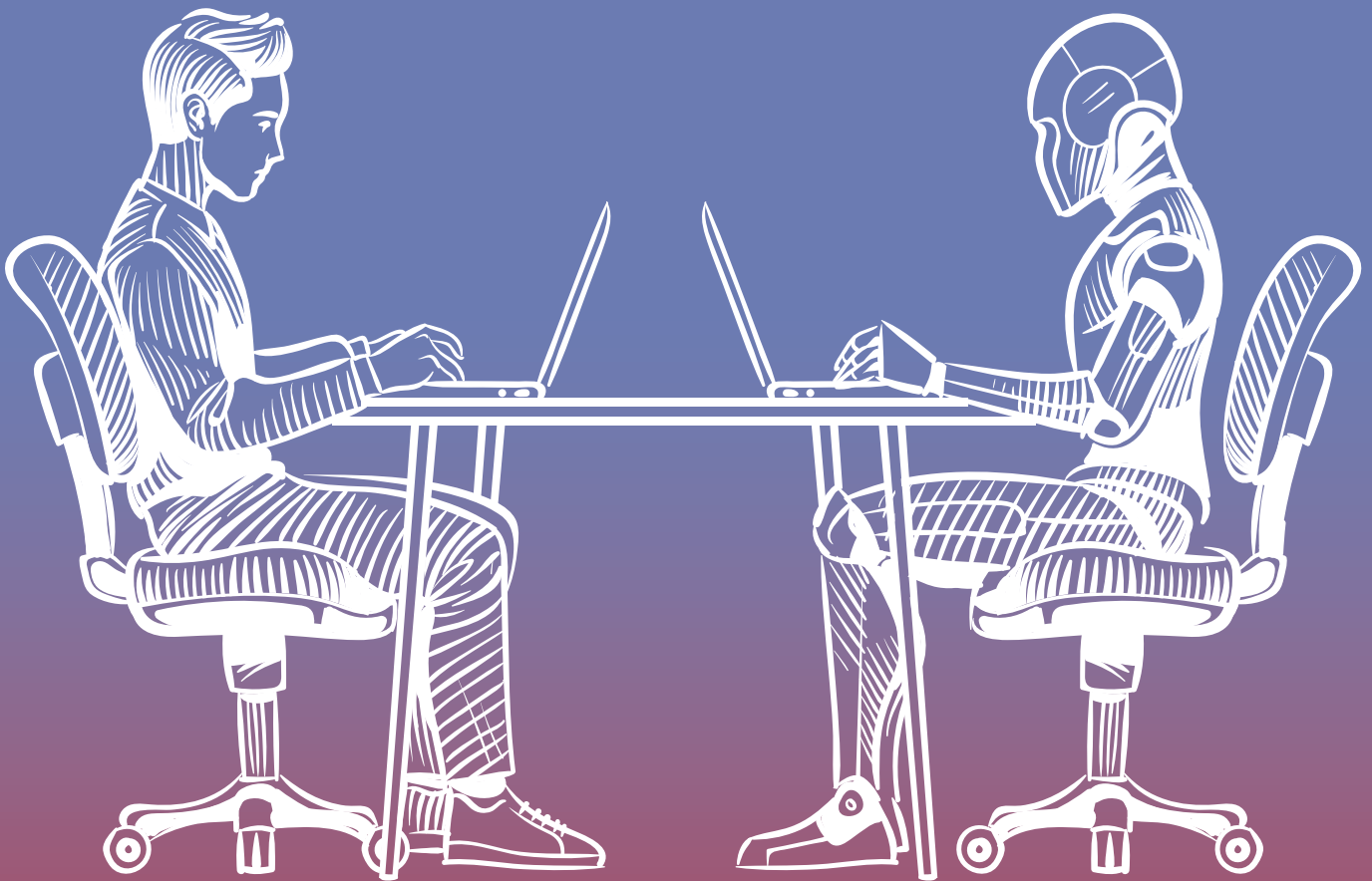
# IG-Magazin

The industry magazine of IG Metall

01/2024

Artificial intelligence (AI) in the working world

## COEXISTENCE WITH AI



**HOW UNIONS LIVE  
INSIDE IT COMPANIES**

Four of our active employees report, page 3

**“OPPORTUNITIES ON  
EVERY CORNER”**

Interview with Christiane Benner, page 12



Photo: Annette Hornischer

**Marco Schmidt**  
is “Active in Enterprise”  
department head with the Executive  
Board of IG Metall in Frankfurt.

Dear Reader,

Have you written an AI prompt today? Chances are that you have. Artificial intelligence is everywhere and much easier to use as programs get better. Watching what’s happening to the IT sector and industry is exciting. In this IT Magazine issue, we focus on artificial intelligence and its impact. For our cover story, I discovered how steel manufacturers and carmakers already use artificial intelligence, which raises some questions. When a new technology spreads so rapidly, what happens to data protection? And what about the impact on employees? What are the opportunities and risks of this new technology? We spoke with people with the necessary keen instinct and considerable experience required to answer

such questions – our IG Metall works council members. They are the ones who shape this new company technology to benefit employees. There is much to do when facing this kind of change in businesses and the country. Christiane Benner, our First Chairwoman, says this is a vast understatement. In an interview, she explains why IG Metall believes it is time for giant leaps, not small steps. Germany needs an investment program to renew its infrastructure. IG Metall, therefore, has drafted an 11-point plan to modernise the economy and society – with a primary focus on Germany’s debt brake. The discussion is critical; it is urgent. As a political organisation, IG Metall is driving this plan forward with determination. We represent 2.2 million members from the core sectors of the Ger-

man industry, including the IT sector. Trade unions are alive and well within our companies; they work at the ground level, close to the action. Trade unions are people who get their hands dirty, get involved, and want to make a difference. In this issue, we provide a platform for some of our volunteers from IT companies. What drives them? Why do they get involved? Their answers are inspiring. It’s an exhilarating read, and it’s now available in English. IG Metall’s IT magazine has recently attracted the attention of an English-speaking community of IT professionals, many in Berlin, who have joined forces to form a Tech Workers Coalition with which IG Metall cooperates. These colleagues also find IG Metall’s progress in the IT sector inspiring. I shout out to them: Welcome! ■

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# OUR ACTIVES

Unions thrive on volunteer work. Committed shop stewards, works councillors, active members of youth and trainee councils, and representatives of severely disabled employees give IG Metall countenance. With our many committed volunteers, IG Metall could achieve much in the IT sector. Four of our volunteers report on what drives them, what projects they are pursuing, and why things are better with IG Metall. *Kathryn Kortmann* wrote down what they had to say.

**F**or me, it's all or nothing at all. A little volunteering is not my thing. In 2021, a Cariad colleague approached me, looking for a confidante to be her successor. It was immediately clear to me: I was all in!

I saw an opportunity to think outside the box and actively help shape my working environment, so I joined IG Metall and became a shop steward. After three years, I know I made the right decision. Together with IG Metall, we've made a difference at Cariad and achieved excellent results, including the extension of job security until 2029.

But, even beyond the collective wage agreements, where IG Metall brings in all its expertise, I am happy to work side-by-side with a strong union. IG Metall is a fundamental part of our trustee work. In terms of content and communications, we get all the know-how we need from seminars and personal exchanges. The IT sector is very international. That's why we have initiated bilingual or English-language trade union communications. An example is the English-language online platform, which IG Metall made possible exclusively for us in Berlin. In our seminars, we also have the opportunity to network and exchange ideas with shop stewards from other companies, which inspires us greatly.

We experience how valuable union representatives are in the IT sector almost daily. Many colleagues turn to us with questions before they involve the works council. The barriers to approaching us are sometimes lower. We work side-by-side, and they know what makes us tick. We can give them tips and determine whether these are issues that need to be raised and belong on the works council's agenda. We are the IG Metall team link between colleagues, the works council, and the full-time staff. We inform and mobilise in collective bargaining rounds and give life to IG Metall in our companies.

**“This is an opportunity to shape my working environment actively.”**

Cindy Fasanya (29) is a shop steward and member of the shop steward management at Cariad in Berlin.

Photo: Markus Altmann



Photos: Marcus Schwetasch

**“Students, trainees, and dual study/work students have better opportunities when backed by IG Metall.”**

Philipp Büsgen (23) is Chairman of the General Youth and Trainee Representation (JAV) at Eviden.

**“Working towards greater participation and inclusion is not a sprint, but a marathon.”**

Ulrike Goth (54) is a works councilor and representative of the Disabled Employees' Council (SBV) at Capgemini Engineering in Leinfelden-Echterdingen.

**M**y journey with IG Metall began in a moment of empowerment on a night in December 2021 when IG Metall, the works council, and company management negotiated the demerger of the Atos/Eviden Group. As a newly elected member of the youth and trainee representative body (JAV), I found myself in a conversation with the IG Metall negotiator. His compelling arguments and the immediate impact on the negotiations convinced me that trainees and dual work/study students have better opportunities when IG Metall backs them. The equal inflation compensation bonus for trainees and students and the increased freedom for young learners in choosing their company were genuinely empowering, all advocated by IG Metall.

JAV works closely with the works council, but young people must have their own representative body. The works council often needs help recognising young people's different needs and perspectives.

I am particularly fond of “Oasis,” a virtual company that students and trainees manage within our organisation. They work independently on projects and promote a young corporate culture. Oasis offers young IT talents the opportunity to actively shape their working environment and turn innovative ideas into prototypes that would otherwise not be possible in a larger corporate context.

One project closely supported by the JAV is an AI chatbot that helps young colleagues with standard questions and travel expense accounting. The works council was initially sceptical about the technology. However, thanks to close cooperation between the works council and youth and trainee representatives, we have succeeded in developing a way to regulate the project, which enables innovation and, at the same time, guarantees the protection of employees.

**I** am fighting for a culture that welcomes every one and in which no one has to hide their handicaps. After ten years of experience, I know this fight is not a sprint but a long marathon. I've been working at Capgemini Engineering in Leinfelden-Echterdingen for a decade as a representative for severely disabled employees on behalf of my colleagues with visible and invisible illnesses and disabilities. I'm chairwoman of the General and Group Representative for Severely Disabled Employees. In the IT sector in particular, employers are keen to employ young and innovative staff and, where possible, to get rid of those who are no longer doing so well due to health restrictions; this makes it all the more critical that a strong SBV stands by their side and fights with them for inclusion and participation in working life. After all, many colleagues define themselves through their work; if this pillar falls due to restrictions or mental stress, they lose another significant part of their quality of life. As a result, many do not come out as severely disabled; they are not only afraid of losing their job but also losing value as human beings.

With committed representatives in the Disabled Employees' Council (SBV), this does not have to be the case. We sensitise supervisors to the unique situation of their colleagues and work together to find solutions, for example, by finding workplaces in the company where those affected can realise their potential, or we organise the necessary aids. However, the SBV's everyday work also includes lengthy application procedures for equal status, recognition of severely disabled status, or assistive devices. These are often complex legal issues. But with the expertise of a robust IG Metall team behind us and the knowledge that we are not fighting for the rights of our employees alone, we tackle this marathon, too.



**“Together we can achieve even the most difficult tasks in the IT sector.”**

Eberhard Schick (57) has been Chairman of the Works Council at SAP in Walldorf since 2022.

**S**olidarity triumphs! – This is not just a trade union slogan but the motto I stand by. We achieve more together. Without IG Metall on my side, the world of work would be different today – even for us at SAP in Walldorf. We would not have a works council. I pushed this through in 2006 together with two fellow campaigners and with the expert support of IG Metall against fierce resistance. I’ve been an IG Metall works council member ever since. In my early years, I was the union representative for a small, marginalised group. In the meantime, that has changed, and my niche existence is over. The word is spreading among our IT colleagues that more is possible with solidarity and the expertise and know-how of IG Metall. Since the last Works Council election, we have been the largest Group in the still fragmented Works Council, and I am the Works Council chairman.

Working on the SAP Works Council is difficult because we still need the majority behind us. We must organise the majority case-by-case for every project we tackle in the Works Council, which is often tedious and gruelling. I can rely on IG-Metall to provide structures and framework conditions for traditional works council work, which helps us. We have many issues to tackle. We are fighting for a transparent remuneration system to replace the employer-dominated salary system. Comparable work performance must earn equal pay, regardless of whether you are a woman or a man. And under the terms “flex work” and “return to the office,” we are currently struggling for solutions that continue to enable something like a “workplace of trust”. During Corona, our colleagues learned to appreciate flexibility. Then came the order from above to be in the office three days a week, which disgruntled workers. Being forced to desk-share was not precisely conducive either.

We are also looking for work time models that better reflect the different life phases of our employees. Here, too, solidarity triumphs! If this realisation becomes widespread in the IT industry, we can achieve even the most difficult tasks. ■

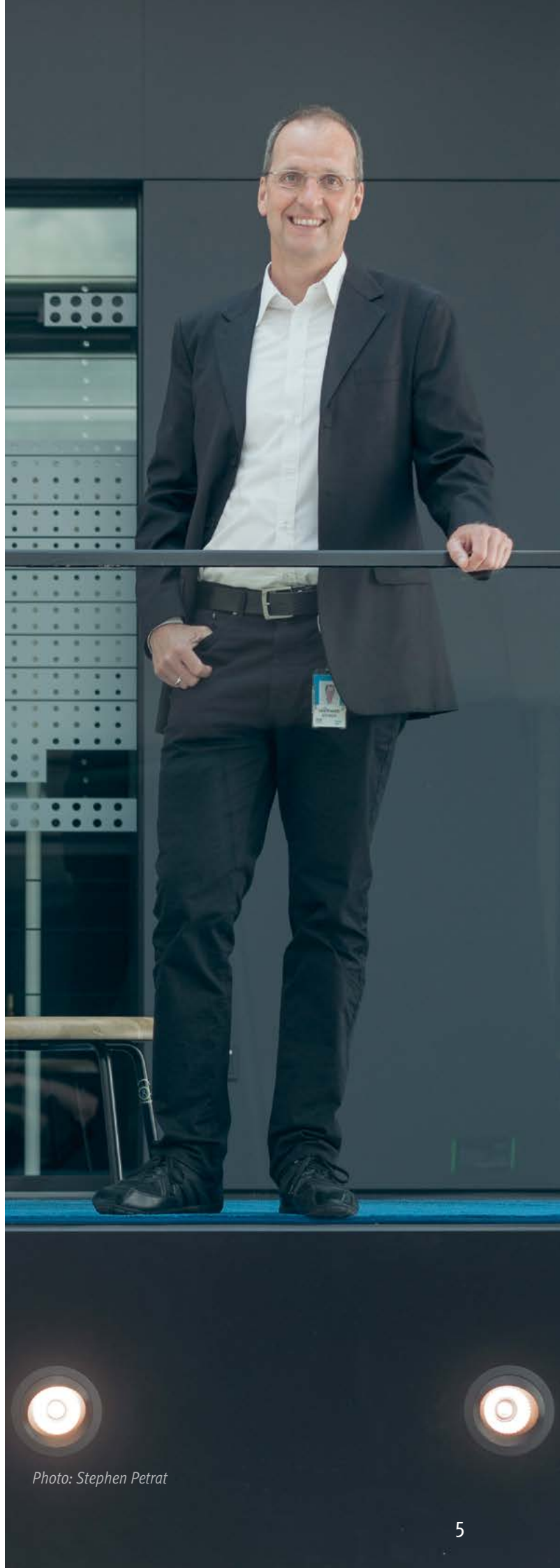


Photo: Stephen Petrat

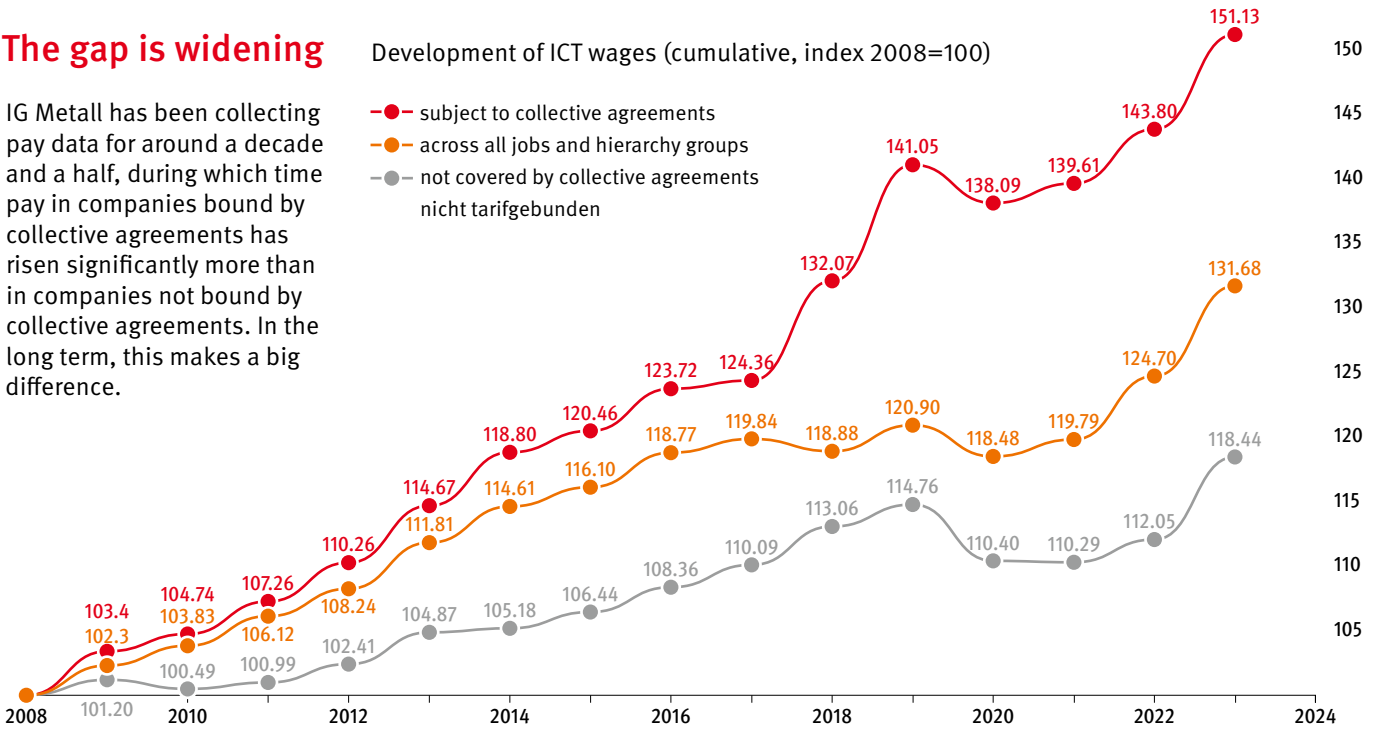
# MORE WITH WAGE TARIFFS

IG Metall regularly collects data on the development of salaries in the information technology and communications sector – and also takes working hours into account. The ICT pay analysis shows that employees with a collective agreement earn considerably more money.

## The gap is widening

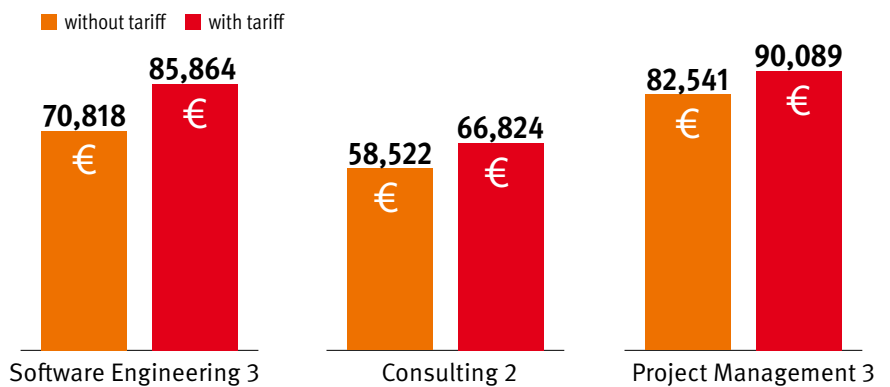
IG Metall has been collecting pay data for around a decade and a half, during which time pay in companies bound by collective agreements has risen significantly more than in companies not bound by collective agreements. In the long term, this makes a big difference.

Development of ICT wages (cumulative, index 2008=100)



## Wage levels achieved with collective bargaining

What are the annual earnings in my field? The ICT pay analysis emphasises the importance of collective agreements. The three examples demonstrate how much more money employees in companies bound by collective agreements earn compared to employees in companies not bound by collective agreement (for the same pay groups). It is worth campaigning for collective bargaining!



### The Analysis

IG Metall's ICT pay analysis is one of the most substantial on the market - simply because of the large amount of data.

- 40,420** Remuneration data
- 108** companies
- 74** jobs
- 16** job families

### And what have you earned?

Try it out: At [itk-entgeltanalyse.igmetall.de](http://itk-entgeltanalyse.igmetall.de), you can select your job profile, enter your working hours, and make a comparison: Are you getting what you deserve?





# MASTERING AI WITH HUMAN INTELLIGENCE

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly changing the working world beyond the IT sector. AI is finding its way into steelworks and car factory assembly lines. What does this mean for employees? How can the new world of work be designed to be as people-friendly as possible? IG Metall and its works councils have their hands with AI – and are tackling the issue head-on. *Andreas Schulte* reports how.

**W**hen global supply chains faltered, ThyssenKrupp proved its inventiveness. The Group couldn't do much about the economic impact of the coronavirus crisis, but it wanted to minimise damage in similar situations in the future – the magic formula: Artificial Intelligence (AI). Now, algorithms do the work. Since 2021, ThyssenKrupp's Pacemaker.ai project has been predicting difficulties in supply chains, answering questions like Which raw material is available where? When will it arrive, where, and by what route? Which areas have warehouses, and how high is the demand? Artificial intelligence regularly queries such data and uses it to make independent forecasts.

One year later, ThyssenKrupp turned the project into a Group-owned limited company: tkMX Dataflow Works. At four locations, the now 50 experts are combining the Group's data with oil prices, weather data, and exchange rates. Pacemaker.ai predicts customer availability and demand for their products. ThyssenKrupp can then adapt ordering and stock management accordingly. There are high hopes for the artificial intelligence business model: "In the long term, we want to become the global market leader for industrial AI applications," says Product Manager Reiner Kurzhals.

AI will rapidly change the world of work- including work in metal and IT companies. The question is in which direction? Will jobs be created like at tkMx, or will AI replace armies of programmers? How can the working world of tomorrow be designed to be people-friendly? Trade unions and works councils are working quickly to prepare employees for as many scenarios of the AI revolution as possible.

## IG Metall drafts its strategy

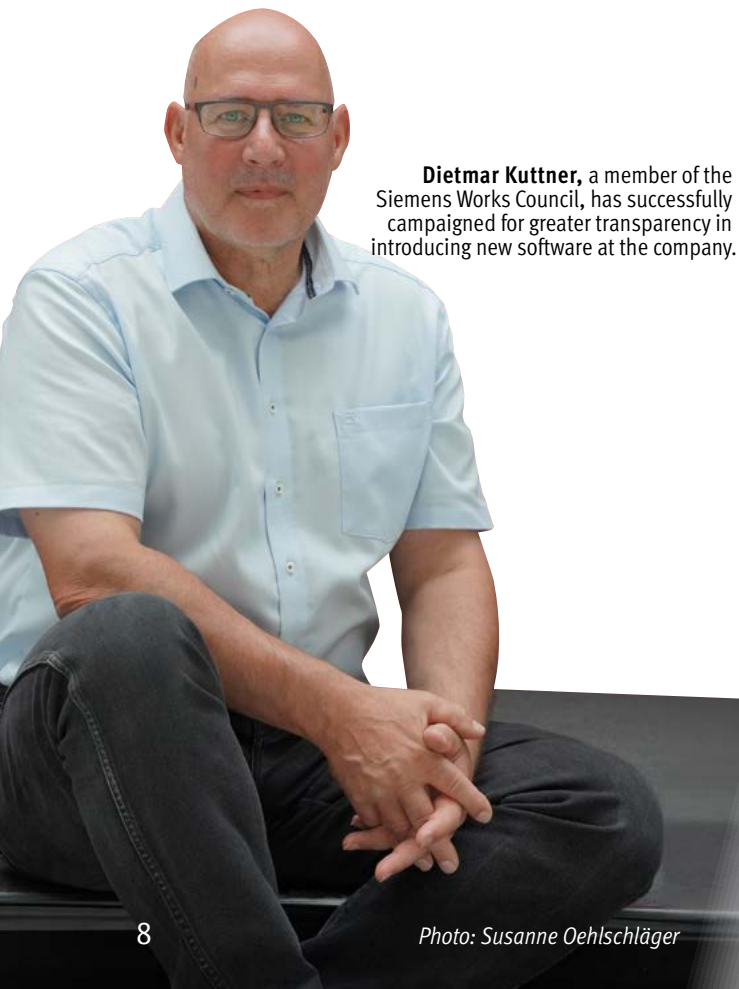
Our trade union is, therefore, currently drafting an artificial intelligence strategy. The paper clarifies how co-determination ensures that AI is implemented fairly and transparently despite all the uncertainties. However, this is a challenging task because AI is complex. The problem: "It serves different purposes. This means that the possible consequences are also different," says Detlef Gerst, from the Fundamental Issues and Social Policy department on the Executive Board of IG Metall. "There is no one-size-fits-all solution for shaping AI." Therefore, the strategy must consider as many eventualities as possible.

In principle, IG Metall favours using artificial intelligence: "I see it as a great opportunity, but like any opportunity, it also harbours risks," says IG Metall chairwoman Christiane Benner. "As always with such technological leaps, it's important to shape the opportunities that arise and simultaneously contain the risks." (See interview on page 12.)

IG Metall works councils show how this is possible in practice. Siemens, for example, ensures greater transparency in the use of AI for the benefit of employees. A few years ago, 450 AI applications were in use at the company, which Dietmar Kuttner first learned by chance from an internal report. The works council and his colleagues had never heard of one before that moment. AI was an uninvited permanent guest in the company, which doesn't necessarily mean it was intentional on the employer's part. It can also happen accidentally because economic pressure causes carelessness. "Often, they buy software without realising that an AI application is built-in," says Kuttner. One reason for this is that the development of AI is very limited in Germany. According to the IT group SAP, 73 per cent of major AI models – such as the ChatGPT voice assistant – originate from the USA. A further 15 per cent originate in China.

Siemens, however, runs its own AI department to make production processes more efficient and understands Kuttner's concerns about the unknown software. Both parties agreed to provide more transparency with so-called AI cards. Since then, when Siemens introduced new software, these cards tell the works council a great deal about it, including what the software uses, which organisation provided it, which algorithms are used, what criteria the software uses to make decisions, and what risks arise.

Based on this information, the Siemens Works Council can now make the following decisions: What impact does the system have on the employees? Who is affected, and what measures, such as training, are required? If it still needs to be determined, it can involve external experts. Since 2021, the Works Council has had the right to make decisions thanks



**Dietmar Kuttner**, a member of the Siemens Works Council, has successfully campaigned for greater transparency in introducing new software at the company.

**“People often buy software without realising that an AI application is built-in.”**  
**Dietmar Kuttner, Siemens Works Council member**





During his visit to SAP in May, **Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz** also discussed the opportunities and risks of artificial intelligence with works councils.

Photo: Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, Marvin Ibo Güngör

to an amendment to the Works Constitution Act. At Siemens, the handling of AI will soon be regulated by a company agreement. In some other large companies, such as IBM, such work agreements already exist.

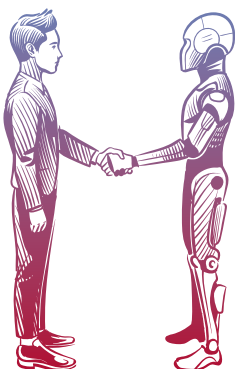
### **Beware of performance monitoring**

The works council's approach is exemplary. It shows how to protect employees from AI risks such as job loss or performance checks. Car manufacturers, for example, use AI to control manual weld seams and determine whether the welds comply with quality standards. AI monitoring can also assign welding seams to employees. Employers using this option can create unprecedented performance and behaviour control during production.

Elsewhere, AI can pose a threat to production jobs. Car manufacturers, for example, can now scan paint finishes automatically. The controlling AI recognises the structural data of many paint finishes. It then decides – automatically

– where re-polishing is needed. Until recently, workers did this by hand. AI systems also calculate exact colour mixtures and work more accurately by quickly adapting colours to different lighting conditions. The painter's tasks will change – away from manual labour and towards monitoring with the help of IT. However, this will require fewer people. A study by management consultant Horváth assumes that up to 80 per cent of jobs in product controlling in the automotive industry could be replaced by AI.

Only a few industries have so many jobs at risk due to AI. However, the Institute for Labour Market and Occupational Research (IAB) assumes that AI will most impact the professions of IT and natural science services. In its spring report, the IAB writes that AI can combine and programme different software modules independently, which increases the risk that some software developers will lose their jobs. However, the IAB researchers also point out that using AI programming generators would only immediately automate some ac- ▶



**“If the AI does not interpret the intention of the command correctly, the result is not very satisfactory.”**

Institute for Employment Research (IAB)

tivities in any IT profession. This is because programming is only one of many requirements for most highly qualified IT specialists. In addition, AI could help with the creation of new code sections and error correction, as well as support the completion of program codes.

The key to good results, however, is the text commands given to the AI. "If the AI does not correctly interpret the intention of the command, the result is less than satisfactory," says the IAB. A good half of the core activities of IT employees could be replaced by computers or automation.

Eberhard Schick is currently experiencing just how much the job profile of IT employees is changing (see also page 5). The chairman of the IG Metall works council at software company SAP has enlisted prominent help in his fight for jobs: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz was a guest of the works council in May.

"The meeting shows our appreciation of co-determination," says Schick. Background: At the beginning of the year, SAP announced an AI offensive. The company's products are now to be equipped with AI across the board. SAP also plans to use AI more often in the Group itself. Of SAP's 100,000 employees worldwide, about 25,000 work in Germany.

### **IG Metall provides training in dealing with AI**

SAP has announced plans to cut 8,000 jobs worldwide, but it still needs to be determined how many jobs SAP will cut in Germany. Employee representatives estimate it could be about 2,700, or one in ten jobs. However, SAP management and the works council agree that AI is not the cause of significant company losses that have led to job cuts.

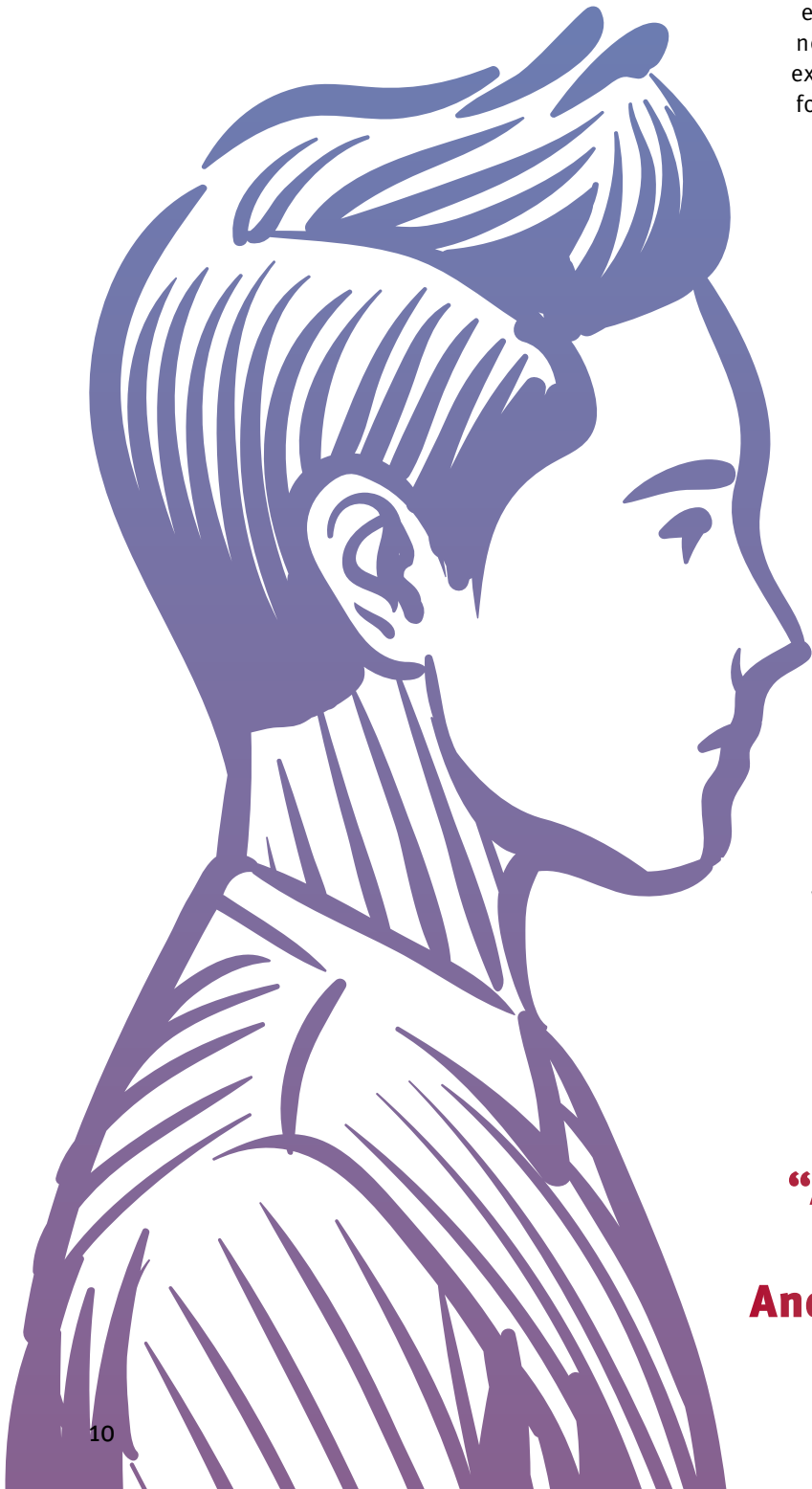
On the contrary, AI use will likely create new jobs. One example is the Executive Board, which has created a new AI development unit with 400 employees that SAP expects to grow rapidly. According to the company's forecast, the reduction of 8,000 jobs will not significantly impact the total number of employees by the end of the year, with the number of jobs remaining roughly constant.

SAP European Works Council member Andreas Hahn does not believe AI will kill thousands of jobs in the Group. "AI is not in a position to replace jobs at SAP," he said when SAP announced the cuts. The AI assistants could, at best, support programmers or accountants.

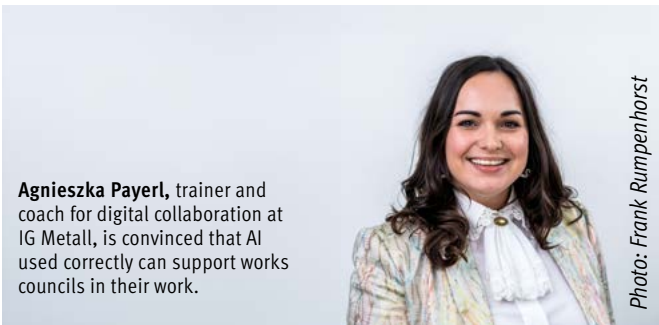
However, AI plays a crucial role in the restructuring of SAP. The employees must learn how to use AI. As a result, the Group has increased its training budget to 150 million euros annually, partly at the urging of the trade union and works councils.

IG Metall is also organising numerous courses and training sessions that are designed to prepare members and works councils for the upcoming AI era. Course participants discuss the ethical aspects of AI use, for example. How can we prevent AI from adopting stereotypes? One danger is that the algorithm increasingly favours men in an automated candidate selection process because it has recognised that men have previously been preferred for a particular position. Who will be responsible for accidents caused by AI?

**"AI is not in a position to replace jobs at SAP."  
Andreas Hahn, SAP European Works Council**



Previous experience indicates that there are still many misunderstandings across the various professional groups. Some IT employees and programmers have reservations about AI altogether. IG Metall is working to counteract this with information and training.



**Agnieszka Payerl**, trainer and coach for digital collaboration at IG Metall, is convinced that AI used correctly can support works councils in their work.

Photo: Frank Rumpenhorst

The union is also putting its learning programs into practice. Agnieszka Payerl trains co-determination officers at the trade union's University of Labour in Frankfurt to use the self-learning language assistant ChatGPT and AI. Her goal: "To take away the fear of the black box that AI still represents for many representatives and make them experts in this field," she explains. "If used correctly, AI can become a 'new superpower' that supports the work of the works council." The course encourages works councils and employee representatives to address the issues and organise lessons and training sessions at the University of Labour, where they learn how ChatGPT can be used to their advantage.

When global supply chains faltered, ThyssenKrupp proved its inventiveness. A one-time prompt, i.e. the formulation of the order to ChatGPT, is not enough. "Anyone who uses ChatGPT does not have to learn how to use a machine, but how to give a good work order," says Payerl. "The more specific the order, the better the result and the easier it is." But, she reports, "there is still a need to learn," regardless of the position or function of the user. If ChatGPT is to support works councils in formulating a speech for the works meeting, for example, a brief prompt such as "Write me a speech for the works meeting" is not enough. Instead, a good work order includes the topic, the target group, the desired result of the speech, and the information "whether I want to convince, motivate, scandalize or just inform."

But even then, the job is not over. Testing is a must. "You don't always know from which sources ChatGPT draws its information," says Payerl. Anyone who lets ChatGPT draft a

works agreement risks unknowingly using passages from the employers' association. As a result, AI will not eliminate the work of the works council. "For example, the works councils must continue to have specialist knowledge about the Works Constitution Act," says Payerl. "The works councils remain the experts, albeit with one more superpower, and I want to empower them to use it." ■

**“Our works councils remain the experts, but with an additional superpower. I want to empower them to use it.”**  
**Agnieszka Payerl, IG Metall**







**“WE HAVE TO  
INVEST, NOW”**



## IG Metall chairwoman Christiane Benner talks about the billions needed for modern infrastructure, location bashing by companies, the right path into the digital future, limits for artificial intelligence, and avatars with wooden answers.

### ***Christiane, does artificial intelligence scare you?***

No. There are man-made developments that concern me more. These include the war in Ukraine and the military conflict between Israel and Palestine. Polarisation in our society scares me, but not so much artificial intelligence -on the contrary.

### ***Do you see artificial intelligence as an opportunity?***

It is a great opportunity, but like every opportunity, it naturally harbours risks. With artificial intelligence, we, as an industrialised country, are on the verge of a major leap forward. And, as always, with such technological leaps, it is essential to make the most of the opportunities that arise and contain the risks simultaneously.

### ***What options do you see?***

We can free ourselves from many nonsensical, strenuous, or boring tasks by letting a machine do them for us. We can improve the competitiveness of our companies and make our products better, cheaper, simpler, and with higher quality through the widespread use of useful AI applications. There are many possible applications in logistics, predictive maintenance, digital networking, and ecological transformation. Greater efficiency, more prosperity, with everyone better off, and, at the same time, we could come to grips with our demographic problem and our shortage of skilled labour. Opportunities are everywhere. Unfortunately, the German economy is currently on a different trajectory.

### ***What do you mean?***

Our companies have decided to sing the great lament and badmouth Germany as a business location. I am watching this with horror. The companies don't want to see the chance to create something new. Instead, they only see the opportunity to bash the government and use this moment to change some fundamental things in their ideological favour: Deregulation, lower taxes, elimination of workers' rights wherever possible, lower social standards, and things like that. There's an agenda behind it; it's a shallow political game that we at IG Metall will not join. The industry is engaging in calculated scaremongering that benefits no one and ignores the country's real problems.

### ***What is IG Metall doing to counter the companies' pessimism?***

We have positioned ourselves clearly on this. We have an eleven-point program to move the German economy forward again. Our objective is to maintain industrial value chains along their entire length, which requires a working community. The last European Championships showed us all the country's lack of modern, innovative infrastructure. Our guests praised the atmosphere in the European Championship cities and the friendliness of the people – the only thing that somehow never worked is our transport system. I found that feedback interesting. We knew about the problem in Germany, but now the world knows about it. Our wonderful football festival in the summer should be an incentive for us to do the right thing for the country. We have to invest, and we have to invest now, not just in the ailing railway but in all kinds of modern infrastructure. The list goes on and on in ultra-modern hospitals with top-class care, in digital administration, in attractive electric cars, in smart electricity grids, and in green steelworks. This is where companies would be called upon in a very concrete way, namely by doing their bit to modernise the country and investing in the future instead of just spreading a bad mood. The state alone will not be able to cope with the enormous tasks.

### ***Especially as there is still the debt brake...***

The debt brake is poison, and everyone has realised that by now, except perhaps a few political hardliners, if I may call Mr Lindner from the FDP that. Therefore, our eleven-point program calls for introducing a so-called golden rule. It would mean that investments are exempt from the debt brake. We also favour raising the new debt limit from 0.35 to 1.5 per cent of GDP. Overall, this alone would generate around 50 billion euros per year relatively quickly and give us room to manoeuvre.

### ***Are you calling for an investment offensive?***

Yes, we assume the state will have to invest 60 billion euros in public infrastructure over the next ten years. That's a lot of money, of course, and that's why we need to ensure that the super-rich, for example, pay higher taxes. A major investment program would be the best thing we could do right now. ►

That would help us make significant progress. We need more courage, clear strategies, and local investment.

***And then everything will be fine?***

Then many things will improve. Provided we organise our transformation correctly. Because nothing will happen on its own, and everything will go in the right direction if we set this direction precisely and have clear boundaries.

***What are these limits?***

The first experiences with artificial intelligence, in particular, teach us one essential thing: what we feed into the machine. What value judgments are behind what we feed artificial intelligence, for example? Where do we need to intervene to ensure that the machine does not discriminate? If, for example, artificial intelligence is used in companies to recruit staff, there is always a risk that this intelligence will perpetuate incorrect behaviour from the past. A machine doesn't make judgments, it builds on patterns: Aha, they've always hired men in the past, so I'll do the same. So someone has to say: Stop, machine! We'll give you a different specification. In any case, transparency is essential to me. I want to know who fed which machine with which knowledge and for what purpose.

***...which brings us to the risks. Many people are afraid that artificial intelligence could end up replacing them and their work.***

There is some truth in that. In the IT sector, for example, we have a situation where tasks are being eliminated, like programming, replaced by artificial intelligence. Roughly speaking, we are talking about 80 per cent of the work volume. As a trade union, we stand for solidarity and togetherness; we won't let anyone fall into the abyss. Incidentally, this is also part of our eleven-point program: We want the transformation to be socially designed so that no one has to fear the risks of this huge change. People should have a strong welfare state behind them. We can get these risks under control if we start early enough and look for alternatives for those affected. What qualifications do programmers need if their previous job is completely or partially eliminated? This can be organised and should be organised by those who know the subject matter best, which means the employees in our companies and their work councils. Incidentally, our eleven-point program was developed with the significant involvement of works councils. The most important industries in the country were represented, including our very active colleagues from the IT sector.

***You say that we need a new form of co-determination so that we can manage the technological transformation. What do you mean by that?***

We need to make the voices of employees heard much more strongly. I mean, who is sitting at the source and who knows what it's all about? In case of doubt, it's the people in the company. This is especially true for the IT sector. After all, these skilled workers will get artificial intelligence and its applications up and running in the first place. We, therefore, need more participation in corporate decision-making. The days of top-down management are long gone; you can no longer run a company with this old-school approach. Now is the time for

the next step, namely, to drive innovation from the bottom up. I call out to the companies: Listen to your people! They often know much more about the technology than you can imagine.

***Let's take a closer look at the IT sector. What challenges do you see there?***

As IG Metall, we have always told companies to treat IT specialists sensibly; otherwise, they will be gone one day. That's what has now happened in many companies: Wherever there are poor working conditions, employees are leaving in droves, and staff turnover is huge. This makes it all the more important for companies to take a fundamentally different approach. To keep skilled workers, you have to offer them something: secure conditions with a collective labour agreement. In recent times, we have seen collective bargaining successes in a number of companies and have also been able to intervene in crises, for example, at Atos. But all in all, I would like to see even more.

***Last question: Do you already have an avatar?***

*(laughs)* If I had one, we could share the work, and I could visit even more works councils and learn about their exciting projects. That would be handy. But seriously, the hype surrounding avatars is a bit spooky. I was recently a guest in a TV studio where the panel asked questions to an avatar, an artificially produced figure in a woman's body, and the answers were wooden, wrong, or sounded memorised. I kept asking myself: what's the point? At the moment, it's more of a gimmick. It gets interesting when it becomes concrete when we provide products and services under better conditions. In some companies, for example, we already have cobots in use in production, i.e., robots as colleagues that do the heavy work – I find that exciting.

***You sound optimistic.***

Yes, I am. Let's tackle our problems now and prepare for great things.

*Bernd Kupilas conducted the interview.*

## Tech Workers Berlin

### Digital team at the start in Berlin



Actives who favour collective bargaining in the capital's growing IT scene: the new digital team at IG Metall Berlin

Vibrant start-ups or branches of large digital companies – Berlin has long since become a hotspot for the IT scene. Every fourth new job in the capital is a digital industry job. The digital economy in Berlin now employs more than 145,000 colleagues from around 30 nations. The trend is rising steeply. According to forecasts, more than twice as many people will be earning a living in Berlin's IT sector in the next ten years. The IG Metall executive board has responded to this trend by launching a new development project. Five colleagues are working together in a digital team, docked with the Berlin office, to inspire employees from the tech world to join IG Metall and achieve good working conditions. As a first step, the new digital team is gaining an overview of the general conditions in the various companies, researching new communication channels and platforms, establishing contacts with the IT employees, and inviting them to network meetings.

It is already obvious that the conditions that tech workers find in their companies vary greatly. For example, pay for identical work can vary by up to 1,000 euros because individuals often negotiate for themselves. IG Metall wants to change this with its new digital team. The aim is to introduce collective bargaining standards in digital companies as quickly as possible and secure good work for tech workers. Contact the digital team via the Berlin office: [berlin@igmetall.de](mailto:berlin@igmetall.de)

## Semiconductor industry

### New network founded

Tens of thousands of new jobs are being created in the semiconductor industry in Germany – especially in “Silicon Saxony.” Saxony has become the most important location for semiconductor production in Europe. Leading chip manufacturers such as Infineon, Bosch Semiconductor and TSMC/ ESMC have decided to locate in the region. It is no surprise or coincidence that IG Metall founded an industry network in Dresden last April. The aim is to provide even more intensive trade union support for the semiconductor industry.

With the new network, IG Metall wants to bring together employees in the industry nationwide so that they can jointly push for good working conditions. The success of such networks is not guaranteed, despite some positive examples. However, this could change soon; collective agreements should become the standard in the industry as quickly as possible – and not just a positive exception. IG Metall in the Berlin-Brandenburg-Saxony district has already taken the first steps in this direction. In July, it agreed with the Saxon Employers Association of the Metal and Electrical Industry (VSME) to start exploratory talks to pave the way for a collective labour agreement for the semiconductor industry.

The still-young industry network, created in April, is coordinated by Moritz Niehaus from the Industry and Sector Policy department of the IG Metall Executive Board. The first meeting of works councils from the semiconductor industry will take place in Frankfurt am Main on 25 and 26 September 2024.

## Cariad subsidiary

### A VW Firm without a collective agreement? Not yet!

The software employees at Volkswagen Infotainment want a collective labour agreement. Unlike its parent company Cariad, Infotainment does not have one yet. Last year, colleagues at Cariad achieved a decent pay rise of 8.5 per cent in two stages by staging nationwide warning strikes. Working conditions that the Infotainment employees in Bochum can only dream of. Infotainment employees earn about 20 per cent less than Cariad employees and work 40 hours a week instead of 35 hours at Cariad. To ensure good working conditions at VW Infotainment headquarters (Opel's former location), employees have taken the first step in establishing trade union structures in the company by electing IG Metall representatives. They now want to recruit more members for IG Metall to have a good basis to achieve a collective labour agreement. The joint development project of IG Metall NRW supports the company's activities. At Infotainment, around 1000 employees from more than 50 nations develop software for Volkswagen.

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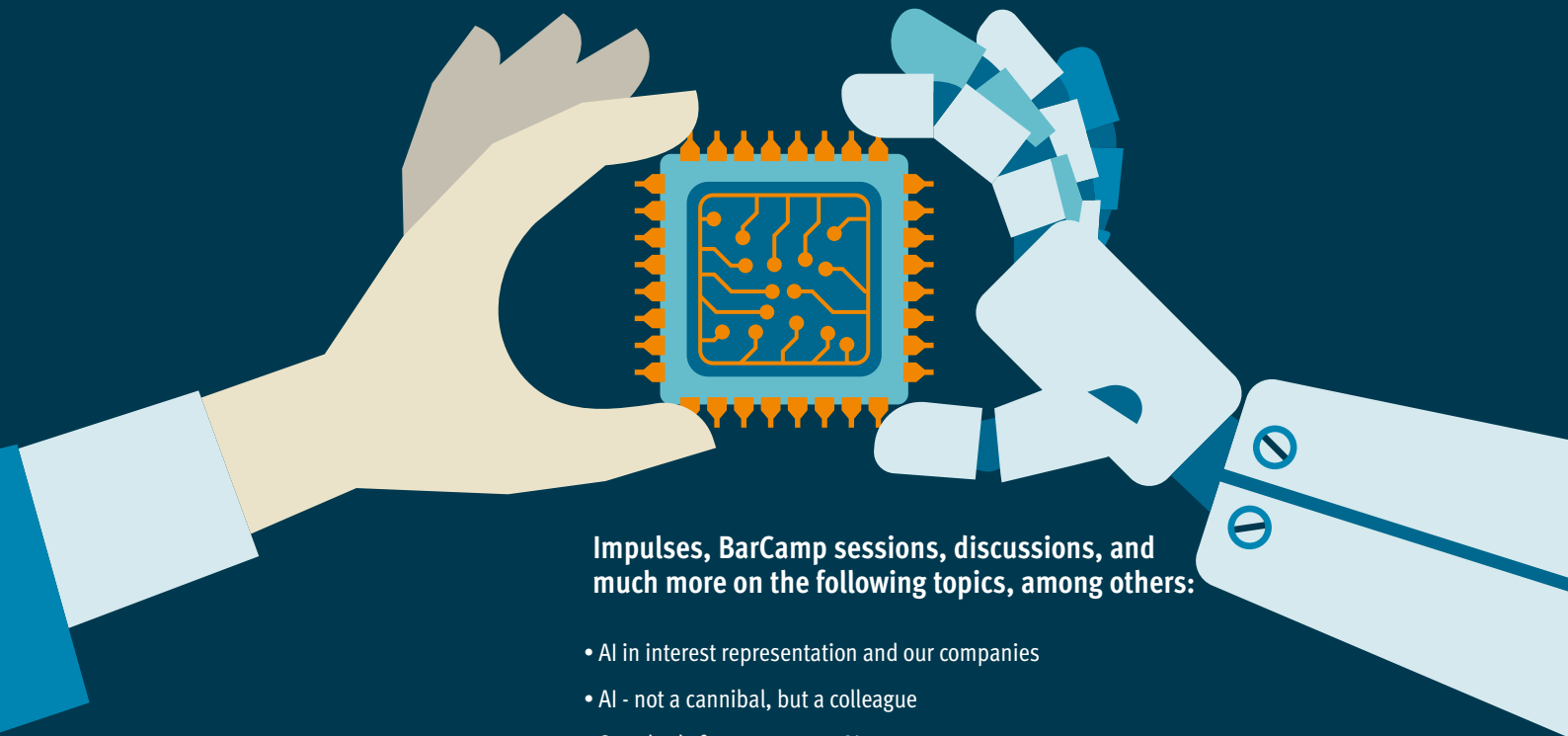


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