IG Metall Magazine for employees at Mercedes-Benz headquarters in Stuttgart

Issue 18 | 2026

TOGETHER



COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Industry Insights from IG Metall

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"LET'S TALK!"

Mediation@Mercedes-Benz

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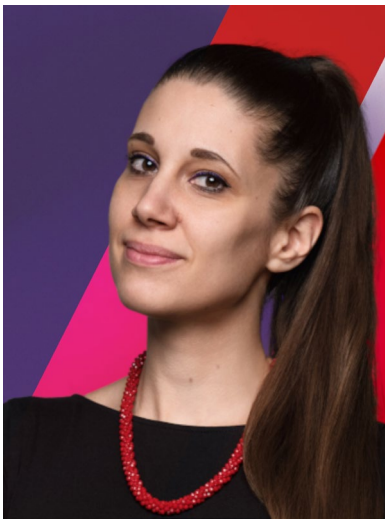
MERCEDES-BENZ FOR SALE

No future in the region?

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Isabelle Ehrlich
IG Metall Works Council Faction
Leadership Team Mercedes-Benz
Headquarters



Gianpiero Schirò
IG Metall Works Council Faction
Leadership Team Mercedes-Benz
Headquarters

Dear colleagues,

Our Group, and consequently our headquarters site, is facing critical decisions. On the negotiating table are, among other things, management's demand to abolish commercial vocational training (KBA) at headquarters (our largest location for salaried employees), impending drastic cuts to our corporate culture, and the future structure of mobile working arrangements.

The 2026 collective bargaining round is also on the horizon-accompanied by the Executive Board's intention to severely disrupt industrial peace. It is against this backdrop that the elections for the Representative Body for Severely Disabled Employees (SBV) and the Youth and Trainee Representation (JAV) must take place this autumn.

This demonstrates that the future of our Stuttgart site is not guaranteed. It depends on us standing together as a workforce for our jobs and working conditions, representing our interests jointly, and, above all, sticking together.
Our cover story makes this very clear regarding E4 executives. Precisely when working conditions, remuneration, and performance assessments become increasingly individualized, we need strong collective guardrails provided by the Works Council and IG Metall.
Whether trainees, specialists, managers, or colleagues with specific support needs: we are all part of the same workforce. Where, in this context, is the "ONE TEAM" spirit that the Executive Board and management constantly chant like a mantra?

Yet one thing remains true: only by working together can we shape good working conditions, secure prospects, and a strong future for the Stuttgart site. Participation, mutual support, and solidarity are more important today than ever.
No Works Council in the world can secure a site on its own - not even the 37 Works Council members at Group headquarters. We can provide impetus, negotiate within the scope of our co-determination rights, and (above all) always fight for the interests of the employees. However, the future of the Mercedes-Benz headquarters in Stuttgart can only be secured if the workforce stands together, takes responsibility, and acts in concert with us.

We will not master the challenges of the coming years as individuals, but only through your courage, commitment, and a strong, united voice.

Isabelle Ehrlich
IG Metall Works Council Faction Leadership Team Mercedes-Benz Headquarters

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MERCEDES-BENZ FOR SALE

"We need to become more Chinese."
(Ola Källenius 2025, STZ article*)

It is a statement that has stuck in the minds of many employees to this day. A statement that raises questions. A statement made at a time when the company is cutting costs, eliminating jobs, and uncertainty is steadily growing.

Saving up instead of shaping the future

While colleagues wait for a clear strategy for the future, they are experiencing one thing above all: pressure. The "Next Level Performance" cost-cutting program permeates almost every area.
Staff numbers are being reduced, positions remain unfilled, and workloads are rising. There is little evidence of long-term workforce planning or a compelling vision for the future. Instead of a spirit of optimism, worry and uncertainty are spreading in many places.

Achievements under pressure

At the same time, achievements that generations of employees fought for are coming under fire.
The 35-hour workweek is being publicly questioned. Continued wage payment during illness is repeatedly up for debate. Remote work is increasingly viewed with skepticism, despite a lack of (scientific) evidence to justify this. Employees hear that they are sick too often, in the office too rarely, and need to demonstrate their commitment to performance more clearly. Allegedly, this is necessary to master the transformation and strengthen team spirit.

But how is team spirit created? Through trust or pressure? Through prospects or fear?
Through investment in people or through constant cost-cutting programs?



Our brand identity is facing challenges. Image generated with AI Microsoft 365 Copilot

China as a model for the future – and Germany?

While the budget axe is being wielded here at home, the business in China is increasingly being portrayed as a model for the future:
"In the future, we will further deepen our localization — by developing and producing more vehicles there and increasingly using China as a source of innovation for Mercedes-Benz worldwide."

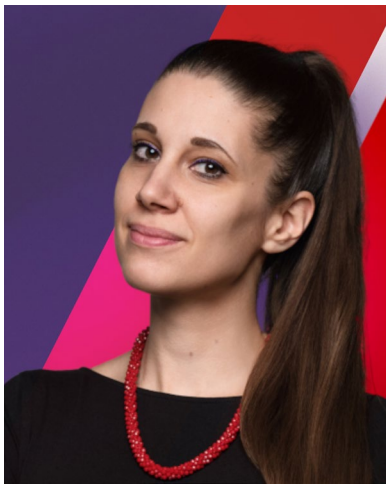
Naturally, a global corporation needs strong international markets. Yet many employees are asking a legitimate question:
Where is the clear commitment to Germany as a business location?
If more development, production, and innovation are to take place in China in the future, what does that mean for German sites in the long run?
What does it mean for the next generation of skilled workers? For apprentices? For our job security?

An increasing number of colleagues feel that Germany is being redefined - shifting from an engine of innovation to merely a cost factor.

Many small steps, a deep transformation

Developments in recent years reinforce this impression.
First NLP-P, then further hidden cost-cutting programs. Outsourcing wherever possible. Departments are being downsized, tasks relocated, and external hiring drastically reduced. Commercial vocational training is slated for elimination. Young people have fewer and fewer opportunities to start a career with the company.
No single measure fundamentally changes the company.

Yet, taken together, many small steps can bring about profound transformation.
And that is precisely what worries many employees. For Mercedes-Benz is far more than just a brand. Mercedes-Benz stands for industrial expertise, technical innovation, high-quality jobs, and social responsibility. The company invented the automobile and has demonstrated for decades that economic success and social responsibility need not be mutually exclusive.
Yet this commitment is coming under increasing pressure.



Protection needs a strong voice

Collective bargaining agreements, co-determination, and job security guarantees still shield the workforce from the worst upheavals. Strong works councils and a strong industrial union (IG Metall) are still in place.
But these protective mechanisms do not simply appear out of thin air. They were won through decades of struggle and must now be defended once again.

The crucial question, therefore, is not whether the challenges are significant - they certainly are.
The crucial question is: Do we stand by and watch, or do we actively shape the future?
Anyone who believes that others will safeguard our jobs, our production sites, and our future is bound to be disappointed. The history of the labor movement shows that progress is made when employees stand together to champion their interests.

A future without "Daimler" here in the region?
For many, that is unthinkable.
To ensure that future endures, we must act now.
Not tomorrow. Not sometime down the line.
Now.

It is about our jobs.
Our skills development.
Our production sites.
Our future.
And our Star.

Isabelle Ehrlich
Works Council Member Mercedes-Benz Headquarters

Weitere Infos
über den QR-Code im Intranet:

Hier geht's zum Artikel

*Source: Mercedes-Benz underscores China's key strategic role at Auto China 2026 | Mercedes-Benz Group › Technology › Specials QR code for MB Group article

TRAVELING FOR WORK

– but who is responsible for what?

Employees are increasingly working for a day or more at a different corporate location. This surely raises practical questions.
Here are the key points of the applicable regulations:



Kübra Güneş
IG Metall Works Council Member,
Committee for Social Affairs,
Gender Equality and Diversity

Travel arrangements: Who handles them?

The general rule is: For work-related assignments, the employer organizes the travel.
Specifically, this means:

- Necessary travel must be facilitated and reimbursed. The first option should be the use of a company or departmental vehicle.
- Costs for public transport are covered if used.
- Alternatives such as taxis or other mobility options are permitted if there is a valid business reason (e.g., time savings or lack of public transport connections).

Important: Employees are not required to find their own solutions or personally bear extra costs when the employer designates the work location. The relevant department is generally responsible for making the arrangements — such as handling bookings or approvals.

Travel Policy Meal allowance: When is payment provided?

Travel expense regulations apply to assignments at other locations lasting one or more days:

- Meal allowances are provided to cover additional expenses incurred during the required period of absence.
- The flat-rate allowances cover all meal-related costs (food, drinks, etc.).
- Individual expense claims are not permitted; only the flat-rate allowance applies.
- The decisive factor is the duration of the absence from the primary work location. If this duration exceeds the relevant tax thresholds (e.g., more than 8 hours), an entitlement arises.

Private interruptions: What do you need to know?

An often-overlooked point: private interruptions affect reimbursements.
Examples of private interruptions:

- Detours for private reasons
- Stopovers unrelated to work
- Combining a business trip with private errands

This means:

Anyone who interrupts or alters a business trip for private reasons must expect reductions in allowances or reimbursements.
What does this mean for you?

- Work assignments at other locations must be properly organized and financially covered.
- Travel costs are generally reimbursed.
- Meal allowances are provided based on the duration of absence.
- Private interruptions can reduce entitlements.

We are here for you

The rules are clear: employees must not suffer any disadvantages if the employer changes the work location. If you find that:

- costs are not being covered,
- guidelines are unclear,
- or you face other disadvantages,

please contact us.
We provide individual and confidential support. Together, we ensure that flexibility does not become an extra burden.



Your voice, your future: Decide for yourself who helps shaping your apprenticeship

2026 JAV ELECTION:

Help Shape the Future!

In the autumn of 2026, apprentices, dual-study students, and young employees at Mercedes-Benz Headquarters will elect their new Youth and Trainee Representation (JAV). This election is about far more than just marking a ballot; it offers the chance to actively shape the future of the younger generation within the company.

The JAV is the powerful representative body for apprentices and young employees. It champions your concerns, ideas, and expectations, advocates for high-quality training and working conditions, and ensures that the perspectives of young people are heard when important decisions are made. Working alongside the Works Council, it strives for fair opportunities, modern skills development, and attractive career prospects.

Especially in times of change, we need people who are willing to take responsibility and stand up for their colleagues. The working world is evolving rapidly, making it all the more important for young employees to contribute their viewpoints, experiences, and ideas. The JAV provides the ideal platform for doing just that.

By participating, you strengthen the voice of the younger generation and send a clear message: quality training, strong development prospects, and attractive working conditions deserve a powerful voice.

Your vote counts.
Your ideas count.
Your commitment counts.

Get involved and support the election with your vote. After all, the future doesn't just happen on its own; it is shaped by people who are ready to take responsibility.

If you have questions or are interested in the JAV election, the JAV Election Committee is happy to assist you.
Be part of it and shape your future.



Image generated with AI Microsoft 365 Copilot

SBV-ELECTION 2026:

Your vote counts: Why electing the Representative Body for Severely Disabled Employees (SBV) matters

Co-determination thrives on participation. This also applies to the election of the Representative Body for Severely Disabled Employees (SBV – *Schwerbehindertenvertretung*). It offers employees with severe disabilities - as well as those with equivalent status - the opportunity to actively influence how their interests are represented and to help shape the future of their own working environment.

The SBV: A voice and support in everyday work life

The SBV advocates for the concerns of employees with severe disabilities and those with equivalent status. It provides guidance on matters related to participation, inclusion, accessibility, and equal opportunity, while offering support to individuals with specific needs. At the same time, it ensures that legal requirements are met and that the interests of these employees are appropriately considered. SBV acts as a point of contact on equal footing: confidential, independent, and close to the people it represents. It helps ensure that the workplace is accessible and fair for all employees.

That is why YOUR vote is important

With your vote, you decide who will represent your interests in the coming years.

Every vote cast is a sign of:

- strong representation of interests
- active, lived-out inclusion within the company
- better working conditions for those affected
- a respectful workplace that offers equal opportunities.

Taking responsibility together

A modern corporate culture thrives on diversity. People with varied experiences, perspectives, and abilities make an important contribution to the company's success every single day. The SBV helps ensure that this potential can be fully realized and that no one is disadvantaged due to a disability. The election provides an opportunity to actively support this commitment and to send a clear message in favor of cohesion and mutual respect.



Martin Jerg
Youth and Trainee Representation Election Committee and IG Metall candidate for the Representative Body for Severely Disabled Employees, Mercedes-Benz Headquarters

Please vote!

Employees with severe disability, as well as those with equivalent status, are eligible to vote. Play an active role in shaping the future of the Representative Body for Employees with Disabilities (SBV). Every vote count and helps to effectively represent the interests of colleagues with severe disabilities or equivalent status. Let's work together to strengthen participation, diversity, and inclusion. Please make sure to exercise your right to vote and take part in the SBV election.



About Me

As a representative for employees with severe disabilities or equivalent status, I aim to provide support, guidance, and effective representation for your interests. I am running for the SBV because I believe that no one should face their concerns alone.

Everyone should have the opportunity to carry out their professional duties successfully, independently, and without barriers. I am committed to this cause with passion, openness, and reliability. In my work, I intend to apply my expertise specifically to issues of participation, inclusion, equal opportunity, and accessibility.
My goal goes beyond simply safeguarding existing rights; I am also dedicated to actively making improvements and addressing concerns at an early stage. To me, effective representation means listening, seeking solutions, and advocating for the needs of those affected with both persistence and success. One of my key strengths is engaging in direct, personal dialogue with my colleagues.
I will take the time to listen to your concerns and work with you to find practical solutions. For me, maintaining a confidential and respectful relationship is just as important as fostering constructive collaboration with all parties involved.

I want to help ensure that the workplace is fair, inclusive, and future-oriented for all employees. That is why I am running for the Representative Body for Severely Disabled Employees as a trusted representative for those with severe disabilities and those with equivalent status. I would appreciate your trust and your vote in the election.

SHAPING DIGITAL WORK TOGETHER



Patrizia Sickinger
Works Council Member (IG Metall Team),
Deputy Chair of the ITK Committee

Digitalization is transforming workplaces, processes, and communication. New IT systems, flexible cloud solutions, and advanced data-driven applications offer numerous opportunities - while simultaneously raising questions regarding data protection, transparency, and fair working conditions. Added to this is the rapid evolution of artificial intelligence.
The Committee for Information Technology, Artificial Intelligence and Digitalization (or "ITK Committee" for short) serves as the specialized point of contact, monitoring these developments from the perspective of the employees. The ITK consists of nine members from various departments and diverse professional backgrounds.

Our Responsibilities

- New or modified IT systems, projects, and AI applications must be presented to the Works Council at an early stage; we then assess whether they comply with legal requirements, in line with our co-determination rights.
- When work processes change, we examine the impact on employees and identify any necessary training or qualification requirements.
- We critically evaluate which data is required, the purpose for which it is processed, and who is authorized to access it.
- In the interest of data protection, we review data retention periods and analyze what kind of insights or conclusions can be derived from the data.
- We provide support for pilot projects and the implementation of new technologies from the very beginning.
- We work with the employer to draft company agreements and protective regulations, while also ensuring that these are upheld in day-to-day operations.

An important note: Any systems deployed across multiple locations within the corporate group cannot be handled solely by the Works Council at the headquarters. Depending on the scope of their cross-site usage, such matters are addressed by the General Works Council or the Group Works Council. Our goal is to create a digital working environment where innovation, individual rights, and employee participation go hand in hand.

Challenges in the ICT Sector

he earlier a project is presented; the sooner practical insights can be incorporated. If technology and processes are already fully defined, making meaningful adjustments often becomes more difficult.
For this reason, we advocate for the involvement of the Works Council as early as the planning and pilot phases. Early participation leads to better solutions!
AI tools are increasingly becoming a part of our daily work. While they can provide valuable support, they are not infallible. Therefore, clear rules for their use are essential, as is the presence of people capable of evaluating their outputs. We are especially vigilant whenever personal data is involved.
The implementation of new technologies requires clear guidelines: transparent and comprehensible outcomes, effective data protection, well-defined responsibilities, and appropriate training for employees.

What Matters to Us

We place the interests of the employees at the heart of everything we do. Our role is to represent the perspective of the workforce and to ask the right questions. We listen, pose specific inquiries, and work together to find viable solutions. New technology should make work easier, remain transparent, and respect the rights of employees.

DESTROYING JOBS OR SHAPING THE FUTURE?

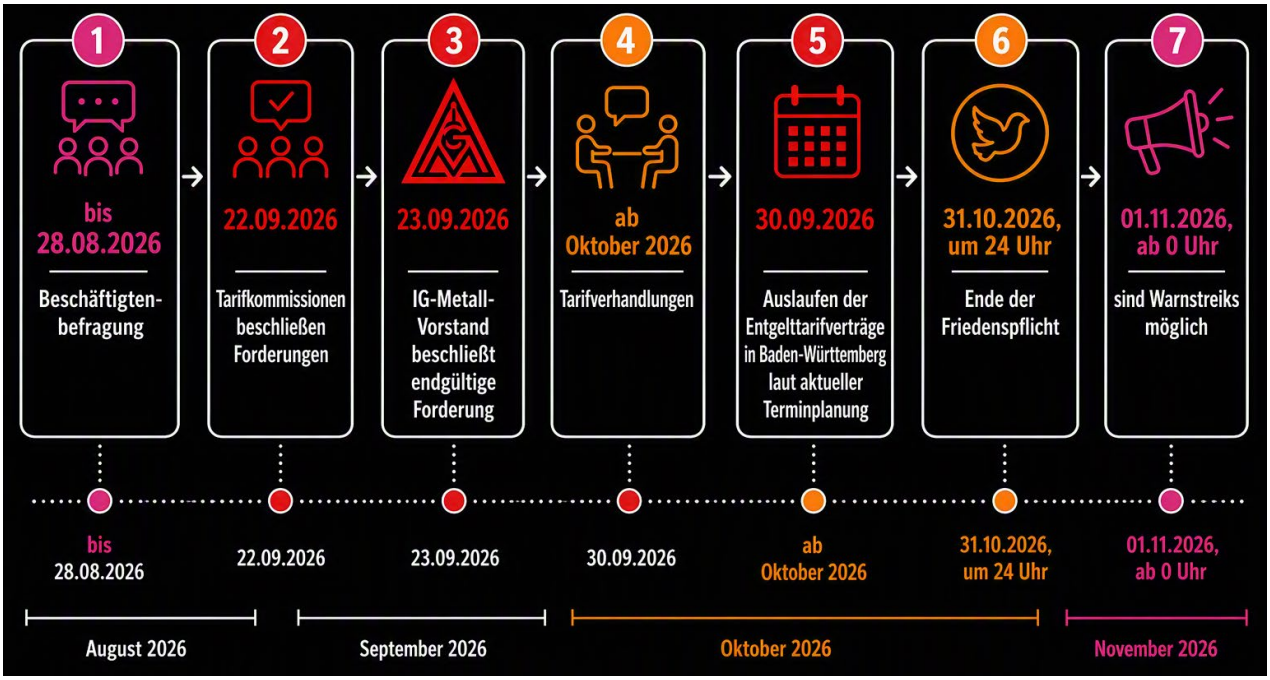
Strong together for the collective bargaining round

This autumn, the next round of collective bargaining begins for approximately 3.8 million employees in the metal and electrical industries.
For us at Mercedes-Benz, including at our Stuttgart headquarters, a great deal is at stake: fair pay, vvvwvsecure jobs, reliable commitments to our locations, and good working conditions during a period of profound change.

The press frequently reports on the varying situations across different companies.
Some are under economic pressure, while others continue to deliver strong results.

We therefore need solutions tailored to each specific situation, not a blanket demand for employees to make concessions. The transformation can only succeed if companies invest, safeguard employment and involve their people in the development process.

In the run-up to these negotiations, reports regarding potential relocations and plant closures - alongside demands for longer working hours have created uncertainty among the workforce. Even though much of this information is currently based on speculation and media reports, many employees perceive such statements as a form of pressure.



Potential transformation process



Bettina Stadtmüller
Works Council Member, IG Metall Team

Respect, Reliability, Confidentiality

When populist fearmongering replaces fair negotiation, it is no longer a dialogue between equals. Now, more than ever, genuine negotiation is far more effective and constructive than public posturing or threats.

The current discussion focuses on securing jobs and production sites, achieving permanent wage increases, and raising apprenticeship pay. For Mercedes-Benz in particular, it is crucial that future technologies, professional development, and new products ensure long-term employment in Germany. And, by extension, at our Stuttgart location.
Our experience shows that strong collective agreements are only achieved through participation, solidarity, and the willingness of many people to stand together for their shared interests!

The more employees who are members of IG Metall, the stronger our voice at the negotiating table.
A strong membership base helps us protect jobs and secure good working conditions for the future.
There is a lot at stake in this round of collective bargaining: will jobs be cut, or will we shape the future?
If you want to strengthen security, fairness, and the right to have a say, your IG Metall membership helps secure our collective bargaining power.

Weitere Infos
über den QR-Code
im Intranet:

IG Metall @ Zentrale

"LET'S TALK!"

Mediation@Mercedes-Benz

Conflicts are a part of everyday work life. Wherever people work together, differences in opinion, varying expectations, or misunderstandings can arise. This is perfectly normal. What matters is how we handle them. Within our company, there is a group of specially trained colleagues who help resolve conflicts early on and in a respectful manner: the Mediation Community.
They work to ensure that tensions do not escalate but are instead resolved; confidentially, voluntarily, and on equal footing. In a conversation with our Together-Editorial team, the mediators explain what motivates them, how the mediation process works, and why they believe no one should have to face conflicts alone.

Weitere Infos
über den QR-Code im Intranet:

TOGETHER: What obstacles do you see when it comes to dealing with conflict - specifically, what makes things difficult, and what actually helps?

The biggest hurdle is often that conflicts are left unaddressed for too long. Many people hope that a problem will resolve itself, but that rarely happens. We would like colleagues to reach out to us sooner, as soon as they notice that things aren't running smoothly. That makes it much easier for us to work together to find a good solution.

**TOGETHER: You say that conflicts are a normal part of life and should be discussed.
Taboo or "let's talk" - how do you approach this?**

Yes, conflicts are a natural, inherent part of working life. Differing opinions or needs exist everywhere; that is completely normal. The crucial factor is how we handle them. We often see that colleagues feel a sense of relief when they realize: "I'm not alone with this problem, and it's okay to talk about it."
Conflicts are not a sign of weakness; rather, they are an opportunity to clarify matters and strengthen how we work together.

TOGETHER: You emphasize the importance of resolving conflicts early on. What happens when someone reaches out to you, what is the process when things get serious?

Mediation Community: When someone contacts us, our first step is to listen carefully. We discuss the situation together to understand what is involved and whether mediation is the right approach. If it is, we invite the individuals concerned to a confidential meeting. We remain neutral throughout this process. It is not about assigning blame, but about fostering mutual understanding once again. Together, we explore ways to ensure that working together can be successful again.



Mediation Community Mercedes-Benz

TOGETHER: Who finds out about mediation? Is it a safe space, or does word get around the office?

Mediation is strictly confidential. Everything discussed during the session remains between the participants and the mediators. We are bound by a duty of confidentiality, which is also stipulated by the Mediation Act. Without the consent of those involved, no one else, not even a manager or any other department, will learn what was discussed.

TOGETHER: What motivates you, as a mediation community, to take on this volunteer role?

Mediation Community: We know from our own experience how much energy unresolved conflicts consume. Not just for the individuals involved, but for entire teams and departments. Our motivation is to help our colleagues shed this burden. We want to facilitate a return to open dialogue, help rebuild trust, and find shared solutions. After all, a positive working relationship makes the job easier and that's something everyone can feel.

TOGETHER: How did you get involved in mediation?

Mediation Community: Many of us have experienced firsthand just how difficult conflicts can be in our daily work lives, but also how liberating it feels when they are finally resolved. This motivated us to train as mediators. We come from a wide variety of backgrounds; legal, finance, development, sales – and we all share the same passion: helping people talk to one another again.

TOGETHER: Who is behind the mediation community at Mercedes-Benz? The faces, the stories, the vibes… who are you?

Mediation Community: We are colleagues from various Mercedes-Benz locations and departments. On our page on the social intranet, "Mediation@Mercedes-Benz," we introduce ourselves through personal profiles. This allows everyone to see who is nearby and reach out to us directly.

TOGETHER: How can people get in touch with you or learn more about you?

Mediation Community: It's simple: follow us on our "Mediation@Mercedes-Benz" page on the social intranet. There, you'll find the latest updates, food for thought, personal accounts, and, of course, the profiles of all our mediators. We are here to support you in resolving internal conflicts, because we believe that a positive working relationship is only possible when we work together.

"Conflicts are not a sign of weakness; rather, they are an opportunity to clear things up and strengthen our working relationships."



CHILDCARE AT MERCEDES-BENZ

Taking advantage of available spots to support families

Balancing professional and family life presents significant daily challenges for many employees. It is therefore even more encouraging that there are currently openings available at several "sternchen" (little stars) daycare centers, as well as at various reserved spots in external childcare facilities, in the Stuttgart area.

Family-friendly offerings for employees

or many years, Mercedes-Benz has supported its employees with an extensive range of childcare services. This includes company-run "sternchen" daycare centers, reserved spots at external facilities, holiday programs for children, and advisory services covering family and childcare-related topics. These offerings are supported by our cooperation partner, famPLUS. In the Stuttgart area, "sternchen" daycare centers are located in Untertürkheim, Vaihingen, Möhringen, and Esslingen-Mettingen. Short commutes to the workplace help simplify daily family life and provide added flexibility.
Across Germany, Mercedes-Benz offers approximately 590 childcare spots in eleven company-run daycare centers, in addition to more than 160 reserved spots at external facilities.



Age-appropriate facilities, creative and physical activities, and social interaction

Images: Magnific

Currently, there is a good chance of securing a childcare spot

While obtaining a childcare spot has often been difficult in the past, the number of available spots even exceeds demand. Families who have previously been unable to secure a spot (or who refrained from applying due to the challenging situation) should look into the current opportunities.
The chances of obtaining a childcare spot are better now than they have been for a long time.

How spots are allocated

To be eligible for enrollment, at least one parent must be employed by Mercedes-Benz Group AG or Mercedes-Benz AG. Allocation is based on a set of established priorities:

- Siblings and employees from central departments
- Cases of social hardship or specific family circumstances
- Employees from subsidiaries and branch offices (subject to availability)

A distinction is made between places for children under three and kindergarten places for children aged three and older. The goal of these facilities is to provide long-term care, thereby offering families greater planning security.



Kübra Güneş
IG Metall Works Council Member,
Committee for Social Affairs,
Gender Equality and Diversity

famPLUS assists with individual solutions

Not every childcare need can be met with a spot in a daycare center. For this reason, famPLUS provides free support to employees in finding tailored solutions, including assistance with arranging:

- Thildminders (nannies/daycare providers)
- Babysitters, Au pairs
- "Borrowed" grandparents (surrogate grandparents)
- Holiday care In select regions, emergency childcare services are also available.

Professional childcare can likewise be arranged for company events.

Support during school holidays

For school-age children, SG Stern regularly offers sports camps and recreational activities. The program is complemented by the SG Stern Kids Club, which features activities such as bouldering, trampolining, and Zumba.

Information on the social intranet Employees can find further details regarding childcare options, points of contact, registration procedures, and current availability on the social intranet.
You can access the relevant information pages directly by scanning the QR code below.

MORE FREEDOM. MORE RESPONSIBILITY. GREATER COHESION.

Freedom requires participation

– or: Why "Level 4 Executives" (E4E) continue to be represented by the Works Council, the General Works Council, and the trade union IG Metall, and why participation remains essential within this model.

The E4 Executive model offers greater personal responsibility, more individualized terms and conditions, and a stronger focus on leadership systems. However, greater individual autonomy requires clear collective guardrails.
Many colleagues at the "Level 4 Executive" (E4E) level are familiar with this: in day-to-day work, E4E is often described as being "outside the collective bargaining agreement" (*außertariflich*). This can easily create the impression that one falls outside the scope of collective agreements, workplace co-determination, or trade union representation.
While this impression is understandable, it is simply incorrect. E4E is not a legal vacuum, nor is it a model based solely on individual terms. It is anchored in a dedicated collective bargaining agreement and a general works agreement. Even a model characterized by greater freedom requires binding rules, protective mechanisms, and representation of interests.

The key takeaway: E4 Executives are not "senior management" (*leitende Angestellte*)

E4 Executives do not qualify as "senior management" the Works Constitution Act (*Betriebsverfassungsgesetz*). The decisive factor is not the title "Executive," but rather the legal classification according to Section 5, Paragraph 3 of the Works Constitution Act.
Those who do not fall under the category of "senior management" are represented by the Works Council, are eligible to vote in Works Council elections, and may approach the Works Council with their concerns. In other words, E4E roles do not place individuals outside the scope of workplace representation. They remain part of the workforce – with specific terms and conditions, yet still covered by collective representation through the Works Council, the General Works Council, and IG Metall.

What does the collective bargaining agreement cover?

The collective bargaining agreement forms the foundation of the E4E model. It describes the collective bargaining framework upon which specific terms and conditions for "E4 Executive" have been established. This includes aspects such as the scope of application, fundamental protective mechanisms, and collective bargaining benchmarks that remain relevant for this group of employees. E4E was not created by simply abandoning collective bargaining coverage; rather, a distinct collective bargaining framework was negotiated specifically for this group. In other words, E4E does not mean that "collective agreements no longer matter." Instead, it means that specific, distinct, and independent collective bargaining provisions apply to this group of employees.

What does the General Works Agreement (Gesamtbetriebsvereinbarung) cover?

While the collective agreement sets the foundational framework, the General Works Agreement (GBV 107.0, "Level 4 Executive Conditions Package") provides the specific details. (Further information on the overall package can be found on the social intranet.) It outlines how the model is structured within the company; covering areas such as working hours, compensation systems, annual income progression, retirement provisions, continued salary payment during illness, company car policies, and other terms and conditions. A central element is the organization of working hours. E4 Executive employees retain their individually agreed-upon contractual working hours. At the same time, the traditional balancing of working-time accounts no longer applies under this model. In principle, regular working hours, overtime, travel time, and on-call time are all covered by the conditions package. This entails greater personal responsibility, but also a higher level of personal risk regarding workload and self-management. Compensation also follows a specific logic. Income consists of a fixed component – the "base"- and a variable component, the "bonus." Annual salary adjustments do not occur automatically through percentage-based collective bargaining increases, as is the case for employees covered by standard collective agreements.



Harmonizing dynamics and responsibility.

Instead, the company determines an annual budget for salary increases. Factors such as collectively agreed wage developments, the economic situation, and market trends are considered. Strong collective bargaining agreements remain important: even though E4 Executives do not receive automatic, collectively agreed pay increases. The outcomes of these negotiations serve as a key benchmark for salary developments across the company as a whole.

Typical questions – clear answers

“As an E4 Executive, am I actually represented by the Works Council?”

Yes, provided you are not considered a ‘senior executive’ (*leitender Angestellter*) as defined under Section 5, Paragraph 3 of the Works Constitution Act (*BetrVG*). In practice, E4 Executives are generally still classified as ‘employees’ under the terms of the Works Constitution Act, meaning the Works Council is responsible for representing them.

“Can I, as an E4 Executive, be a member of IG Metall?”

Yes. Membership in IG Metall is not limited to employees, covered by collective bargaining agreements in the traditional sense. Employees outside the scope of collective agreements (*außertarifliche Beschäftigte*), managers, and E4 Executives can also become members and get involved.

“Am I, as an E4 Executive, truly ‘outside the scope of collective agreements’ (*außertariflich*)?”

The term is frequently used, yet it can be misleading. "E4 Executive" roles are not automatically included in standard collective bargaining pay increases. At the same time, the model itself is based on a dedicated collective agreement and a comprehensive works council agreement, is by no means a situation devoid of collective bargaining coverage.

"Why should I be a member of IG Metall if I don’t receive automatic collective pay increases?"

Because collective bargaining settlements serve as a vital benchmark for salary progression within the E4E system. Furthermore, IG Metall does more than just negotiate and secure pay raises; it also establishes a broader framework, protective rights (such as protection against dismissal for employees aged 53 and older) and collective guardrails. This is particularly important in a model that relies more heavily on individual performance assessment.

"What is the benefit of collective representation for E4E?"

The more that salary, working hours, and performance are individualized, the more critical collective frameworks become. Without a collective agreement, works council agreements, and co-determination, there is a risk that key issues would be defined solely by the company.



Images: Magnific



Lucas Merkel
Chair of the Works Council,
Mercedes-Benz Headquarters

Collective representation ensures that employees are not left to rely exclusively on their own individual bargaining power.

Why active involvement remains important

E4 Executive employees are directly affected by many current issues: remote work, desk-sharing, requirements for on-site presence, the strain of working hours, performance management systems, salary review cycles, organizational restructuring, transfers, and the balance between professional and family life. This is precisely why it is essential for this perspective to be made visible. Works meetings, the work of union representatives, and trade union discussions are not formats reserved solely for staff covered by standard collective agreements or those in "Level 4" (E4) tariff-based roles. These are spaces where employees can pool their interests, raise questions, develop positions, and exert influence. Those who do not participate are less likely to be heard.
By organizing, individuals not only strengthen their own position but also bolster the bargaining power of the entire workforce. This is especially true for E4E, a group that operates at the intersection of individual leadership responsibility and the collective representation of employee interests.
Precisely for this reason, they require both: personal accountability in their day-to-day work and robust collective guardrails.

Conclusion: Freedom requires participation.

E4 Executive entails greater freedom, increased individual responsibility, and a distinct compensation structure. However, it does not mean falling outside the scope of the Works Council, the General Works Council, or the trade union IG Metall. The E4E model was established through collective bargaining agreements and general works agreements.
It is, therefore, an expression of collective shaping — not the end of it. The more that salary, working hours, and performance are determined on an individual basis, the more essential strong collective guardrails become. For this reason, it is worthwhile for E4 Executive members to re-evaluate their own role: not as employees standing outside the framework of interest representation, but as part of a workforce whose working conditions can only be effectively shaped if as many people as possible participate.
The Works Council and IG Metall remain key points of contact for E4 Executive members: whether regarding individual concerns, fundamental issues or the collaborative effort to create good working conditions.

E4E Gesamtpaket


YOU NEVER
WORK ALONE.
Die besten Teams gewinnen gemeinsam.
Die stärksten Belegschaften auch.
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SOLIDARITÄT GEWINNT
IG Metall @ Zentrale
erstellt mit KI Microsoft 365 Copilot