

Newsletter no. 20

In focus: „Extraordinary“ engagement

Topic

A Look Back and Forward

Since KAAT was launched in 2020, we've already achieved a lot – especially when it comes to visibility. At the same time, there's still a long road ahead before KAAT becomes a natural part of IGBCE's identity.

One milestone will be the 8th Ordinary Trade Union Congress (Ordentlicher Gewerkschaftskongress, OGK), taking place from October 19–24 in Hannover. KAAT-related motions have been submitted to this highest decision-making body of our union – covering topics like collective bargaining policy, strategic direction in the KAAT area, and IGBCE's presence at universities. Approved motions are important signals. Whether they lead to concrete collective bargaining outcomes is another matter. Of course, employers play a role as negotiation partners. But so do the bargaining committees: Where do they set priorities? Where do they draw red lines? Where are they willing to compromise? One thing is clear: In any IGBCE body where KAAT employees are underrepresented, the chances that their issues and interests will be prioritized are lower.

So, dear KAAT members: Go for it, get involved! Become a shop steward, a recruiter, a member of a bargaining committee, the



Picture: IGBCE

Federal Women's Committee (Bundesfrauenausschuss), or the Advisory Board (Beirat) ... Not in order to push KAAT interests against others, but to help ensure that IGBCE can secure good working conditions for **all** employees.



[Info on the congress ...](#)

You can look at all motions for the 8th Ordinary Trade Union Congress here (only for IGBCE members):



[Read more here ...](#)

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Anniversary

Just in time for the 20th edition of our KAAT newsletter and following the 5th KAAT Dialogue, our team is (for now) complete. With Susanna Quadrius joining us as team assistant, we now have another skilled colleague on board who's working with us to represent your interests. For five years now, our initiative has been shining a spotlight on the concerns of commercial, academic, and non-tariff (AT) employees. Our networking efforts are paying off – and KAAT continues to grow steadily.

Of course, we'll also be present at the 8th Ordinary Trade Union Congress, where we'll be engaging delegates on KAAT.net.

And as always, we're here for your questions and ideas. Feel free to write to us at kontakt@kaat.net – especially if you have topic suggestions or questions you'd like us to cover in the newsletter.

But now: Have fun with the 20th KAAT newsletter!

Service

How can I make my leadership role easier?

Anyone taking on a (new) leadership position often faces conflicting expectations: The team expects a lot – and so does your own manager. Combined with high personal standards, this can quickly lead to constant stress.

In this situation, it helps to consciously take a step back and reflect. Even better: do it with guidance and in exchange with others in the same situation. Ten IGBCE members took advantage of this opportunity in the (educational leave, Bildungsurlaub) seminar: “Sometimes I feel caught in the middle.”

Victor Hering, experienced trainer and systemic coach, explains: “If you have too high expectations of yourself and try to please everyone, your leadership role will definitely feel heavier. Saying



Photo: C. Arcurs / AdobeStock

no with the right mix of heart and respect makes a difference. And learning how to say it in a way that suits you. That’s exactly what we practice here. And you’ll enjoy your first successes right away.” In 2026, there will be another chance for guided reflection: April 19–24, again in Haltern am See.

Events

Co-determination for highly qualified employees?

Works council, spokesperson committee & more

Works councils and spokesperson committees (Sprecherausschuss) are not just “complaint boxes” – they hold legally guaranteed rights to represent employees’ interests. In 2026, these bodies will be re-elected in companies across Germany. Because KAAT employees are often underrepresented in works councils – and because many committees are facing a generational shift – we need more commercial, academic, and non-tariff (AT) employees to step up and get involved. Here you’ll find everything you need to know about running for office and the upcoming elections.

Online seminar, on November 6, 2025
from 16:00 to 18:00 (seminar number:
HV-003-5710402-25)



More Info and registration ...

Is my AT salary high enough?

Minimum standards for non-tariff (AT) employees in the chemical industry

Collective agreements define the minimum requirements that must be met to establish a non-tariff (außertariflich, AT) employment relationship. That’s why collective agreements – and how they evolve – are also highly relevant for AT employees. We take a closer look at key questions: Am I really employed outside the collective agreement? What rights and entitlements come with an AT contract? What can I do if something’s not right with my AT working conditions? And what is IGBCE doing for AT employees?

Online seminar, on October 8, 2025
from 12:00 to 13:30 (seminar number:
HV-003-570703-25)



More Info and registration ...

Legal aspects of field work

What you should know as a field employee

Working in the field comes with its own set of rules: Your workplace setup, contract terms, and pay structures differ from those in “stationary” roles with occasional business trips. Our expert – a lawyer specializing in labor law – offers an overview of frequently asked questions, including topics like company cars, place of work, and working hours. This is our special feature for everyone who’s constantly on the move.

Online seminar, on December 3, 2025
from 18:00 to 19:30 (seminar number: HV-
003-570301-25)



More Info and registration ...

From the regions

Mini Anniversary: 5th KAAT Dialogue



Francesco Grioli (photo left) celebrated the 5th KAAT Dialogue – held in early July in Hannover – as a “mini anniversary with maximum impact.” The IGBCE Executive Board member responsible for KAAT

praised the event, saying the format had clearly outgrown its early stages.

The concept behind the KAAT Dialogue: A diverse program with flexible options, focusing on topics and interests relevant to commercial employees, academics, and AT staff. Workshop topics ranged from methodology (“Meetings with a twist”), technology (“AI for beginners”), and union-related (“Works council elections 2026”, “Crisis and KAAT”) to legal issues (“Focus on working hours”, “AT or not AT?”). Around the workshops, there were plenty of chances for creativity, idea ping-pong, and – quite literally – active networking (keyword: get-to-know Bingo).



Photos: Nadine Cardenão

Organizer Tabea Bromberg also gave a positive summary of the “small anniversary”: “It’s great to see how this format has become so well established – just like KAAT.net overall. With our four new hub colleagues (photo above), we’re really shifting into a higher gear. That gives us fresh momentum and new opportunities for the upcoming KAAT dialogues. Stay tuned!” One current idea: KAAT dialogue on tour! In the coming years, we plan to visit the four KAAT hub regions. Each Dialogue will have its own unique flair – and you’ll get the chance to experience KAAT.net right in your neighborhood.



[Impressions from the 5th Dialogue ...](#)



[Read more here ...](#)

Service

Reform of the occupational profile for office administrators

Office Management Assistants (Kaufleute für Büromanagement) are true all-rounders in the office: They organize and coordinate administrative workflows and handle a wide range of tasks – from processing orders to communicating with customers and partners.

To ensure that the job profile keeps up with the changing demands of today’s working world, it has recently been updated. The revision focuses on new content around digitalized work environments and sustainability. As with every revision, the

perspective of employees was taken into account: The social partners – including IGBCE – were actively involved in shaping the new structure. This ensures that the job profile remains future-proof and attractive – for apprentices as well as for companies.

A practical guide with information on training and examination regulations is available from the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, BIBB) for those interested.



[Read more here ...](#)

From the regions

KAAT-Hub North: A flexible start

In our last newsletter, she was just a mysterious shadow – now she’s clearly visible: Sabine Schulze is the fourth KAAT specialist secretary at IGBCE. Sabine is already spending the final months of her trainee phase with us, and from October she’ll officially take on the role of KAAT-Hub North. She’s a trained nurse and certified specialist in social and healthcare management (Fachwirtin im Sozial- und Gesundheitswesen). As a certified pharmaceutical sales representative (IHK), she worked in medical field sales for more than 14 years. She also served as a works council member. Sabine remains committed to mobile working and will drive KAAT activities forward in the districts of Berlin/Mark Brandenburg, Hannover, and Hamburg/Harburg.



Photo: Tabea Bromberg

Legal

Limits of the employer's right to issue instructions

In general, employers have the right to give work-related instructions to their employees. But: Under what conditions can your employer assign you a different job ("job" in the sense of 'position' or "workplace," not in the sense of a single task)? The work you are required to perform is, of course, subject to your employment contract.

The more precisely your role is described in your employment contract, the more limited is your employer's right to assign you to something else. For example: If someone is hired as a chemi-

cal technician (Chemikant*in), the employer can't simply move them to the payroll department.

That's why it's so important to read your employment contract carefully before signing. And if any clause seems "strange" or unclear to you, remember: As a member of IGBCE, you can always reach out and ask for advice. E.g. via the KAAT legal hotline.



[More about the KAAT legal hotline ...](#)

Digital

Working in Germany 101

Starting a new job in another country is a real adventure. Many questions only pop up over time, such as: What should I do if I get sick – or if my child does? And what's the deal with the works council that recently invited to an event? We will address these and many other questions in three online sessions – held in English – for foreign colleagues working in Germany. Please feel free to share this information!

Free online seminars on November 19 and 26, and December 3, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. each day



[More Info and registration ...](#)



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WIR SIND KAAT.net - MACH MIT!

Imprint

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