

Topic

KAAT at the IGBCE Congress

The Ordinary Trade Union Congress is IGBCE's democratic highlight. KAAT.net was visible and active there: for the entire five days, we had a booth, held plenty of conversations, and provided delegates with information and KAAT materials. We attracted special attention with a presentation called 'AT Employment in Memes' and with the 'KAAT Vitamin Break.' At the KAAT booth, delegates could enjoy smoothies and had an opportunity to exchange ideas with the team and Francesco Grioli, our responsible board member. For a short time, the KAAT booth was truly the place to be at the congress.

And on the topic of motions: Among the more than 500 motions, there were of course some that are particularly interesting from a KAAT perspective. For example, those concerning industrial strategy, member benefits in collective agreements, recognition of international qualifications, or, quite specifically, the motion 'Abolish the collective bargaining area for academically educated employees – unite all employee groups under one general collective agreement (Manteltarifvertrag, MTV)'.



Photo: Kai-Uwe Knoth / IGBCE

The central KAAT motion was D26: 'Stronger Together: Making KAAT Employees an Essential Part of Our Union.' It states, among other things: We will create strong and active IGBCE KAAT structures in the regions, and we will involve KAAT employees even more actively in our collective bargaining movement. We couldn't agree more! All the better that the motion was adopted unanimously. There is clearly a strong awareness within IGBCE of how important and forward-looking KAAT is.



[More info about the congress ...](#)

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Tabea Bromberg
IGBCE, Abteilung
Betriebspolitik



Sebastian Gödecke
IGBCE, Abteilung
Betriebspolitik

KAAT comes of age

After the congress, the Executive Board adopted a new allocation of responsibilities for IGBCE's head office. The aim is to make the organization more impactful and fit for the future. For us, the key point: KAAT/Target Groups will be separated from "Betriebspolitik" and become its own department! This is a recognition of our work over the past years and the perfect foundation for putting an even stronger focus on KAAT. Together with the "Membership Strength" department (Abteilung Mitgliederstärke) and the newly created "Growth Industries" department (Abteilung Wachstumsbranchen), we will form Board Area 3.

We think this is a great setup and look forward to working closely with our new 'sister departments'. Together, we will work on the future of the IGBCE, and as a reader of our newsletter, you will have a front-row seat.

You can always write to us with your questions:
kontakt@kaat.net.

But now: Enjoy reading the 21th KAAT Newsletter!

Service

Timetable to the Chemical Industry Collective Bargaining Round

The starting signal was given on November 3: The IGBCE Main Executive Board published its recommendation for the 2026 collective bargaining round in the chemical and pharmaceutical industries. It contains two key points: an increase in income to strengthen employees' purchasing power, and the development of collectively bargained instruments to secure employment. This recommendation shows a sense of proportion given the current difficult situation in parts of the industry. That said: It's a recommendation – now it's up to the members. Across the country, the proposal is being discussed in shop steward committees and member meetings. Anyone who wants to see progress for KAAT employees can and should raise his/her voice in this context.

One step is already completed: a cross-company member survey on the recommendation. A record-breaking 22,000



Picture: IGBCE

responses were received. Unfortunately, only 3.4 percent came from AT employees. If the AT issue is to gain priority, we need more participation! But we're also holding ourselves accountable: next time, we'll consider a special newsletter.

The final demand, with which IGBCE will enter negotiations with the Federal Employers' Association for Chemistry (BAVC), will be decided on December 16. You can follow the key negotiation steps until the conclusion (in German and English) right here:



[Read more here ...](#)

Events

Private Savings on the Capital Market

Taking Action Yourself – Capital Market for Beginners

Whether for your retirement or independently: stocks and other investments can deliver returns that far exceed the interest earned on traditional savings accounts. However, given the potential risks, many of us hesitate. Sound decisions require reliable information. That's why we provide insights into the topics behind them, explain which investment options fit which goals, and also assess the risks.

Online seminar, on February 4, 2026 from 17:30 to 19:00 (seminar number: HV-044-570901-26)



[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? Our seminar provides an overview.

Online seminar, on January 20, 2026 from 17:00 to 19:00 (seminar number: HV-044-570701-26)



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

New: seminar in English, on March 18, 2026 from 16:30 to 18:00 (seminar number: HV-003-571701-26)



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

Sometimes I'm caught between two chairs

How do I make my everyday management life easier

As a manager, you constantly face conflicting demands. In this seminar, you'll learn how to make your leadership routine more efficient and successful. You'll receive practical tools to define clear work packages, recognize and integrate different needs, strike the right balance between praise and constructive feedback. This way, you'll master your daily challenges and lead with greater ease.

seminar (suitable for educational leave), from 19 to 24 April 2026 in Haltern (seminar number: HV-002-572401-26)



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

An overview of all events in the first quarter of 2026 can be found here:



[Read more here ...](#)

From the regions

Safety is not a matter of luck

During their lunch break, employees at K+S Kassel had the chance to spin a prize wheel. Available to win were safety vests, reflective bands, and ice scrapers – all tied to the message: "Safety is not a matter of luck." The idea for this "ansprechBAR" campaign was developed by the K+S works councils and KAAT.net. The focus: safety during the dark season and the benefits of a strong union. The organizers also provided information about IGBCE's labor and social security legal protection, accident insurance for IGBCE members, as well as educational opportunities and local group activities in Kassel. The campaign sent a clear signal: fair wages, secure jobs, and good working conditions are only possible through a strong community of solidarity!



Photo: Sebastian Sittig



Photo: fidaolga / freepik

KAAT.net

Reader's question: You ask, we answer

An attentive reader wanted to know the details: What does the motion S24 "Statute Amendments – Contributions" (meanwhile approved at the congress) mean? Until now, membership fees were determined using a table, where the contribution – on average 1 percent – could be read off. In times when everyone has a smartphone with a calculator, such aids are no longer necessary. From now on, the rule is simple: The membership fee amounts to 1 percent of the average gross monthly income. It was also clarified that this includes all regular payments, but not one-off payments such as Christmas or vacation bonuses or other bonuses. The new regulation takes effect on January 1, 2027.

6th KAAT-Dialogue

One thing is certain: the 6th KAAT-Dialogue will take place on 26 and 27 June 2026 at the Adolf Schmidt Conference Centre in Haltern am See. Out in the countryside, right next to the lake: the perfect setting for our KAAT house party! More information coming soon.



Engagement

Lay judges – practical insights for fair judgements

Judges have no idea how things work in the private sector? Think again! At the labor court, lay judges bring their real-world experience to the table. They have the same rights in hearings as professional judges and are bound only by the law. One of them is Michael Brunner. He has worked in HR management at Merck for over 15 years and has been on the works council there since 2021. Since 2023, he has also served as a lay judge at the Darmstadt labor court. For him, it's an enrichment: "I get to see how hearings unfold and how judgments are made – that makes me better as both a works council member and an HR manager." Michael and many other lay judges bring the employees' perspective into the judicial process.



Photo: ARAMYAN / AdobeStock

And when it comes down to it, we all benefit from this. For those who are interested: trade unions such as the IGBCE propose candidates and offer training courses.

Legal

Transparency, not arbitrariness

When it comes to pay increases, employees have a right to transparency! That was the ruling of the Düsseldorf Regional Labor Court on December 10, 2024 (Case No.: 3 SLa 318/24). If salary increases are granted without clear criteria, it can become costly – for the employer. In cases of 'arbitrary performance rewards,' employees who are left out or only minimally considered can invoke the principle of equal treatment under labor law. Doing so, they don't have to stick to the average increase – they can refer to the highest percentage granted within the

comparison group. At the very least, employees have the right to information: anyone who wants to know the largest raise in the team can take legal action to obtain it.

As IGBCE, we say it loud and clear: Transparency instead of arbitrariness! We advocate for clear and understandable criteria for salary increases – so that fairness doesn't depend on goodwill.

Service

Christmas bonus comparison

Not every employee receives a Christmas bonus – there is no statutory entitlement. This special payment is usually made on the basis of a collective agreement. The amount varies greatly. For example, in the middle pay groups it ranges from €250 in Bavarian agriculture to €4,235 in the chemical industry in North Rhine. This is shown by a recent analysis from the WSI Collective Agreement Archive covering 23 selected major sectors.



[Read more here ...](#)



Imprint

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