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## What is Fil Filipov doing these days?



### Video clip information

- Running time: 03:33 minutes
- Show: [buten un binnen | regionalmagazin of October 25, 2017](#)
- Online thru October 25, 2017
- Link: <https://www.butenunbinnen.de/videos/fil-filipov102.html>

When Filipov took over Atlas seven years ago, he was booed. Right at the start Filipov, who calls himself a benevolent dictator, had terminated the tariff agreement in order to hire new employees for less money. He declared war on his works council. Hundreds of legal disputes ensued, but that is history now, the works council reports.

### Author



Hanna Möllers

Introduction (16:23 – 17:02 / 28:01):

*He calls himself a benevolent dictator – needless to add that Fil Filipov polarizes like virtually no other company boss in our region. The American with Bulgarian roots manages Atlas, the company with a long tradition based in Ganderkesee. Filipov got the financially ailing company going again, but in doing so, he went at it hammer and tongs – he had even declared war on the trade unions and the works council. But it's a fact: Atlas has recovered. Yesterday, new excavators were launched and Fil Filipov was of course present. Hanna Möllers took the opportunity to look whether there still is seething unrest at Atlas or they are at peace now.*

## What is Fil Filipov doing these days?

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- 00:00 Whenever Fil Filipov comes to Bremen, he is always accompanied by his wife Véronique and they come in his "18-million-dollar toy", as he likes to call his jet. These days, the owner of Atlas GmbH only visits his three factories in Delmenhorst, Ganderkesee, and Vechta occasionally.
- 00:16 The daily business is managed by Brahim Stitou, his youngster. He had started with Atlas 20 years ago. Fil Filipov chose him to be the boss.
- 00:27 FF: "He has no diplomas..." (VO DE<sup>1</sup>: "I don't care. Give me somebody who works hard and wants to learn, and I make him successful.")
- 00:37 Brahim: "Because he just has the drive and the speed to make things happen fast, and I love to make things happen fast. Cost reduction is in my blood."
- 00:51 Today is special for Fil Filipov and his manager. They are introducing six new excavators, which are soon to be sold under the Atlas name. Even though the excavators are not built here but in China, this is good for the company. In year 7 after the takeover, the business is running, and even his employees recognize that, Filipov says.
- 01:11 FF: "At the end of the day, what counts is results." (VO DE: „and these are good after seven years. When I walk around today and say 'hello', they say 'hello' back, so I know that it is better.") "You don't have to thank me, you just have to work."
- 01:32 When Filipov took over the company seven years ago, he was booed. Right at the start Filipov, who calls himself a benevolent dictator, had terminated the

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<sup>1</sup> VO DE = voice-over in German; translated back to English

collective bargaining agreement in order to hire new employees for less money. He declared war on his works council. Hundreds of legal disputes ensued, but that is history now, the works council reports.

- 01:55 Kreusel: "Because he had designated persons who serve as contacts, in the meantime we were able to talk about a lot of issues in the company again. And, last but not least, we now assume that he will stay around, and insofar our confidence in his presence and in his activity is growing."
- 02:13 For this peace accord, the works council however had to swallow a few bitter pills. The employees are still being paid unequally. The pressure is high. Fil Filipov is an uncompromising cost-killer.
- 02:24 His latest project: TIM. Last summer, he bought the ailing company with 450 employees in northern France– two hours before its bankruptcy.
- 02:34 FF: "Even at 71, I still cannot retire. *(VO DE: "I keep doing what I do best: make companies profitable again. If somebody tells me 'that's impossible', this really gets me going.")*
- 02:51 At present, the French cab manufacturer is making losses of one million euro per month – but not for much longer, Filipov believes. He wants to turn the tide here as well and is working 18 hours a day to do so. He cut management by half, streamlined processes, and – unlike in Germany – the trade union is even supporting him.
- 03:10 After this flying visit to Delmenhorst, it's back to France.
- 03:15 FF: "Some people go golfing" *(VO DE: "or they go fishing or hunting. I go to work. I tell my friends to leave me alone, I love my work.")*
- 03:25 Fil Filipov has worked his way up from rags to riches and he just cannot stop anymore.

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