

## IN THIS ISSUE

### EDITORIAL

- 1 **Wanted now - a programme to deliver the strategy**

### COMMUNITY POLICY

- 3 **Long on ideas, short on means**

### TUTB OBSERVATORY

- 7 **Framework Directive up before ECJ**

- 8 **ECJ rulings on compulsory membership of a statutory work accident insurance body**

### EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

- 10 **PPE Directive : A review of the proposed amendments**

### WOMEN, WORK AND HEALTH

- 13 **The gender dimension in health and safety. Initial findings of a European survey**

### HEALTH GAPS

- 18 **France : yawning health divides**

### TECHNICAL STANDARDS

- 20 **Safety of woodworking machinery : benefitting from workers' experience**

- 23 **Participatory strategies for work equipment design**

### NEWS IN BRIEF

- 24

### EVENTS

- 26

### TUTB PUBLICATIONS

- 27 **Risk Estimation for MSD in Machinery Design – Integrating a User Perspective**

- 28 **Europe's unions map out strategy for sustainable development**

### EDITORIAL

## Wanted now - a programme to deliver the strategy

The Commission has just published a Communication entitled *Adapting to change in work and society: a new Community strategy on health and safety at work 2002-2006* which was heralded in the social agenda adopted at the Nice Summit.

In June 2001, the ETUC called on the Commission for a strategy in which the responsibilities of the different actors and levels of actions are clearly established, and which emphasizes the central role of the public authorities. It demanded a strong European programme for health and safety which addressed the worrying trends of deteriorating working conditions and an increase in occupational ill-health in many sectors.

Reaching much the same conclusions about changes in the working population (it is growing older, women's share is increasing), new and different patterns of work (mostly insecure) and new forms of work organization (non-standard working hours), the Commission recognizes that all these issues are major shaping factors on work-related health problems.

Its Communication comes down firmly on the side of an overall approach to health and safety at work.

True, it lays down guidelines and flags up a handful of initiatives for this year and next, but most of what it comes up with are proposals for potential actions, and vaguely-worded ideas; in some cases - like the gender dimension - all it does is to set objectives.

The mid-March Barcelona European Council pointed out the need to enhance the qualitative aspects of work, in particular the health and safety dimension, and to give priority to examining the Commission Communication. This pledge to get the Communication on an early agenda is welcome, and a Social Affairs Council resolution is expected for June 2002.

NEWSLETTER

Hopefully, this time, the Council will come up with concrete conclusions, having failed to do so on the previous proposal for a strategy. We want the Council to:

- support the objectives set up in the Communication, by calling for appropriate instruments, including legislation;
- recognize the central role of the public authorities in health and safety issues;
- give an impetus and set guidelines to keep efforts focused and the necessary indications for resources to be allocated at European level to deliver these priorities;
- call for concrete proposals for evaluating, adapting and supplementing Community legislation;
- adopt proposals that are already on the table;
- establish a framework for monitoring working conditions and, in consultation with the social partners, put in place the open method of coordination to improve working conditions and ensure that all workers are covered by prevention services;
- actively support the development of guidance that gives practical effect to the principles underpinning the directives, promote policies that deliver their objectives, and establish coordinated linkages between individual directives and the framework directive.

The essential next step will be for the Commission to draw up an action programme before the end of 2002. We shall be keeping a careful eye on that, because we believe that the state of working conditions in the EU and candidate countries demands that the Council and Commission make a renewed effort, with appropriate material and institutional resources, to turn the guidelines laid down by the framework directive over 13 years ago into workplace reality. ■

**Marc Sapir,**

Director of the TUTB

Our proposals for what should be in the strategy were published in *A New Impetus for Community Occupational Health Policy*, ETUC-TUTB, June 2001, 44 pages. See also our website: [www.etuc.org/tutb/uk/pdf/politique-com.pdf](http://www.etuc.org/tutb/uk/pdf/politique-com.pdf)

**THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION TECHNICAL BUREAU FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY** was established in 1989 by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). It provides support and expertise to the ETUC and the Workers' Group of the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work. The TUTB is an associate member of the European Committee for Standardization (CEN). It coordinates networks of trade union experts in the fields of standardization (safety of machinery) and chemicals (classification of hazardous substances and setting occupational exposure limits). It also represents the ETUC at the European Agency for Health and Safety in Bilbao.

**TUTB** - Bd du Roi Albert II, 5 bte 5  
B-1210 Brussels  
Tel.: +32-(0)2-224 05 60  
Fax: +32-(0)2-224 05 61  
E-mail: [tutb@etuc.org](mailto:tutb@etuc.org)  
Internet: [www.etuc.org/tutb](http://www.etuc.org/tutb)

The TUTB is financially supported by the European Commission.

**TUTB Newsletter** No. 18 March 2002

The information contained in this issue is mainly as at 15 March 2002.

**The TUTB Newsletter** is published three times a year in English and French.

**Responsible Publisher :**

Marc Sapir, Director of the TUTB  
Bd du Roi Albert II, 5 bte 5  
B-1210 Brussels

**Editor :** Janine Delahaut  
([jdelahau@etuc.org](mailto:jdelahau@etuc.org))

**Production assistant :**  
Géraldine Hofmann

**Contributors :** Stefano Boy,  
Janine Delahaut, Theoni Koukoulaki,  
Marc Sapir, Laurent Vogel

**Translation :** Glenn Robertson

**Reference material :** Jacqueline Rotty

**Circulation :** Géraldine Hofmann

**Graphic design :** Célia Carrera Schmidt

**Printed** in Belgium by JAC Offset