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NEWS IN BRIEF

EDITORIAL

Wanted: a clear, ambitious strategy for 2007-2012

In 2002, the Commission adopted a Community health and safety strategy for the period 2002-2006. In a different tack to previous programmes, it aimed to mainstream health and safety at work across other policies, some of which, like the European employment and public health strategies, have no legislative underpinnings.

The Commission also signalled a wish to build partnerships with the other players, specifically referring to the agreements concluded by the European social partners. This approach stems from the Social Policy Agenda, adopted two years previously, which put combining full employment with quality of employment on the agenda.

The strategy for 2002-2006 was seen as a way of adapting to changes in society and work. The Communication surveyed changing patterns of work and their impact on risks. The strategy was flawed from the start by being too vague on what measures would be taken, and when - a failing made worse by the Council of Ministers' inaction.

Early this year, the new Commission published its new Social Policy Agenda focused on two priority areas: full employment and equal opportunities. Under the Communication subheading *A new dynamic for industrial relations*, the Commission flags up plans for a new health and safety at work strategy for the period 2007-2012. It should focus on new risks, safeguarding minimum levels of protection, and coverage for workers not adequately covered.

The Commission's pledge to zero in on these areas can only be welcomed. Protection cannot be harmonized at a minimum level without adopting directives that lay down a common basic set of rights for European workers. Trade unions want the programme to do a stocktaking of public resources (regulatory, financial and human) allocated to health and safety in each member country.

It should also look at how the public authorities are addressing the two challenges of having their remit expanded to include psychosocial risks in particular, and disaggregation of businesses. The lessons of the present strategy's

NEWSLETTER

ineffectiveness must be learned: the new strategy must have better targeted activities, with a timetable. The national and European levels of action must be better joined up, with a special focus on national debates and developments. The trade unions and other players must also help to inform the process.

Trade unions want the Community strategy to focus on two major risks: musculoskeletal disorders (the main cause of illness from a stressor-ridden work organization), and chemicals - a big cause of work-related health disorders, where the regulatory framework is currently being radically overhauled.

Coverage for all workers means finally doing something about the health and safety of workers with no job security. The spread of casual hire-and-fire is taking a heavy toll on health across Europe. Existing Community provisions are not up to tackling the problem.

Workers' right to collective representation, guaranteed in the 1989 Framework Directive, is another key thing. Many workers, especially temporary agency staff and workers in SMEs, are outside this directive. But rights alone are not enough! Trade unions must provide more systematic support to health and safety reps. That is essential if we are to change and improve the quality of work. ■

Marc Sapir, Managing Director, ETUI-REHS

HESAmail: your monthly OSH update

The ETUI-REHS Health and Safety Department has been publishing a monthly e-newsletter since September 2004. We call it HESAmail, because it aims to provide subscribers with an emailed briefing on developments in health and safety at work on the European and international scenes. It gives regular updates on live issues at European level, like musculoskeletal disorders, work-related stress, and the new European chemicals policy (REACH). HESAmail is also our way of keeping you informed about the range of activities organized by our Health and Safety Department, like conferences, seminars, new publications, and so on.

HESAmail is sent out free of charge to our subscribers by e-mail at least monthly, or more frequently if breaking news requires.

You can sign up for the HESAmail mailing list on our website home page:

www.etui-rehs.org/hesa

or send an email giving your surname, first name, postal address and email address, and putting "HESAmail signup" in the subject line, to ghofmann@etui-rehs.org

It costs you nothing to register or have it sent to you.

HESA Publications

REACHing the workplace and Occupational health: new language versions

The ETUI-REHS Health and Safety Department continues to develop partnerships with national trade unions to expand its catalogue of publications and make them available in different EU languages.

Initially available only in English and French, *REACHing the workplace* and *Occupational health* - two brochures to make European OSH policies more accessible to non-insiders - have now been translated into many other European languages.

Most of these language versions, including the English and French ones, can now be downloaded free of charge in PDF format from our website: www.etui-rehs.org/hesa > Publications. The list of languages in which both brochures have now been published, and the contact details for ordering them are given below.

REACHing the workplace in:

- Czech: CMKOS bozpz@cmkos.cz
- Danish: LO-D lja@lo.dk
- Dutch: ABVV francois.philips@abvv.be
- Estonian: EAKL eakl@ekl.ee
- Hungarian: ASZSZ palgergely@netscape.net
- Latvian: LBAS martins@lsab.lv
- Polish: NSZZ Solidarnosc ipawla@solidarnosc.org.pl
- Slovenian: ZSSS lucka.bohm@sindikat-zsss.si

Occupational health in:

- Czech: CMKOS bozpz@cmkos.cz
- Danish: LO-D lja@lo.dk
- Dutch: ACV hfonck@acv-csc.be
- Estonian: TALO talo@talo.ee
- Hungarian: ASZSZ palgergely@netscape.net
- Italian: CGIL alhaique@mail.cgil.it
- Latvian: LBAS martins@lsab.lv
- Polish: NSZZ Solidarnosc ipawla@solidarnosc.org.pl
- Slovenian: ZSSS lucka.bohm@sindikat-zsss.si

The English and French printed versions can still be ordered on our website: www.etui-rehs.org/hesa > Publications.

Encouraged by the success of these two brochures, and believing that this type of publication addresses a real need for clear and to-the-point information on complex European issues, the ETUI-REHS Health and Safety Department plans to produce a new brochure on the European institutions involved in health and safety at work in the near future. ■

