

# Community strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work

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The Council adopted a resolution on the Community strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work.

The Council agrees with the Commission that, in order to achieve an ongoing, sustainable and consistent reduction in accidents at work and occupational illnesses, the parties involved must pursue a number of objectives, including:

- placing more emphasis on the implementation of Community legislation;
- supporting compliance with Community legislation, in particular in sectors and undertakings considered to be at risk and for categories of workers who are most vulnerable;
- adapting the legal framework to changes in the workplace and simplifying it;
- promoting the development and implementation of national strategies;
- creating a general culture that values health and risk prevention by encouraging changes in the behaviour of workers and at the same time by encouraging employers to adopt health-focused approaches;
- finalising the methods to identify and evaluate new potential risks;
- assessing the implementation of the Community strategy;
- promoting health and safety at work at international level.

The Council considers that Community policy on health and safety at work based on an overall approach to well-being at work should have as its purpose an ongoing, sustainable and consistent reduction in accidents at work and occupational illnesses. It supports the Commission in seeking to reduce the incidence rate of accidents at work by 25 % at Community level, taking into account the Member States' experiences, circumstances and opportunities.

The Council stresses the need to:

- recognise the importance of Good Work and its underlying principles, i.e. workers' rights and participation, equal opportunities, safety and health protection and a family-friendly organisation of work;
- take into account new challenges such as demographic change and ageing of the workforce, new employment trends, and new and increasing flows of migrants towards and within Europe;
- enhance awareness among those concerned of the need for rehabilitation and reintegration of workers excluded from the workplace for a long period of time because of an accident at work, an occupational illness or a disability;
- deploy additional efforts including economic incentives to trigger changes in attitudes with a view to a more participatory, integrated management of health and safety in undertakings;
- invite the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work to foster the exchange of information and good practice and to draw up, through its risk observatory, high-quality information on the specific challenges. More consideration should be given to the wider socio-economic trends and influences.

The Member States are invited to:

- develop and implement coherent national health and safety at work strategies geared to national conditions, in cooperation with the social partners, and, where appropriate, with measurable targets set in this context for further reducing accidents at work and the incidence of occupational illnesses, especially in those sectors of activity in which rates are above average;
- give the national social protection and health care systems, as appropriate, a more active role in improving prevention and in the rehabilitation and reintegration of workers;
- consider the possibilities offered by the Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (Progress), the European Social Fund and other Community funds for the promotion of the Community strategy;
- encourage national research centres to exchange information and collaborate on their programmes at national and European level, focusing on problem-solving and on the prompt transfer of results to enterprises, in particular SMEs;
- raise awareness by improving the information, training and participation of workers, providing simple guidance, particularly for small enterprises, and analysing and disseminating examples of good practice, in particular by means of networking of the parties involved at the local level;
- promote a systematic approach to well-being at work through initiatives for quality of work by integrating, in particular, health and safety, lifelong learning and gender into business management and all levels of education;
- ensure better and more effective enforcement in all Member States and to take appropriate steps to provide adequate resources for labour inspectorates;
- further implement the International Labour Organisation Global Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health, adopted in 2003, by all appropriate means;
- give particular attention to new employment trends, such as the increase in self-employment, outsourcing, subcontracting, migrant workers and posted workers.

The Commission is called upon to:

- promote occupational safety and health by taking appropriate measures with regard to changes in the world of work;
- continue to monitor and support the implementation of legislation in all Member States;
- draw up, in conjunction with the ACSH and the social partners, guides on how to apply directives, especially for SMEs;
- improve coordination with other Community policies, in particular on the manufacture and marketing of work equipment and chemicals and on public health, education and anti-discrimination policy;
- cooperate with the legislative authorities in establishing an appropriate European statistical system in the area of occupational safety and health, which takes account of the different national systems and which avoids imposing additional administrative burdens.

The social partners are called upon:

- to draw up initiatives in the context of the sectoral social dialogue and ensure that workers' representatives are given more opportunities to participate in the systematic management of occupational risks;
- play an active part in disseminating the basic principles of the Community strategy at European, national, regional and individual business level;
- enhance, both at national and Community level, technical assistance and training to worker representatives with health and safety responsibilities and to employers, particularly SMEs.