Managing stress and psychosocial risks at European workplaces

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1. EU-OSEH

- Established in **1996 in Bilbao**, Spain
- To help improve **working conditions** in the European Union by providing **technical, scientific and economic information** to people involved in **safety and health at work**.
- **An autonomous** legal entity set up by the legislator (European Parliament/Council)
- **Tripartite Board** bringing together:
  - governments, employers’ and workers’ organisations
  - the European Commission
1. EU-OSHA - our network

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1. EU-OSHA – multi annual programme

- **Anticipating change**
  - Foresight methodology
  - Green jobs
  - Research priorities

- **Facts and figures**
  - Micro and small enterprises
  - Older workers
  - Enterprise Survey on New and Emerging Risks
  - Workrelated Diseases
  - Benefits of OSH

- **OSH tools**
  - OIRA
  - E-Tools

- **Raising awareness**
  - Campaigning
  - NAPO

- **Networking knowledge**
  - OSHWiki

- **Networking & corporate communications**
  - International networking
Healthy Workplaces Manage Stress - key objectives

- Raising awareness about the growing problem with stress and psychosocial risks
  (increase of mental health problems in general, crisis, growing service sector, general ‘acceleration’ of the world…)

- Focus on the positive effects of successful psychosocial risk management
  (better health, better productivity, the business case…)

- Increasing the enterprises’ practical knowledge on recognising and preventing psychosocial risks at work
  (providing and promoting the use of simple, practical tools and guidance)
A practical approach: 5 steps

Step 1. Identify the hazards and those at risk

Step 2. Evaluate and prioritise the risks

Step 3. Decide on preventive actions

Step 4. Take action!

Step 5. Monitor and review the situation

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The hierarchy of prevention

1. Avoid & eliminate risks

2. Reduce and minimise hazards AND separate from the workers
   - by technical measures
   - by organisational measures
   - by personal measures

3. Individual measures, e.g. modifying behaviour
ESENER survey: Enough information for assessing psychosocial risks

Water supply & waste management
Human health and social work activities
Education
Public administration
EU-28
Manufacturing
Construction
Information and communication
Real estate activities

Yes  No  NA

0  10  20  30  40  50  60  70  80  90  100

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ESENER survey: 
Reasons for not assessing psychosocial risks

- Risks are already known
- No major problems
- Necessary expertise is lacking
- Procedure is too burdensome
ESENER survey: Management of psychosocial risks

Concern about work-related stress, as reported by managers

- Concerned: 79%
- Not concerned: 21%

ESENER survey 2009 & 2014, EU-OSHA

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ESENER survey:
Procedures in place to deal with…
ESENER survey: Difficulties in addressing psychosocial risks

- Reluctance to talk openly about these issues
- A lack of awareness among staff
- A lack of expertise or specialist support
- A lack of awareness among management

**Human health and social work activities**

- Mining and quarrying
- Public administration
- Education
- EU-28
- Construction
- Wholesale and retail trade
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing

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Drivers

- Good general OSH management and reported concern for work-related stress

- The main drivers reported by managers:
  - Requests from employees
  - Desire to reduce absenteeism
  - Legal obligations
Barriers

- Lack of technical support and guidance and lack of expertise
- Lack of resources
  - higher number of measures in place than those not reporting this barrier
- Sensitivity of the issue
  - more measures in place than those not reporting this barrier

Conclusion:
Reported barriers very much depend on the different stages of the companies implementing psychosocial risk management
Worker participation

- Workplaces that have formal worker representation are more likely:
  - to report management commitment to safety and health
  - to have preventive measures in place for both general OSH and psychosocial risks
  - to involve employees (consultation and participation) in the process of OSH and psychosocial risk management

- Workplaces that have formal worker representation and a high level of management commitment to OSH are more likely to report that their organisation’s OSH and psychosocial risk management are effective
Employee participation in setting up psychosocial measures

% establishments, Member States and overall score EU-28
EU Policy background

The EU Framework Directive (89/391)

- Creates a legal obligation on employers to protect their workers by avoiding, evaluating and combatting risks to their safety and health
- This includes psychosocial risks in the workplace which can cause or contribute to stress or mental health problems
- Daughter directives…

Health care specific:

- Directive 2010/32/EU, implementing the Framework Agreement on prevention from sharp injuries in the hospital and healthcare sector

EU Social Partners Agreements

- Framework Agreement on Violence and Harassment at Work (2007)

European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being (2008)

- Encourages employers to implement measures to promote mental well-being at work
Different Member State approaches: Legislation and labour inspection

- Text very broad, no specific mentioning of psychosocial risks
- Mentioning the need to take psychosocial risks into account, but no specification
- Legal obligation to do a psychosocial risk assessment
- Possibility to include psychosocial expert/psychologist
- Definition of stress and psychosocial risks included in legislation
- Broader framework, approach supported by other actions
Thank You!

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