

## Social partners' conference on approaches to the issue of psycho-social risks and stress at work

### MEDIA RELEASE

On 10 November 2015, HOSPEEM and EPSU – with the support of the Finnish EPSU affiliates JHL, Superlitto and Tehy – organised a conference in Helsinki aimed at supporting a broad fact-finding on the main risk factors of psycho-social risks and stress at work in the hospital/healthcare sector, highlighting good practices to assess the risks and identifying instruments and measures that can help preventing, managing and/or reducing the risks. The live [web streaming](#) was followed by up to 250 people.

Alongside musculoskeletal disorders, psycho-social risks and stress are the most important health and safety hazards in the hospital/healthcare sector in Europe. Improvements would be beneficial in various regards as they would support effective recruitment and retention policies, reduce sickness absence and costs for employers and improve the health and safety of the workforce and thereby also the quality of service provided to patients in the hospital/healthcare sector.

Particular attention was given to the role and initiatives of social partners from local to national and European level in this regard. This was reflected in the presentations, many of which building on existing good practices and grassroots experience. Presentations from Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom illustrated how preventive actions, risk assessment and good management of psycho-social risks and stress at work can contribute to improved workers' health and safety, to better quality care for the patients, to more attractive retention conditions for the workforce in the hospital sector and to improved efficiency in the management of healthcare institutions by reducing the negative effects psycho-social risks and stress at work have on the individual worker and/or on the good functioning of institutions and services in the hospital/healthcare sector.

The event brought together about 85 participants from more than 20 European countries. This conference was the contribution of the hospital/healthcare sector social partners to the [EU-OSHA 2014-2015 "Healthy Workplaces Manage Stress" campaign](#), aiming at giving a sector-specific input into the campaign and relevant follow-up activities. Zinta Podniece, representing DG EMPL, Kirsi Sillanpää, Tehy, representing EPSU, and Johanna Karlström, CLAE, representing HOSPEEM, participated in the closing panel discussion where the emphasis was put on trade unions' and employers' priorities with regard to further work on PSRS@W, on the main take home messages and the possibility of making practical use of the presented findings on the level of hospitals/healthcare institutions.

The conference is a key step for the sectoral social partners in the hospital sector in identifying instruments and forms of work organisation supportive in achieving healthier and safer working conditions. EPSU's and HOSPEEM's work on the issue will continue in 2016. This will include the collection and dissemination of existing good practices. The insights from the event will be discussed and assessed with a view to reach joint conclusions on relevant action to be taken to help preventing and reducing psycho-social risks and stress at work for the health workforce. A report is to be published in 2016.

Helsinki/Brussels, 16 November 2015

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