

Social Partners' Conference on Occupational Safety and Health

A SOUND MIND IN A SOUND BODY

Taking care of those who take care of us

Vilnius, 23 - 24 May 2018

MEDIA RELEASE

On 23 and 24 May 2018, EPSU and HOSPEEM, with the support of the Lithuanian EPSU affiliate *Lietuvos sveikatos apsaugos darbuotojų profesinė sąjunga* (LSADPS), hosted in Vilnius the **conference “A Sound Mind in a Sound Body – Taking care of those who take care of us”**. The event was organised to pursue and deepen the social partners’ thematic focus on the prevention and reduction of the two occupational health and safety hazards most widespread in the hospital/healthcare sector: musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) and psychosocial risks and stress at work (PSRS@W)¹. It brought together more than 100 participants from 17 EU Member States and from 2 non-EU countries, including 30 participants from Lithuania.

The conference was held in the framework of the **joint project** (2017-2018)² which aims at first supporting the sectoral social partners in the hospital/healthcare sector and their national member organisations to achieve improved and attractive recruitment and effective retention conditions and second at facilitating the identification of good practice examples, the exchange of knowledge and mutual learning processes³.

The conference provided a forum for exchange and debate on a number of **initiatives jointly carried out or supported by the social partners** in the hospital sector to better prevent and to more effectively reduce musculoskeletal disorders and psychosocial risks and stress at work.

- **Presentations by representatives of HOSPEEM members and EPSU affiliates** came from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The speakers identified successful approaches, instruments and initiatives to better prevent and more effectively reduce MSD and PSRS@W. They assessed the role played by social partners at different levels and how the policies, measures or projects help to improve the health and safety of workers and/or patients. **Other contributions** presenting results and insights from ongoing or recently finalised research will help the European Social Partners and their members to design and implement future activities on an improved evidence basis;
- The conference was opened by a **panel from Lithuania**, involving Rita Zubkevičiūtė, Chief Labour Inspector, State Labour Inspectorate for Accidents and Occupational Diseases, Aldona Baublytė, President, Lithuanian Trade Union of Healthcare Employees (LSADPS), representing EPSU, and Prof. Habil. Dr. Vinsas Janušonis, President, Lithuanian National Association of

¹ See the following articles on the [HOSPEEM](#) or on the [EPSU](#) webpages for more information.

² Project n°VS-2017-0017 “Promoting effective recruitment and retention policies for health workers in the EU by ensuring access to CPD and healthy and safe workplaces supportive of patient safety and quality care”.

³ The second topic covered by the project is continuing professional development (CPD). See the following articles on the [HOSPEEM](#) and the [EPSU](#) webpages for more information on the first joint conference on CPD on 19 and 20 June 2017 in Amsterdam. It was based on the Joint HOSPEEM-EPSU Declaration on CPD and LLL for All Health Workers in the EU (available in English, French, German, Spanish and Swedish) which can be accessed from the following articles on the [HOSPEEM](#) and the [EPSU](#) webpages.

Healthcare, representing HOSPEEM. The social partner representatives informed about the national situation and their experiences and set out opportunities and the major problems in relation to their future work on MSD and PSRS@W to be addressed;

- HOSPEEM and EPSU were honoured by the presence of **Dr. Vytenis Andriukaitis**, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, DG SANTE. He referred to relevant initiatives of DG SANTE on patient safety and the health workforce and called for a continued cooperation and exchange with EPSU and HOSPEEM. As on earlier occasions⁴, he renewed his support for their joint work;
- They were also delighted that **Malgorzata Milczarek**, from the European Agency for Health and Safety at Work (**EU-OSHA**) intervened in the closing panel to inform the participants about past and planned initiatives of EU-OSHA on MSD and PSRS@W relevant for the partners in the EU-level sectoral social dialogue in the hospital/healthcare sector;
- **Wrapping up and concluding on the conference**, **Tjitte Alkema**, member of the the Dutch Hospital Association (NVZ), and Secretary General of HOSPEEM, **Dr. Margret Steffen**, Vereinte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft (ver.di), Germany, representing EPSU, shared important “learning experiences”. They also elaborated on proposals by HOSPEEM and EPSU for follow-up work on MSD, PSRS@W and OSH, and in general in the context of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for the Hospital/Healthcare Sector (SSDC HS);
- The conference was organised in **three plenary sessions** – the first on how to better prevent and address PSRS@W, the second in relation to MSD and the third focusing on policies, measures and joint social partner initiatives to improve occupational safety and health in the framework of a structured involvement of both management and workers’ representatives in hospitals/healthcare institutions. **Three corresponding break-out sessions** were set up to foster discussions and the exchange of experiences;
- Looking at the **health professions most often referred to**, the majority of the presentations and discussions dealt with nurses, healthcare support staff and doctors as well as – as a première in an EPSU-HOSPEEM conference – with ambulance workers and paramedics.

Participants wrote down their **“take home messages”**; these inputs, along with the **visuals of a graphic recorder**, will be included in the conference report and in a joint EPSU-HOSPEEM document. It will incorporate key messages from speakers and participants and will set out possible joint action points for both organisations and/or for their national member organisations⁵. Several **videos** from the conference will also be produced and **interviews** with 15 representatives of HOSPEEM members or EPSU affiliates will be recorded. It is planned to share them on dedicated webpages on the of HOSPEEM and EPSU.

EPSU and HOSPEEM have expressed their intention to **pursue the thematic work on the two conference topics in 2018 and 2019**. They will be disseminated at national and at EU level and will feed into the future work of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for the Hospital Sector on CPD.

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⁴ See the following articles on the [HOSPEEM](#) and [EPSU](#) webpages.

⁵ Cf. „Summary Document“ in [EN](#) (official version), [FR](#), [DE](#), [ES](#), [RU](#) and [SV](#) from the first joint project on MSD and PSRS@W uploaded to the [HOSPEEM](#) and [EPSU](#) webpages.