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NOTE

from: The Presidency
to: Delegations

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Subject: EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020 -- Adapting to new challenges
- Draft Council conclusions

Delegations will find attached draft Council Conclusions prepared by the incoming Presidency with a view to the meeting of the Social Questions Working Party on 12 January 2015.

EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020

Adapting to new challenges

Draft Council Conclusions

- (1) WELCOMING the Communication from the Commission on an EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020 and ACKNOWLEDGING that tackling the following challenges requires particular attention:
- the prevention of occupational and work-related diseases by tackling existing, new and emerging risks, in particular occupational cancers and musculoskeletal diseases, which often take a long period of time to develop;
 - the ageing workforce and lengthening working lives of both women and men;
 - the need to improve the implementation of legislation, in particular in micro and small enterprises;
- (2) CONSIDERING that the following actions should be prioritised:
- (a) the practical implementation of OSH¹ legislation, particularly in micro and small enterprises (for example through targeted guidance, practical tools, awareness-raising initiatives, support for enterprises, as well as new forms of control and new monitoring systems);

¹ occupational safety and health

- (b) tackling new and emerging risks, including stress at work, and prevention of occupational and work-related diseases, in particular occupational cancers and other diseases associated with the use of chemical substances, as well as musculoskeletal disorders. This can be done *inter alia* by means of preventive measures in the workplace and through promotion of healthy lifestyles in general;
 - (c) addressing the ageing of the workforce and the extension of working life. This includes both adaptation of workplaces and work organisations to older workers and appropriate preventive measures for younger workers;
 - (d) mainstreaming OSH issues in other relevant policy areas, in particular those related to the employment and social inclusion objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy;
- (3) **STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE** of creating new user-friendly tools and better targeting the dissemination of information on OSH, including good practices and guidance. In particular, it is important to adapt to technological progress in order to create more effective practical tools and to find new methods of communication and better ways of disseminating targeted information on OSH, especially with a view to promoting a culture of prevention culture;
- (4) **SHARES** the Commission's conclusion that risk prevention and the promotion of safer and healthier working conditions can at the same time improve job quality and promote competitiveness and productivity. In particular, the Council welcomes the emphasis on health protection issues in the new Strategic Framework;

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CALLS on the Member States:

- (5) to review or develop and further consolidate their national strategies in the light of the new EU Strategic Framework 2014-2020 and to implement these strategies in cooperation and consultation with the social partners and other relevant stakeholders;
- (6) to address health protection issues and initiatives for tackling new and emerging risks in their national strategies, taking into account the gender perspective;
- (7) to continue active implementation of accident prevention policies and initiatives;
- (8) to provide support to enterprises, particularly micro and small enterprises, using all appropriate means, such as awareness-raising campaigns, the exchange of good practice, as well as different IT-based tools and social networks;
- (9) to provide information to businesses on legislation and benefits in the area of OSH, in particular to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises;
- (10) to ensure effective enforcement and monitoring of OSH legislation by providing adequate resources and capacity for labour inspectorates² and using effective monitoring methods (including sanctions, advice and new ways of communication);
- (11) to promote ways of improving working conditions for categories of workers facing or affected by specific risks (including older and young workers, workers with disabilities, pregnant and breastfeeding workers, migrant workers, the self-employed, domestic workers, those employed on a temporary basis);

² cf. Resolution of the European Parliament of 14 January 2014 on effective labour inspections

- (12) to pay specific attention to the effective rehabilitation of persons with health disorders due to working environment risks (accidents at work, occupational diseases, disability), helping them to integrate into working life;
- (13) to promote a prevention culture, in close cooperation with the social partners;
- (14) to raise awareness among children and youngsters by including OSH issues in training and education programmes where possible, as well as by promoting appropriate IT-based tools (for example: games, quizzes, mobile applications);
- (15) to use the European Social Fund and other European Structural and Investment Funds as much as possible to promote OSH issues, including by means of innovative digital tools;

CALLS on the Commission:

- (16) in line with the objectives of the REFIT programme and the ongoing ex-post evaluation of the existing OSH directives, to identify possibilities to reduce any unnecessary administrative burdens, to update outdated provisions of directives, and to simplify OSH legislation without reducing the current level of protection;
- (17) to consider reviewing the EU Strategic Framework in the light of the results of the ex-post evaluation of existing OSH directives;
- (18) to ensure that new initiatives in the field of OSH are based on the best available evidence, taking into account all data and information available, including that received from the Member States, the social partners and stakeholders;
- (19) to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the EU Strategic Framework 2014-2020 with the help of ACSH³;

³ Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work

- (20) in cooperation with the competent national authorities and ACSH, to examine options to improve the availability and comparability of data on occupational diseases and other OSH indicators at EU level;
- (21) to strengthen cooperation in the field of OSH with other EU institutions and bodies (in particular, EU-OSHA, ACSH, SLIC, Eurofound⁴), and with international organisations (for example ILO, WHO, OECD⁵), as well as with the social partners and national authorities;

CALLS on the social partners:

- (22) to engage actively in the development and implementation of national OSH strategies;
- (23) to promote and disseminate, at European, national, regional and company level, the basic principles of the EU Strategic Framework 2014-2020, as well as information on awareness-raising activities through guidelines and IT-based tools, for example.

⁴ European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA); Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC); European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)

⁵ International Labour Organisation (ILO); World Health Organisation (WHO); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)