

A new EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at work (2014-2020)

— Communication from the European Commission (6 June 2014)

On 6 June 2014, the European Commission presented a new Strategic Framework of action, cooperation and good practices exchanges in the field of health and safety at work for the period 2014-2020. It is a Communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions.

— Context

Waited for over a year by the Member States and in particular by the social partners, this framework has been developed from:

- the results of the evaluation of the European Strategy for health and safety at work covering the period 2007-2012,
- contributions from many stakeholders, including social partners, as part of a public consultation in 2013.

The new strategic framework is in line with the "Europe 2020" Strategy.

— Results of the evaluation of the 2007-2012 OSH Strategy (31 May 2013)

According to the European Commission, the evaluation confirmed the importance of the European dimension of safety and health at work, particularly with regard to the positive downward trend in the number of accidents at work and the role of the EU strategy in the coordination of efforts and the establishment of a common framework for action. Among the actions still to be done, the Commission

cited in particular the following:

- improve the implementation of the provisions on safety and health in SMEs and micro-enterprises,
- develop more accurate tools for monitoring and data collection,
- greater emphasis on new risks and emerging occupational diseases,
- effectively address security issues and occupational health related to aging of the workforce.

— 3 key challenges require further policy action by 2020

SMEs, emerging risks and aging workforce - mentioned in the evaluation of the previous OSH Strategy - are the three challenges for the next 6 years:

- **To improve implementation of existing health and safety rules, in particular by enhancing the capacity of micro and small enterprises to put in place effective and efficient risk prevention strategies**
- **To improve the prevention of work-related diseases by tackling new and emerging risks without neglecting existing risks**
- **To take account of the ageing of the EU's workforce.**

— Next steps

The Framework will be reviewed in 2016 in order to take stock of its implementation and to take into account the results of the on-going comprehensive evaluation of the EU occupational health and safety legislation which will be available by the end of 2015

7 key strategic objectives

Strategic objectives	Actions as from 2014	Whom
Further consolidate national strategies	Review national OSH strategies in light of the new EU strategic framework	MS
	Establish a database covering all national OSH strategy frameworks	EC, EU-OSHA
	Nominate contact points for national strategies (Member States) which will meet regularly to map and exchange good practice	EC, EU-OSHA, ACSHW, SLIC
Facilitate compliance with OSH legislation, particularly by micro and small enterprises	Provide financial and technical support on implementing OIRA ⁽¹⁾ and other IT-based tools in Member States, focusing on priority sectors	MS, ESF, EU-OSHA
	Develop guidance and identify examples of good practice, taking the specific nature and conditions of SMEs and particularly micro-enterprises into account	EC, EU-OSHA
	Promote the exchange of good practice, whereby SMEs will be supported by larger enterprises in the contractor-supplier-purchaser chain in order to improve OSH	EC, MS, ACSHW
	Continue with awareness raising campaigns	EC, MS, EU-OSHA
Better enforcement of OSH legislation by Member States	Map the resources of labour inspectorates and evaluate their capacity to carry out their main duties on enforcing OSH legislation	SLIC
	Evaluate the programme of exchange/training of labour inspectors and examine ways to enhance the current tools for cooperation within the SLIC, taking into account new OSH challenges	EC, SLIC
	Assess the effectiveness of sanctions and administrative fines imposed by Member States, as well as other measures of 'soft enforcement' and non-traditional ways of monitoring compliance	EC, MS, SLIC, ACSHW
Simplifying existing legislation	Identify possible simplifications and/or reductions of unnecessary burden as part of the evaluation of the OSH legislation, and promote a public debate with all stakeholders	EC, ACSHW
	Encourage Member States to identify sources of specific regulatory burden created by their own transposing legislation on OSH and national legislation, and analyse national implementation reports to identify good practice and to promote exchange of information	MS, EC
	Assess the situation of micro-enterprises in low-risk sectors and consider how to simplify the implementation of risk assessment, including documentation	EC

(1) OIRA : <https://osha.europa.eu/en/topics/oira/index.html>
MS: Member States
EC: European Commission
EU-OSHA: European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
ACSHW: Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work
SLIC: Senior Labour Inspectors Committee

ESF: European Social Fund
ILO: International Labour Organization
WHO: World Health Organization
OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SME: small and medium-sized enterprises
OHS: occupational health and safety

Strategic objectives	Actions as from 2014	Whom
Address the ageing of the workforce, emerging new risks, prevention of work-related and occupational diseases	Establish a network of OSH professionals and scientists and ascertain the need to set up an independent scientific consultation body that would channel their recommendations into the work of the Commission	EC
	Support the dissemination of the findings of the European Risk Observatory among the relevant actors	EC, EU-OSHA
	Promote the identification and exchange of good practice on ways to improve OSH conditions for specific categories of workers, e.g. older workers, inexperienced younger workers (including those employed in different forms of temporary contracts), apprenticeships, workers with disabilities and women	EU-OSHA
	Promote rehabilitation and reintegration measures by implementing the results of the European Parliament pilot project on older workers and of the Healthy Workplaces Campaign in 2016-17	EC, EU-OSHA
	Identify and disseminate good practice on preventing mental health problems at work	EU-OSHA
Improve statistical data collection and develop the information base	Assess the quality of data on accidents at work transmitted by Member States in the framework of the European Statistics on Accidents at Work (ESAW) data collection, with the aim of improving coverage, reliability, comparability and timeliness	EC, MS
	By the end of 2016, examine different options to improve the availability and comparability of data on occupational diseases at EU level and assess the feasibility of a simplified data transmission	EC, MS
	Launch discussions within the ACSHW, with advice from national experts, with a view to making recommendations on creating a common database on occupational exposures	EC, ACSHW, MS
	Before 2016, examine options to improve information on costs and benefits in the area of OSH	EC, ACSHW
	Before 2016, develop a tool to monitor the implementation of the EU strategic framework 2014-2020, including policy and performance indicators, building on the 2009 strategy scoreboard	EC, ACSHW
Better coordinate EU and international efforts to address OSH and engage with international organisations	Continue to support candidate countries during accession negotiations on chapter 19 and potential candidate countries benefiting from a Stabilisation and Association Agreement in their efforts to align their OSH legislation with EU law	EC
	Strengthen OSH cooperation, in particular with the ILO, but also the WHO and the OECD	EC
	Launch a review of the Memorandum of Understanding with the ILO to better reflect OSH policy	EC
	Contribute to implementing the sustainable development chapter of EU free-trade and investment agreements regarding OSH and working conditions	EC
	Address, notably jointly with the ILO, OSH deficits in the global supply chain and contribute to G20 initiatives on safer workplaces in this regard	EC
	Strengthen ongoing cooperation and dialogue on OSH with strategic partners	EC

— The words of the European Commissioner, László Andor

“Today we are renewing the Commission’s commitment to continuously upgrade people’s working conditions in the EU. People have the right to work without facing health or safety risks in the workplace. Work related accidents and diseases affect all sectors and professions, irrespective of whether people are sitting behind a desk, driving a truck or working in a mine or on a construction site. They

not only cause personal suffering but also impose high costs on companies and society as a whole. This new Strategic Framework aims to contribute to improving job quality and job satisfaction, while improving the competitiveness and productivity of European companies, especially small businesses, and reducing costs for social security systems.”

Commissioner Andor’s speaking points: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-14-435_en.htm

— Some figures (EU)

- 217 millions workers in the EU
- 3 million workers victims of a serious accident at work every year
- 4000 workers die in workplace accidents every year
- the 2007-2012 EU Occupational Health and Safety Strategy helped to reduce the number of work accidents leading to absences of more than three days by 27.9% in the EU.

— To find out more

- **Communication from the Commission [COM(2014) 332 final] on an EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020** at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=11828&langId=en>
- **Frequently asked questions about new EU Strategic Framework 2014-2020:** http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-400_fr.htm?locale=EN
- **Public consultation on the new EU occupational safety and health policy framework**
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=333&langId=en&consultId=13&visib=0&furtherConsult=yes>
- **Improving quality and productivity at work: Community strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work**
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52007DC0062&rid=2>
- **Results of the evaluation of the 2007-2012 OSH Strategy**
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=10965&langId=en>
- **“Europe 2020” Strategy:** http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm
- **European Trade Union Institute news (13 June 2014) :**
<http://www.etui.org/en/News/A-policy-wasteland-the-strategic-framework-on-health-and-safety-at-work-2014-2020>



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