

The EU needs a new occupational safety and health strategy which includes a legislative program

FinUnions attaches great importance to the European Commission's initiative to update the EU's occupational safety and health strategy. Effective occupational safety and health measures and the prioritization of workers' health and safety must be seen as resource factors that support the economy in a socially sustainable way.

The corona crisis has highlighted the interplay between the economy, health and safety and the need to strengthen cooperation within the Union in these areas. A new, common strategy for occupational safety and health is needed to support this cooperation. As the change in working life is continuous and rapid, without forgetting the risks posed by climate change, the new occupational safety and health strategy must also evolve and it must also be possible to set new targets during its period of validity.

The European Commission must tackle the prevention of **musculoskeletal disorders and psychosocial risks at work** by proposing directives concerning them. Musculoskeletal disorders and illnesses associated with psychosocial risks are by far the biggest costs in terms of sick leave and early disability pensions. The directives must take into account the latest research data in the field and the current challenges involved in these risks, which, for example, the transformation of work, technostress and ethical burden, or the introduction of global infectious diseases bring into working life.

The European Commission must include **a legislative program** in the occupational safety and health strategy. In addition to the creation of new directives, the effective implementation, practical application and monitoring of existing legislation must be a priority in the EU. Existing occupational safety and health directives need to be updated as necessary. For example, the **Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive** still needs to be updated. New limit values must be introduced to protect workers from exposure to chemicals that cause cancer or otherwise endanger their health at work.

Teleworking, the digitalisation of working life and multi-location mobile work are becoming more common in various industries, and the coronavirus time has accelerated this development. **The special characteristics of occupational health and safety related to telework** must be taken into account across all activities. Telework employment contracts must also include health and safety aspects.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought **global communicable diseases and the risks they pose into occupational diseases** and the occupational safety and health agenda in a new way and rapidly. This is most strongly emphasized in the social and health sectors, but also in other sectors and jobs, the risks of communicable diseases must be taken into account in a completely different way and with greater importance than before. This must also be reflected in the EU's occupational safety and health work and strategy.

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