

Tackling psychosocial risks at work new Guide for Action welcomed at Berlin Conference

(15 March 2017) European Social Partners for central government discussed a new guide on psychosocial risks (PSR) at a major conference in Berlin on 14-15 March, as part of a broader EC-funded health and safety project.

Across the EU, central government workers are exposed to higher psycho-social risks than in the private sector according to EU and national sources with huge consequences for the health of the individual worker and for the organisation.

Addressing the 60-strong conference German Secretary of State at the Interior Ministry Hans-Georg Engelke emphasised the importance of tackling stress at work and external violence against public employees which is on the rise in Germany as in many other countries. In a context of digitalisation, time pressure, ageing workforce and restructuring, Engelke said. 'we need sufficient staffing, lean procedures and a good social dialogue with the unions'.

The [guide](#) provides EU-wide comparative information on the scale and impact of PSRs in public administration and for some countries more specific data for central government. It lists the range of risk factors, broken down by gender. The new report also catalogues the risks facing central government employees in a range of professions and services from employment services to labour inspections through tax administrations to prison services. The guide gives concrete real-life examples of good practices, collective agreements and case studies on how public administrations are actively changing work practices to counter PSR within their places of work.

The project researcher and author of the guide, Lionel Fulton, of the LRD, told the conference: 'This Guide has been developed for practice use. What makes it different from other guides is that it is full of examples not of what people say to tackle psychosocial risks but it is based on practical examples of what people are actually doing in different European countries and different public administrative settings'.

EPSU Policy Officer Nadja Salson fully backed Fulton saying: 'I am impressed with the content of the Guide, but this has to be about implementation. We don't want this guide to gather dust on the shelf. The challenge now is to move from assessment to action by ensuring that the recommendations and good practices are implemented by management in consultation with the unions in as many public administrations as possible throughout Europe'.

The [guide](#) offers a number of solutions for dealing with PSR in the workplace including involving staff and their representatives, assessing all risks and prioritising them. It recommends employing external experts and organising appropriate bottom-up training for staff in order to put them in a better position to deal with psychosocial issues as they arise.

The [Guide](#) will be translated into 7 languages and will be supported by a short video. It will be up for adoption by the Social Dialogue Committee for Central Government Administrations on 15 May in Brussels.

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