

Endorsement of implementation report of multi-sectoral guidelines to tackle work-related third-party violence

(Brussels, 11 and 12 December 2013)

In their Plenary Meetings of 11 and 12 December 2013, both the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for the Hospital Sector and the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Local and Regional Government have adopted the report on the use and implementation of the guidelines including recommendations.

On 16 July 2010, EPSU, UNI EUROPA, ETUCE, HOSPEEM, CEMR, EFEE, EUROCOMMERCE, COESS - representing the social partners of the commerce, private security, local governments, education and hospital sectors - reached an agreement on multi-sectoral guidelines aimed to tackle third-party violence and harassment at work.

Read more on the issue on [EPSU's thematic webpage](#).

These organisations in 2013 have done an evaluation of the use of the document and impact on the level of workplaces and sectors, both with regard to the incidence of violence by clients, costumers, patients and their family members to those working e.g. in local government, education or health and social services. A joint questionnaire – available in EN/FR/DE/ES – was circulated to affiliates from EPSU, HOSPEEM and CEMR for the two sectors "local and regional government" and "hospitals". The aim of the questionnaire was to gather information on the follow-up to and use of the multi-sectoral guidelines by social partners as well as to learn about possible recommendation for revisions, etc.

The aim of the guidelines is to ensure that each workplace has a results-oriented policy which addresses the issue of third-party violence. The guidelines set out the practical steps that can be taken by employers, workers and their representatives/trade unions to reduce, prevent and mitigate problems. The steps reflect the best practices developed in our sectors and they can be complemented

by more specific and/or additional measures.

Third party violence (TPV), as a more specific case of work related violence, is a worrying phenomenon. According to different studies 2% up to 23% of all workers have already become subjected to TPV. Due to the concentration of female workers in the sectors most subjected to contact with members from the public, women are often more confronted with TPV than men.

The example of TPV in education demonstrates that TPV not only undermines an individual's health and dignity, but also has a very real economic impact in term of absences from the workplace, morale and staff turnover. The European Agency for OSH concludes in its recent report: "Although there is a lot of information available, there still is a need for knowledge, higher awareness and recognition of the serious and damaging consequences of verbal and non-verbal violence, threats as well as physical violence, and the possible ways to address them." Because even in countries with well-developed strategies to address workplace violence the phenomena of TPV often lacks recognition and attention.

The joint evaluation and implementation report contains examples how the multi-sectoral guidelines aimed to tackle third-party violence and harassment at work were used and promoted in the framework of projects, campaigns and which effects the awareness-raising and concrete actions brought about.

The report also contains recommendations for further steps and summarise the main challenges. Some of the recommendations to the social partners themselves, to government and other stakeholders are:

- A social partner agreement on preventing third-party violence could be a further step to a more stringent implementation of the guidelines if there is consensus between the social partners to start any negotiations.
- Further projects, conferences, and training for the social partners' affiliates at local, regional and national level should be considered to implement the guidelines, with financial support of the European Commission.

- National projects could receive financial support from the European Social Fund.
- The implementation of the multi-sectoral guidelines should become an integral part of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Work programmes of the respective social dialogue committees who signed the guidelines. A follow-up report should be conducted by 2015 to evaluate progress on the implementation of the guidelines and identify the potential need for further action.

Read the report by EPSU, UNI EUROPA, ETUCE, HOSPEEM, CEMR, EFEE, EUROCOMMERCE and COESS on the use and implementation of the multi-sectoral guidelines aimed to tackle third-party violence and harassment at work, including a set of recommendations that could be jointly agreed.

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