DialogueS 3rd Thematic Meeting – Report

Date: 09/06/2020 ➤ **Start Time – End Time:** 14:00 – 16:00
➤ **Where:** Online

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1. Introduction and welcome

Introduction by

- o Opening remarks from <u>Maryvonne Nicolle, President of EPSU's HSS (Health and Social Services) committee</u>
    - ▪ Main challenges faced in social services sector:
    -Many Social workers felt forgotten
    Lack of protection and funding
    -Lack of recommendations available regarding health
    -Impact of the pandemic, mostly on women (82 % of the workforce) having to manage their own anxiety and the one for supported persons
    - ▪ Need to develop social dialogue to protect the wellbeing of users and workers.

- o <u>Opening remarks from Jiri Horecky, Vice-President Federation of European Social Employers</u>
    - ▪ Main challenges faced by employers during COVID-19:
    -Secure protection and safety to their users and employees
    -Secure the basic care with staff shortage by 20-30 % (caring of children, being sick or in quarantine)
    - ▪ Two joint statements from Social Employers and EPSU to call the EU for action
    - ▪ Today, we have to manage the consequences of the crisis and to prepare the future
    - ▪ Principle goals for the webinar:
    -Promote social dialogue in social services sector
    -Share key learnings and new forms of services experienced during the crisis to improve the safety & wellbeing of services users and workers.

2. COVID-19: Challenges related to safety and health of workers during the re-launching of social services

- o <u>Elke Schneider, Senior project manager and expert on biological risks at EU OSHA</u>
    - ▪ Presentation of the EU guidance on COVID-19 – BACK TO THE WORKPLACE:
    -Actions to minimise exposure to SARS-CoV-2
    -OSH issues related to COVID-19
    -Covid-19 – Back to the workplace measures
    - ▪ Main measures for the back to the workplace:
    -Update of risk assessment (new risks, workload,..) and take appropriate measures
    -Legislation on the management of COVID-19 in the workplace. The legislation is in the biological agents directive and its national implementation.
    -The legislation set up a hierarchy of control measures:
        1. Technical measures
        2. Organisation measures
        3. Personal protective measures
    - ▪ The guidance also presents a set of recommendations regarding other aspects, for example hygiene measures, information and consultation of workers, mental health, Vulnerable workers to work from home, Certifying absence from work, Taking care of workers who have been ill, teleworking and Managing workers who work remotely.

- ▪ Two resources are available for tips and recommendations on teleworking:
  - OSH wiki article Practical tips to make home-based telework as healthy, safe and effective as possible.
  - MSD database of practical tools and guidance: teleworking

  Conclusions:
  - • Collective protection has to be preferred to personal protective equipment (PPE), to be used only when no other protection available
  - • **assess risks linked to telework and take relevant measures**
  - • Information on consultation of workers and their representatives is helpful.

In the subsequent Q&A, speakers and participants brought up the following issues

- o **Question**: Regarding the link between occupational health & safety and public health. Do you think that the COVID-19 crisis put the focus on this question, and what do you think of it?
  - ▪ **Answer:** It is an important issue that had already been raised. A better contact had to be developed between public health and occupational safety. More awareness of occupational health & safety on the public health is also needed. In some countries there is a clear link between public health and OSH strategies and that's a good point.
- o **Question:** regarding mental health. Which concrete measures can employers take to protect the mental health of their employees?
  - ▪ **Answer:** the first step as part of the risk assessment, is to consider the mental load of the employees: created because of the current situation, additional tasks, reduced staffing, etc. in order to put in place measures. There are risk assessment tools on this, that should be applied in the workplaces.

3. The contribution of social partners in ensuring the health and safety of workers and users

- o <u>Fréderic Hyacinthe, Apei des 2 Vallées (FR)</u>
  - ▪ Presentation of the pandemic management by the association
  - ▪ it manages 25 services in Aisne, with the different stakeholders.
  - ▪ Challenges faced:
    -Shortage of equipments and face masks
    -Lack of clear instructions
  - ▪ Principle measures taken:
    -daily crisis unit meetings
    -Transparency and responsiveness daily communication
    -Psychological support unit for both users and staff
  - ▪ **Conclusions:** Key learnings during and after the pandemic
    - • Transparent communication system between employers and employees to manage the crisis. Organised meetings with staff representatives to provide them with full information and to discuss the crisis management.
    - • Training of staff - Information and training of people with disabilities
    - • Take advantage of lessons learnt during this crisis to prepare the future and potential new crisis.

- o <u>Giancarlo Go, FPCGIL (IT)</u>
    - Presentation of two agreements for the prevention and safety of public and private health workers for Covid-19 emergency. It aims to recognize the fundamental importance of the National Health Service during the dramatic emergency and in the future.
    - The agreement provides:
      -Establishment of a Committee composed of the Ministry of Health and CGIL, CISL and UIL.
      -Standards of protection: use of PPE, in compliance with the indications of the technical-scientific bodies.
      -Health Surveillance
      -Staff recruitment
    - Conclusions: The agreements cover several aspects from financial resources to health and safety measures.

- o <u>Tim Kind, Actiz (NL)</u>
    - Presentation of the analysis on the management of the COVID-19 crisis.
    - General patterns ActiZ during crisis:
      -Trust in National Policies
      -Building an information architecture for employers
      -Organizing the continuity of services during the crisis
    - Main measures to ensure the continuity:
      -Availability and distribution of scarce resources
      -Safety and wellbeing of service workers and users
      -Simplifying flows of service users
      -Simplifying flows of (potential) service workers
      -Minimalising bureaucracy, building trust
    - **Conclusions:** Highlighted Key learnings in the Netherlands:
      -Take into consideration from the beginning long term care and other social services
      -Social Dialogue, innovative and effective collaboration to tackle this crisis and potential future crisis.
      -Important to learn and share challenges and initiatives on COVIC-19 in other countries.

- o <u>Jonas Nilsson, Kommunal</u> (SE)
    - Presentation of the collective agreement for emergency situations
    - The purpose of the agreement is to provide flexibility in terms of work obligations, working hours and conditions. In return it provides more favourable compensation for employees.
    - The collective agreements determine:
      -Employees in the emergency services, have a fixed hourly salary
      -Regulations regarding the resting time
      -Separate document that states who is responsible for the working environment
    - **Conclusions**: This collective agreement shows the importance of social dialogue, it provides an interesting balance for employers and employees.

4. Conclusion

Concluding remarks by, Maryvonne Nicolle, President of EPSU's HSS committee EPSU

- Key message from this webinar:
  -"The social services sector must be fully part of the be public health policy."
  -Key role of social Dialogue in social services. Employers' and employees' representatives need to work together, to develop solutions, measures and initiatives to protect workers. This leads to a higher quality of services and protection of users.
  -Improve working conditions to tackle the shortage of workers.
  -Work together to encourage the EU Institutions to do more to protect social services workers and users.
  -Important to put more focus on social dialogue in social services sector.

Concluding remarks by Sylvain Renouvel, Social Employers

- Key messages from this webinar:
  - More and better cooperation between health care and social services sector is needed.
  - During this pandemic employers and employees have a common goal, to protect users and workers.
  - At European level, the Social Employers together with EPSU, sent a joint statement and a joint letter to the Commissioner Nicolas Schmit on Covid-19 effects on the sector and the support needed to face the crisis.
  - This need of a better support from the EU and the member states is highlighted in the current campaign launched by EPSU and the Social Employer together with the EU NGOs representing social services providers and called #WeAreEssentialServices and #IAmAnEssentialWorker.
  - A better support should allow us to provide available, affordable quality social services a goal closely linked with a staff working in Safe and healthy workplaces in a context of a reinforced wellbeing at work.

- Next steps: to continue working together to get more support, to be able to face the current social challenges consequence of the Covid-19 crisis, but also already known challenges as the ageing of the European population which will increase the needs in terms of services and workforce in a sector already facing severe attractiveness issues.

The 3rd Thematic Meeting was closed at 16:00.