

EMF: Specific issues related to the workplace

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Some keys preliminary points

- ETUC approach to health and safety at work is based on the framework directive adopted in 1989: establishing key principles of prevention and information and consultation rights of workers and their representatives
- ETUC has been always calling for the coverage of all the risks in particular related to physical agents with specific directives
- ETUC is concerned of the further delay in the implementation of the directive covering EMF
- Debate about the scientific uncertainties should not stop prevention actions
- Major risk for workers lack of democracy at the workplace

Situation regarding EMF exposure at the workplace

- Increasing exposure situation due to working equipment
- High levels of exposure situations
- Direct and indirect effects
- Wide range of exposure and also other stressors
- Also workers with particular risks (pregnant workers, workers with metallic active or passive medical implants, young workers)
- 'Probable' high level of exposure: health sector (MRI, diathermy), manufacturing sector (welding), electrolytic installation, induction heating, radar and broadcasting, electric handheld tools,
- Very diversified situations...

Basic provisions for prevention and questions

- Risk assessment which implies identification of sources and take into account the real work
- Specific obligation regarding working equipment: design, selection, information
- Which information are provided by Manufacturers
- Skilled workers available with the right equipment
- Risk assessment key starting point: who will do the risk assessment and if needed the measurement
- Identification of the sensitive workers
- Medical surveillance and feedback
- Worries of inconsistencies and conflicting information

To conclude

- Directive must be implemented without further delay
- Start a learning process, many European countries have no legal provisions and take lessons from countries which have some legislation
- Start the building up of the competences to make risk assessment and measurements when needed
- Collect epidemiological data to allow further developments of the rules
- Start the implementation of work practices which brings reduction in exposure
- Development of technologies and design which takes into account work practices
- Hazard elimination or risk minimized are the basic principles if derogation it must be temporarily and justified toward the social partners at European level

Thank you

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