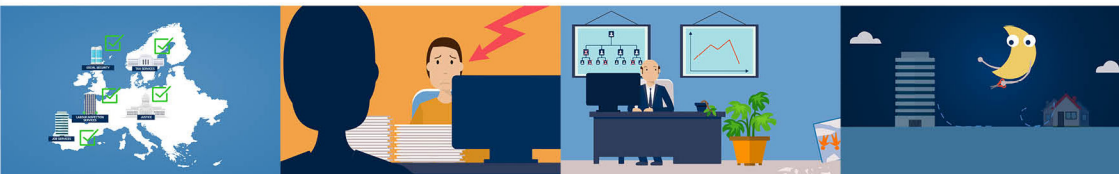


**Well-being and occupational
safety & health (OSH)**

**in central government administrations:
tackling psychosocial risks at work**

A GUIDE

2017



EUPAE | European Public
Administration Employers



TUNED | Trade Union's National and
European Delegation

The production of this guide has been financially supported by the European Union. The European Union is not responsible for any use made of the information contained in this publication.

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INTRODUCTION FROM SOCIAL PARTNERS

This guide is produced by the social dialogue committee for central government administrations, a body bringing together unions and employers in central government from across Europe.¹

The committee wanted to look particularly at psychosocial risks in central government because they are now probably the most serious threat to employees' and civil servants' health and well-being. Ongoing reorganisation, the intensification of work and an ageing population have all contributed to a worsening of the situation. The guide is part of a wider project which the committee hopes will help protect all those working in this area.

There are many guides on psychosocial risks, but this guide, drawn up with the help of Lionel Fulton of the Labour Research Department in London, is the first European guide aimed specifically at central government.

It is based on an examination of the existing research on the issue, and discussions in two workshops in Madrid and Vilnius and a large conference in Berlin. It also includes a series of real-life case studies from central government.

The committee would like to thank all those who have contributed to this guide through the provision of information and support. We are much grateful to Mr Fulton who has put in simple terms complex matters. We trust the guide, together with the background research, and the short video, will provide useful training or social dialogue materials for everyone interested in improving well-being at work and contributing to a social Europe that promotes public services for everyone's interest.

Britta Lejon, TUNED spokesperson and ST President (Sweden) & Thierry Le Goff, EUPAE France, Director General for the administration and civil service.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE EXTENT AND IMPACT OF PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS

The risks to employees' health and at work have changed in recent decades with more people being exposed to so-called psychosocial risks – the mental and social factors that affect well-being. Prolonged exposure to these risks can lead to stress, burnout and depression, as well as cardiovascular diseases and musculoskeletal problems for individuals, as well as serious consequences for the organisations which employ them.

Health and safety bodies across Europe have recognised the need to tackle these risks, although there are differences between countries in how they are categorised. An example from Spain shows how the issue is assessed there. At European level a joint report in 2014 by two EU agencies, EU-OSHA and Eurofound, examined the factors considered to pose psychosocial risks under five separate headings: job content; work intensity and job autonomy; working time arrangements and work-life balance; social environment; and job insecurity and career development.

Psychosocial risks are certainly present in central government and a separate EU-OSHA survey which looked at seven risk factors found that, for six of the seven, public administration had above average levels of risk. Violence and abuse by clients and users is a particular risk in central government, which has also experienced large scale restructuring in recent years.

Psychosocial risks: the context for action

Psychosocial risks are implicitly covered by **EU health and safety legislation**, which applies across the EU, and a majority of states have gone further by including specific references to these risks in their national laws.

There are a range of **support structures** available to deal with these risks including: employee representatives, unions, health and safety experts, labour inspectors, persons of confidence and management.

Collective agreements on work-related stress and violence and harassment have been agreed at European level, and there are a number of agreements covering various aspects of psychosocial risks at national level. The agreement covering the public sector in France in 2013 is particularly noteworthy.

In looking at psychosocial risks, it is important to consider the high proportion of **women** working in central government and the fact that they are more likely to suffer abuse and harassment than their male colleagues. Domestic violence may also spill over into the workplace, and examples from Spain and Sweden show how this can be tackled.

PRACTICAL ACTION

The overall approach

In tackling psychosocial risks it is helpful to tackle them within the traditional **risk management framework**, which begins by assessing which risks are present. In dealing with them, three levels of intervention are necessary: primary-level interventions (eliminating or reducing risks at source); secondary-level interventions (giving individuals better strategies for coping with risks); and tertiary-level interventions (helping individuals who have already been damaged).

Evidence shows that these risks are better tackled through **social dialogues and with employee involvement** and an example from France shows how this can be done.

Assessing the risks

There are a range of readily available tools for **assessing psychosocial risks** and examples from Spain and Belgium show how this has been done in practice.

However, it should be recognised that it seems to be more difficult to tackle psychosocial risks than physical risks and this is particularly the case in public administration. This emphasises the need for any plan of action arising from the risk assessment to have the appropriate level of support and skills to be implemented effectively.

Combating specific risks

Third-party violence and abuse are the most frequently reported psychosocial risks in public administration but there is a range of practical steps which can be put in place to deal with them. These range from better lighting and limiting public access to buildings to training for staff

on defusing threatening situations. Examples from Germany (covering building arrangements and a new approach), Italy (staff training) and Portugal (training plus other elements) show how the issue has been tackled.

Time pressure and workloads are also a major problem. An example from Belgium, where workers are no longer required to record their hours, shows how employees have been able to decide for themselves when to do their work.

Problems linked to a lack of **communication and cooperation** can be both the result of tensions between employees, leading to bullying or harassment, and they can emerge if the organisation's goals are not clear or instructions are contradictory. The European Commission's practical guidance for employers gives some helpful suggestions on how management can ensure that it has good two-way communications with staff and the example from the UK Civil Service provides a practical example of the importance attached to good communications. Other examples show how an anti-bullying policy has been introduced (Austria), how tackling a specific case of bullying led to an overall improvement in the workplace atmosphere (Lithuania) and how efforts to build better understanding between colleagues have produced good results (Germany).

Employees' lack of **control over work pace or process** can be a major cause of stress and increasing their influence in this area can make a big difference. An example from Finland shows the steps taken to give one group of staff (the over 55s) greater influence, and the example from Germany shows how workers doing a very challenging job have considerable control over their work.

As a psychosocial risk factor, **job insecurity** does not just cover the loss of employment, but also major reorganisation. It is important to implement change in an open way and one which reduces the impact on the daily lives of staff. Two examples, from France and Germany, show how new technology has been used to ensure that, when organisations move, the staff who work for them do not face being completely uprooted.

One of the major issues in the area of **long or irregular hours** is that new technology means that staff can be seen as "permanently available". New legislation in France is introducing the "right to disconnect" but German central government already includes a case where the principle of the "least possible intrusion" into leisure time has been included in a local agreement.

Discrimination is found more rarely than other psychosocial risk factors, but, where it is present, the consequences can be severe. An example from the UK shows not just that eliminating discrimination has been set as a clear goal, but also that progress in that direction is monitored.

Making the strategy work

As well as tackling specific psychosocial risks organisations need to ensure that the measures and policies it has put in place are acted upon. One aspect of this is effective communication, and the example from France describes an unusual and effective strategy to get the message across to employees.

Training to manage stress

Training that aims to modify an individual's response to psychosocial risks and give employees better strategies for coping with them is a so-called secondary-level intervention. This approach has been extensively adopted in central government across Europe, and there are examples from Luxembourg (on managing stress and emotions), Belgium (training in mindfulness for management) and Hungary (tips on healthy eating and sport).

Supporting individuals damaged by psychosocial hazards

Despite efforts to eliminate or reduce psychosocial risks or improve individuals' ability to cope with them, there may be cases where individuals have been negatively affected, and organisations need to develop mechanisms to help and support them. These are tertiary-level interventions. Some central government organisations have extensive employee assistance programmes, which cover both problems directly linked to work (such as conflicts with colleagues or workload) and other more personal problems (such as relationship difficulties). There are examples of programmes covering mental health problems (UK), individual psychological and emotional support (Romania and Germany) and addiction (Germany).

References and sources of further information

This provides useful sources of further information with brief descriptions, mostly European, but including some national material.

THE EXTENT AND IMPACT OF PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS



THE EXTENT AND IMPACT OF PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS

As work has changed in recent decades, with fewer people employed in agriculture and industry and more in the service sector, the risks to individuals' safety and health while they are at work have also changed. Fewer people are exposed to the physical risks associated with hard manual work or arising from work with dangerous substances – although these hazards still exist – and more are exposed to the risks, such as stress, bullying, harassment and violence, more typically linked with the service sector.

These risks are often referred to as “psychosocial risks” reflecting the combined mental and social factors involved that affect workers' health and well-being.

A report by a group of experts produced for the French Ministry of Labour in 2011 defined psychosocial risks as “risks for mental, physical and social health caused by working conditions and organisational and relationship factors likely to interact with mental function”. In other countries there are slightly different definitions, and in some countries, the term psychosocial risks is unfamiliar.

However, even if there are differences of definition and terminology, the potential damaging consequences to the individual of exposure to these risks – stress, burnout, cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal problems, depression and even suicide – are known across Europe.²

For an organisation the impacts can include high levels of sickness, absenteeism, poor performance and lower productivity, low morale, an increased risk of accidents, a higher turnover of staff and difficulties in recruitment, more complaints from users, as well as industrial action and internal conflict, all producing higher costs and potential reputational damage.

For society as a whole, an estimate produced in 2014 by EU-OSHA (the EU's health and safety agency) estimated the cost of stress at €25.4 billion in 2013, and the high negative impact of exposure to psychosocial risks is also indicated by national studies. In the UK, the Health

and Safety Executive calculates that stress, depression and anxiety was the biggest single cause of days lost through work-related ill health in 2015-16, accounting for 11.7 of the total 30.4 million days lost (38%). In Germany, the 2015 report on safety and health at work (Sicherheit und Gesundheit bei der Arbeit 2015), produced jointly by the labour ministry and the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA), calculated that psychological and behavioural disorder accounted for 14.8% of days lost, second only to musculoskeletal disorders, which are often linked to psychosocial risk factors, on 22.0%.

Countries in Europe have taken slightly different approaches in analysing the risks which cause these damaging effects. France, Germany, Spain and Belgium, for example, refer explicitly to psychosocial risk factors (“mental pressure” in the case of Germany), while the UK, Italy and Poland talk about “stress factors” or “stressors”.

There are also differences in how the risks are defined and identified. The French occupational health and safety agency INRS, for example, identifies six categories of risk factors:

- intensity of work and working time;
- emotional demands (including third-party violence and having to hide one's real feelings);
- lack of autonomy;
- poor working relations;
- value conflicts (where the job seems unethical, pointless or damaging); and
- job insecurity (which includes changes in how the job is done as well as the fear of losing it).

The UK Health and Safety Executive identifies six primary areas where problems can lead which can lead to stress at work: demands, control, support, relationships, role and change. This categorisation has also been adopted by the Italian health and safety body, INAIL. The Portuguese health and safety body, ACT, identifies nine risk factors, including higher emotional demands, an increased workload, new (and more precarious) form of employment contract, and difficulties in reconciling work and family/private life, as well as harassment and violence at work.

The Spanish approach is slightly different. The most recent detailed guide on psychosocial risks produced by the Spanish national health and safety institution, INSHT, does not contain a list of the main risks. However, the analytical tool that INSHT proposes should be used by organisations to investigate whether they have a problem in this area includes a list of nine factors, comparable to those identified elsewhere. They are

set out in box 1, and include issues such as satisfaction with the level of pay and employees' participation in decision-making, as well as concerns such as autonomy and workload.

At European level, a major report in 2014, produced jointly by Eurofound (the EU agency looking at working and living conditions) and EU-OSHA, looked at the factors considered to pose psychosocial risks to workers under five separate headings. These were:

- job content;
- work intensity and job autonomy;
- working time arrangements and work-life balance;
- social environment; and
- job insecurity and career development.

However, these risks are defined or categorised, it is very clear that they are present in central government, as a major recent study by EU-OSHA shows. This is the Second European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER-2), which was carried out by EU-OSHA in 2014. It looked at the prevalence of seven psychosocial risk factors across Europe, breaking down the results on an industry as well on a national basis. It found, not just that those working in public administration were exposed to these risks, but that, with a single exception – long or irregular hours –there was above average exposure to these psychosocial risks in workplaces in public administration. These figures relate to public administration as a whole rather than just central government, but they are the best available.³

As the figures show, the most commonly found risk in public administration, reported by more than two-thirds of workplaces, is “having to deal with difficult customers, patients pupils etc”. In the area of central government, difficult customers translates into clients and users, who may also be vulnerable, and there is no question that this is a problem. A French survey, for example, which looked at specific areas of central government, found that while just over a quarter (26.9%) of private sector workers had tense relations with the public, it was three-quarters (75.7%) for those working in the area of justice, more than half (53.4%) for those in security and defence, which includes the police and 42.8% for those in public finances.⁴

In the worst cases, these difficult relations can lead to abuse and violence and there are certainly examples in central government where this occurs, from prisons to unemployment offices, from those enforcing regulations to those dealing with tax. For example, in HMRC, the UK tax authority, there were 383 cases of violence and verbal abuse in 2015/16, and in DWP, the UK ministry dealing with most social benefits, there were 33,115 incidents of verbal abuse/threat in 2013/14 and 637 actual assaults. In Spain, there were 424 assaults on prison staff in 2013, while figures from the UK prison service were even more alarming with assaults on prison staff more than doubling from 710 in the second quarter of 2010 to 1,724 in 2016, and serious assaults going up three-fold in the same period from 64 to 209.

One other particular concern in central government is restructuring, which has an impact on how work is done and relations with colleagues, as well as job prospects. Restructuring has been widespread across central government in recent years, with almost every government looking to change how it delivers services and reduce the amount it spends on them.

In Ireland, for example, the Civil Service Renewal Plan, launched in October 2014, is described as representing “a fundamental new vision and direction for the Civil Service”. In France, the government has been engaged in what it calls a “transformation of the organisation and functioning of state services” since 2012. In Romania, the government is engaged in “central public administration reform, aiming to increase the efficiency, performance and stability of the public policy framework”. In addition, hundreds of thousands of central government jobs have been lost across Europe – 106,000 in the UK alone between 2009 and 2016 – while in some countries an increasing number of those working in central government are temporary or agency workers, or are employed on some other form of precarious contract.

Table 1: Psychosocial risk factors present in the establishment (% establishments, EU-28)

	Public administration	All
Having to deal with difficult customers, patients, pupils, etc.	68	58
Time pressure	49	43
Poor communication or cooperation within the organisation	27	17
Employees' lack of influence on their work pace or work processes	19	13
Job insecurity	19	15
Long or irregular working hours	19	23
Discrimination, for example due to gender, age or ethnicity	4	2

Source: ESENER-2

In the French survey referred to above, the proportion of employees reporting restructuring or a change of location in the previous 12 months was 13.6% in the private sector, but 14.8% in the public sector as a whole, rising to 22.9% in public finances and 19.1% in security and defence. (It was below average at 6.3% in justice).

BOX 1: Spain (INSHT): factors to be considered in determining the presence of psychosocial risks

Working time – including unsocial hours and work/life balance.

Autonomy:

- In relation to working time – including the ability to take breaks;
- In decision-making – including about the way work is organised.

Workload:

- Time pressure;
- Level of concentration – including the impact of interruptions;
- The quantity and difficulty of the work.

Psychological demands:

- Intellectual demands – including the need to take the initiative or be creative;
- Emotional demands – including dealing with people, the need for workers to hide their emotions and exposure to situations producing an emotional response.

Variety and content of work – including whether the work is routine, whether the work makes sense, and whether the work is recognised by superiors, colleagues, clients and family.

Participation/supervision – including whether the worker is involved in new developments, such as new ways of working or taking on new employees, and the degree of supervision in areas such as the way the work is done or its quality.

Workers' interest/compensation – including the possibility of promotion or career development and satisfaction with the level of pay.

Performance of the role:

- The clarity of the role – whether the worker's tasks and responsibilities are clearly defined;
- Conflicts in the role – including whether the worker is set unrealistic goals, is given contradictory instructions or faces moral dilemmas.

Social relations and support – including the degree of support from a variety of sources, exposure to interpersonal conflicts, vio-

lence, both physical and psychological, sexual harassment and discrimination.

These are the factors used in the tool (known as FPSICO) produced by the official Spanish health and safety body INSHT to assess the presence of psychosocial risks. However, it is important to point out that is not the only method for evaluating psychosocial risks used in Spain. A large number of organisations have used the analytical tool CoPsoQ ISTAS 21, favoured by the CCOO union.

PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS: THE CONTEXT FOR ACTION



PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS: THE CONTEXT FOR ACTION

This section sets out the context in which action to tackle psychosocial risks can be taken, setting out existing legal protections, the range of institutional support that is available and the collective agreements that have been signed.

LEGAL PROTECTIONS

Health and safety at work is a fundamental right in every state in the EU. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights states that; “every worker has the right to working conditions which respect his or her health, safety and dignity” (Article 31). And there is a comprehensive body of EU health and safety legislation with the so-called “Framework Directive” (89/391/EEC) at its core.

This states: “The employer shall have a duty to ensure the safety and health of workers in every aspect related to the work” (Article 5(1)), and this includes protection against psychosocial risks. The Framework Directive also imposes a series of obligations on the employer, including the requirement to carry out risk assessments, provide health and safety training and to inform and consult employees and their representatives.

This means that, even though there is no specific directive on psychosocial risks as there is, for example, on noise, these risks are implicitly covered by European law, and organisations have a duty to tackle them.

As all EU member states have transposed the Framework Directive into their national law, psychosocial risks are implicitly covered by national legislation in all member states. For example, the Spanish labour inspectorate (ITSS) makes this clear in its guide on psychosocial risks. It

accepts that there is no specific Spanish legislation on these risks but it states they are implicitly included in the Law on the Prevention of Hazards (Ley 31/1995), Spain’s main health and safety legislation, which implemented the Framework Directive.

However, a majority of member states have gone further, including an explicit reference to psychosocial risks, or some aspect of them, in their national health and safety legislation.

In total 19 member states have legislation including this explicit reference. They are: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden.

In some cases, such as in Latvia and Malta, the references are limited to simply adding psychological risks to the list of other risks to be taken into account. In other countries only specific psychosocial risks are referred to: French legislation refers to harassment and sexist behaviour; Italian legislation to stress; the Luxembourg legislation to harassment; and Polish legislation to bullying. (These references are in addition to the legislation member states have introduced to tackle harassment linked to gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability and ethnic origin – see below.)

However, in most cases the legislation is more detailed in its treatment of psychosocial risks, often with a definition of the risk factors involved. Belgian legislation, for example, defines psychosocial risks as “the likelihood that one or more employee(s) may suffer mental harm, which may also be accompanied by physical harm, due to exposure to the elements of the work organisation, job content, working conditions, the conditions of working life and interpersonal relationships at work, on which the employer has an impact and which objectively pose a danger”.

In several countries, legislation paying greater attention to psychosocial risks has only recently been introduced. The law in Belgium was changed in 2014, with new laws on 28 February and 28 March, and a Royal Decree on 10 April. In Germany too there was a recent change. The Occupational Safety and Health Act (ArbSchG) was amended in October 2013 and now specifically refers to the need to organise work in a way which, as far as possible, avoids mental and physical risks to health (§ 4), and adds psychosocial risks at work (“psychische Belastungen bei der Arbeit”) as one of the issues that have to be taken into account when conducting a risk assessment (§ 5). In Luxembourg, new legislation is currently being developed which, among other things, will provide better

protection for public employees who have been negatively affected by psychosocial risk factors.

However, it is important to emphasise that, even in those countries where there is no specific reference to psychosocial risks in national legislation, these risks are nevertheless covered by national legislation implementing the Framework Directive.

In addition to specific health and safety legislation, there may be other ways in which the law can help in tackling some psychosocial risks.

This is the case where the problem is harassment or discrimination. The EU's Gender Equality Recast Directive (2006/54/EC) and the two EU Anti-discrimination Directives, covering religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (2000/78/EC) and racial or ethnic origin (2000/43/EC) all tackle discrimination, and include sections on harassment. All three have been implemented through national legislation in all EU member states so, if it seems that harassment or discrimination is linked to any of the characteristics covered by these directives, those affected potentially have a legal remedy.

Some countries also have more general legislation prohibiting bullying and harassment at work, irrespective of whether the individuals concerned are protected by equality or anti-discrimination law. In Spain, for example, the offence of harassment at work (*acoso laboral*) has been part of the criminal code (Article 173.1.II) since 2012, and some prison sentences have been imposed. In Portugal, harassment is prohibited both in the labour code (Article 29) and in the General Labour Law in Public Functions (LGTFP).

The criminal law can also be used against the perpetrators of violence, and in some cases those affected by violence may be entitled to damages from those who carried out the attacks. (In Germany, legislation introduced in 2016 extends civil servants' rights in this area. It provides that in some cases where civil servants have been awarded damages after an assault, but the perpetrator has insufficient funds to pay, the state will make up the difference).⁵

Action: find out what the law is in your country by asking your union, employee representative, HR department or health and safety specialist. But remember, even if there is no specific reference to psychosocial risks, they are still covered by national health and safety legislation implementing the framework directive. In addition, other legislation may offer alternative routes to tackle violence, harassment and discrimination.

SUPPORT AVAILABLE

In every country there are a range of structures and individuals available to help employees and organisations tackle psychosocial risks. These include employee representatives, unions, health and safety experts, labour inspectors and others. However, there are major differences between countries in how this support is organised, and it is not possible in this guide to set out how the various national systems operate. This section therefore sets out the various types of support which may be available.

Employee representatives: the Framework Directive imposes a duty on employers to "consult workers and/ or their representatives and allow them to take part in discussions on all questions relating to safety and health at work" (Article 11). However, precisely how this is done is left to national level. The most frequently used model is a combination of employee health and safety representatives, who have their own specific rights, plus a joint employee/employer health and safety committee. However, some countries only have employee health and safety representatives and some countries only have a joint committee. There are also some countries where health and safety issues are primarily dealt with through the normal representative structures, the works/staff council or one of its committees. Irrespective of how the system is organised, employee representatives are likely to be a source of information on psychosocial risks; they will have knowledge of the situation in the workplace; and crucially they have the legal right to take action in certain circumstances.

Unions: in some countries unions and workplace union representatives have specific health and safety rights. But, even where this is not the case, unions have knowledge and experience in dealing with psychosocial risks and can provide support. They can also negotiate collective agreements on how these risks should be dealt with (see below).

Health and safety experts: the Framework Directive states that "the employer shall designate one or more workers to carry out activities related to the protection and prevention of occupational risks for the undertaking and/ or establishment", although if there are no appropriate employees to carry out this task, the employer can "enlist competent external services or persons". There are big differences between member states in how this is done. In some countries there is a requirement on

larger employees to set up an internal occupational health department; in others the rules are much less prescriptive. Some countries emphasise the role of the works doctor; in others the role of occupational medicine is much more limited. There should, however, always be someone who has a specific health and safety role.

Labour inspectors: all EU member states have a system of labour inspection, although again there are major differences in how they operate, with some countries favouring generalist inspectorates, where others have specialist services. There are also differences in resources and therefore how often premises are inspected. In public administration, EU-OSHA figures show that the proportion of establishments inspected in the previous three years varies more than ten-fold, from 86% in Romania to 8% in Luxembourg.

Persons of confidence: these employees, whose role is to give support to fellow employees who have suffered violence, bullying or sexual harassment, are not provided for in EU-level legislation. However, they are found in some countries, including the Netherlands and Belgium.

Management: the final area of potential support is management itself, as, irrespective of the appointment of health and safety experts, it is the employer who carries ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of his or her employees. In some cases the line manager may be able to provide support; in other cases it will be senior management. Often the HR department will have a specific role and where things are working well it will be clear who is responsible for what and in which circumstances. (See the case of the French Interior Ministry for an example on page 69.)

Action: establish exactly which support networks are present in your workplace. Find out who does what and how they interact.

NEGOTIATED COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

In many countries there are collective agreements on psychosocial risks negotiated by employers and unions. These can provide a basis for agreed action by employee representatives and managers at local level.

These national agreements have often been negotiated as a result of two so-called European Framework Agreements on psychosocial risks, signed by unions and employers – the social partners – at European level. The first of these, the “Framework Agreement on Work-related Stress”

was signed on 8 October 2004. The second, the “Framework Agreement on Violence and Harassment at Work” was signed on 26 April 2007.

The European agreement on work-related stress states that its objective is “to identify and prevent or manage problems of work-related stress” and makes it clear that “it is not about attaching blame to the individual”. It points out there are a number of ways in which work-related stress can be identified, and once the problem has been identified, measures to prevent, eliminate or reduce it can be both collective and/or individual. It lists a range of possible measures to take:

- clarifying the organisation’s objectives and the role of workers;
- ensuring adequate management support for individuals and teams;
- matching responsibility and control over work;
- improving work organisation and processes; and
- improving working conditions and the environment.

It also proposes training managers and workers on stress and how to deal with it and informing and consulting workers and/or their representatives about the issue.

The European agreement on violence and harassment at work aims to increase awareness and understanding of the problem and “provide employers, workers and their representatives at all levels with an action-oriented framework to identify, prevent and manage problems of harassment and violence at work”.

It proposes that organisations should have a clear statement that “harassment and violence will not be tolerated” and should have procedures setting out how to deal with it, if it occurs. These should include support for the victims, and appropriate measures against the perpetrators. The agreement also calls for appropriate training of both managers and workers. Although much of the agreement relates to harassment and violence carried out by managers or other employers, it also states that, “where appropriate”, its provisions “can be applied to deal with cases of external violence”.

The two agreements, which were negotiated within the legal framework provided by the Treaty for European Union (Article 154 TFEU), are to be implemented by the signatory parties (unions and employers) and their respective national affiliates, rather than through an EU directive, and they have clearly had an impact on bargaining.

In France, for example, unions and employers at national level reached cross-industry agreements on both stress and violence and harassment at work, which were both considerably more detailed than the European texts. At the request of the signatories, these agreements were

subsequently extended by the government, becoming binding on all employers and workers. Italy also implemented the stress agreement, although not the violence and harassment agreement, through a national cross-industry agreement, which largely reproduced the wording of the European text. The provisions of this agreement were then incorporated into Italian legislation, which is why this legislation refers only to stress (see page 16).

National-level agreements or national-level recommendations to lower level negotiators were also signed in Greece, Romania, Spain and Slovenia (on stress) and Luxembourg and Spain (violence and harassment). In other countries there are industry-level agreements on both stress and violence and harassment, although it is not always clear whether they were a direct result of the European framework agreements.

Collective agreements specifically for central government have been signed in several countries, including Denmark (on stress in 2005 and on violence as part of the wider Wellbeing Agreement" (Trivselsaftale) in 2008), France (on psychosocial risks in 2013 – see box 2), Ireland (where a new policy Dignity at Work – An Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy was agreed in 2015, replacing an earlier document agreed in 1999), the Netherlands (where a series of health and safety covenants (arboconvenanten) have been signed), Spain (on violence in 2015 – see box 3), and in Sweden (on change in 2010 and with improvements in the area of violence and harassment in 2016).

In addition, there are local agreements covering parts of central government and dealing with specific psychosocial risks (see for example the agreement in the German Interior Ministry (BMI) on staff transfers – page 67).

Even where these agreements don't exist at national level, there are European level agreements on stress and violence and harassment. (The European agreement on violence includes "cases of external violence".)

Action: find out what collective agreements apply in your country and your workplace. See whether the two European-level agreements could be useful and promote their implementation.

BOX 2: Collective agreement on psychosocial risks in the public sector in France 2013

On 22 October 2013 public sector employers and the unions signed a wide-ranging collective agreement on the prevention of psychoso-

cial risks in the public sector. The agreement, which covers all three sections of the public sector in France, central government (including teachers), local government and the hospital service, aims to implement the general health and safety obligations imposed by the law in a more specific way in relation to psychosocial risks in the public sector.

- It sets out five areas for action:
- implementing psychosocial risk prevention plans:
 - through ensuring that each public sector employer carries out a risk assessment and draws up a plan to eliminate or reduce the risks; and
 - through specialist training for the common council for the public sector which will receive annual reports on progress;
 - support for the implementation of these actions:
 - through the production of specialist materials;
 - through training;
 - through the provision of sufficient staff;
 - through particular support for senior staff; and
 - through the promotion a culture of prevention;
 - evaluating the work that is being done:
 - through setting out criteria to measure success;
 - implementing a national action plan; and
 - setting up a committee of the signatories to monitor progress.

The agreement also includes an annexe covering the support to be given to members and secretaries of the health and safety committees (CHSCT in French) in terms of time off, training and more general rights – for example, in a committee covering 500 to 1,499 employees, a CHSCT member has five days off a year and the secretary has 6.5 days. There is also an annexe providing additional support to the work of occupational medical staff.

BOX 3: Collective agreement on combating violence in central government in Spain 2015

On 30 July 2015 management and unions representing a majority of those working in central government signed a collective agreement on actions to combat violence. The agreement, which deals only with external violence, not with violence or threats from other staff, covers abuse, threats and defamation, as well coercion and as physical assaults.

It includes a procedure for taking action, which draws heavily on the recommendations from the official health and safety institute in Spain, the INSHT. This procedure includes:

- an analysis and evaluation of the situation – looking for example at past incidents, as well as possible causes of violence, like long waiting times or unsuitable premises; and
- a preventative and reactive strategy. This covers:
- action taken before any incidents – such as improving lighting or furniture;
- action to be taken during any incidents – such as remaining calm and informing other colleagues and superiors; and
- action to be taken after any incident – such as support for the victim, both psychological and practical.

The agreement covers all parts of central government (Administración General del Estado – AGE) and the bodies linked to it, with the exception of the prison service and associated institutions. The agreement provides for the evaluation of the possibility of drawing up special regulations for prisons, based on the agreement, but by the start of 2017 these not been agreed.

BOX 4: The gender dimension

Women make up a high proportion of those working in central government. In 2015, across the EU as a whole, 47% of those working in public administration and defence and compulsory social security were women, although the figures vary from well over half in the Baltic and Nordic states (Lithuania is the highest on 58%) to around a third in some of the states of Southern Europe (Italy has the smallest percentage at 33%) (Figures from Eurostat). With defence excluded, it is clear that, in many countries, the majority of those employed in central government administration are women.

In the UK, for example, in March 2016, 54% of all Civil Service employees were women,⁶ while in France in 2014, women made up 55% of the workforce in central government (FPE), which also includes teachers and the armed forces.⁷ In Portugal, the proportion of women in central administration was 62.2% in December 2016.⁸ In Spain, while men outnumber women by two to one in civilian administration at national level, the position changes if the ministry of the interior, which includes two predominantly male police bodies, is

taken out of the figures. In these circumstances, women make up just over half the total (53%).⁹

It is therefore important, when looking at action on psychosocial risk in central government, to consider the gender dimension and examine whether women and men are affected by psychosocial risks in different ways.

One clear difference between men and women is that women are much more likely than men to be subject to what the EU's research agency Eurofound describes as adverse social behaviour (verbal abuse, unwanted sexual attention, threats or humiliating behaviour). Both the recent European Working Conditions Surveys (EWCS), undertaken by Eurofound in 2010 and 2015, found that in all European countries, across the whole economy, women were more likely than men to be subject to bullying/harassment at work.

A Eurofound study on violence and harassment at the workplace in 2015 described the results of the 2010 survey as follows:

“According to the EWCS 2010, the proportion of women subjected to ASBs [adverse social behaviours] is slightly higher (15.1%) than the proportion of men (13.3%). The difference between women and men is more pronounced in some Scandinavian and Baltic countries. In Finland, for instance, nearly twice as many women are subjected to ASBs than men. The difference between women and men is partially explained by women's higher levels of exposure to sexual harassment.

“Women are subjected to sexual harassment more than men, while men show higher levels of exposure to physical violence than women.”

There are fewer details from the EWCS 2015 survey, whose outline results have only recently been published, but it confirms the 2010 findings. It states: “All adverse social behaviours are experienced by women to a much greater extent than by men, except for threats (about 60% of the people reporting having been threatened were men).”

These European-wide figures for the whole economy are confirmed for central government administration in one country by the Swedish Work Environment Survey. This survey, like the EWCS, is based on the responses of individual employees. This makes it possible to look at differences between women and men, and, unusually in Europe, it looks separately at those working in central government (Statlig).

One clear result from the Swedish figures is that women are much more likely to suffer discrimination on grounds of gender. This was

reported by 12% of women but only 3% of men. Other notable differences were the fact that, while more women than men reported that they could set their own work pace and take short breaks, they were also much more likely to say that they did not have time to talk or think of anything else but work and that work demanded their whole attention and concentration (50% of the women said this). Women seemed less likely than men to receive encouragement and information about priorities from managers, although they were less likely than men to have had clashes or conflicts with them. However, they were also more likely than men to have received encouragement from colleagues.

The most striking differences between women and men in the Swedish figures are in the area of sexual harassment and discrimination on grounds of gender. In total 9% of women in central government said that they had suffered sexual harassment in the previous 12 months, compared with 1% of men, although one noticeable aspect of this result is that all the cases of sexual harassment came from sources other than their managers or colleagues – presumably from users or other external individuals. The responses on violence or the threat of violence confirm the EWCS figures. Men were more likely to have been affected by this than women, with 25% reporting at least one incident in the previous 12 months, compared with 20% of women. However, the figures are much higher in central administration than in the private sector, with an overall average (men and women together) of 22% of employees in central administration facing violence or the threat of violence compared with 8% in the private sector.

One particular threat that women face disproportionately is domestic violence, where a partner or ex-partner is violent and abusive. This violence can sometimes extend to the workplace, and unions and employers have sought to protect employees in this position. Collective agreements in a number of countries, including Denmark, France, the Netherlands and the UK, have included provisions intended to protect employees facing violence of this sort.

Unions and employers in Spain, which has a serious problem with domestic violence, have been particularly active in this area. As a result, many gender equality plans, which are obligatory for larger employers, have provisions on domestic violence, or gender-specific violence (*violencia de género*), as it is known in Spain. The equality plan for Spanish central administration, which was formally agreed by the unions and employers in July 2015, contains domestic violence provisions and they are presented in the example.

Another interesting example, where workers in central government are helping to identify and support women facing domestic violence comes from the Social Security Agency in Sweden. Here the support is being provided to all Swedish employees, not just those working in central government, but the example shows how changing procedures can have a direct impact in this area.

Example from practice: protecting those suffering domestic violence (Spain)

The gender equality plan, which was formally agreed by unions and employers on 30 July 2015 and officially approved by the government on 20 November 2015, is the second agreed equality plan for central government. The first was agreed in 2011. It has seven specific axes for action, and one of these relates to domestic violence.

Its provisions in this area include:

- guaranteeing permanent confidentiality to victims of gender-specific violence;
- developing a procedure allowing employees to transfer within the administration;
- developing procedures aimed at preventing and dealing with gender-specific violence;
- making progress on mobility agreements across departments;
- developing additional legislation on sexual harassment in central administration;
- ensuring that equality units take account of the issue of gender-specific violence; and
- ensuring that the professional careers of the victims of gender-specific violence are not adversely affected by factors such as moving to a new location, or periods of absence or leave which are the result of gender-specific violence, as well as guaranteeing that there is no loss of pay.

Example from practice: providing support for victims of domestic violence (Sweden)

As part of the government's overall effort to improve gender equality, the Swedish Social Security Agency (*Försäkringskassan*) has introduced new procedures to identify and support women facing domestic violence.

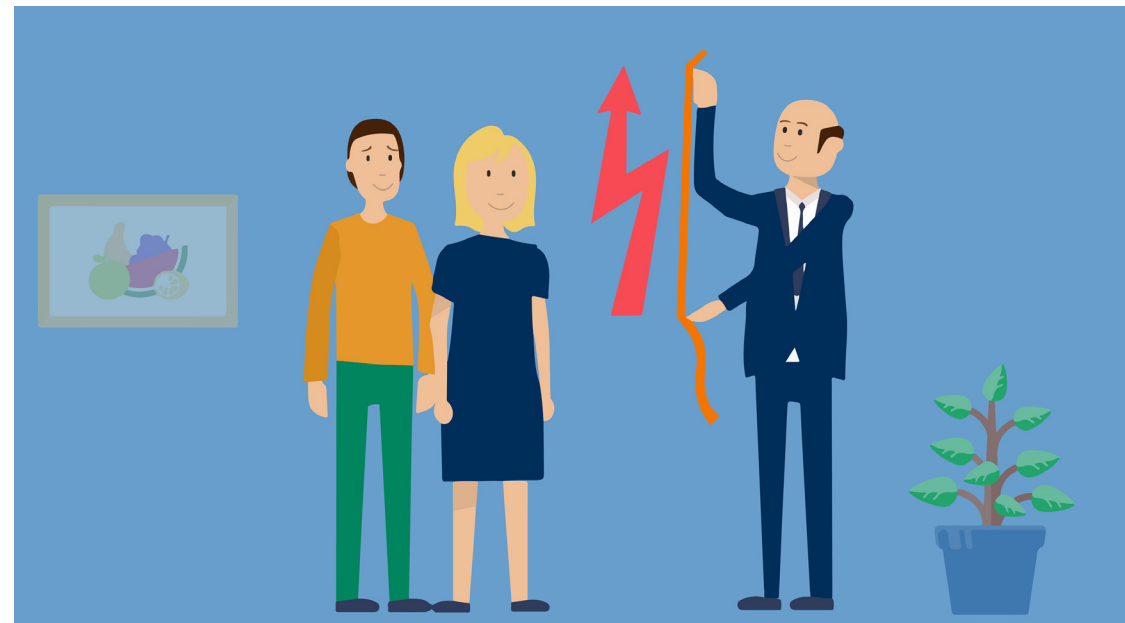
The agency has developed a method to detect signals pointing to domestic violence during interviews during sick leave. (Every year there are estimated to be around 11,000 women who take sick leave because of domestic violence.)

Agency staff are being trained how to identify symptoms of domestic violence, how to ask questions about it and how to coordinate support for women being abused. One of the key aims of the training is to make questions on domestic violence a standard part of the interview procedure, not something that depends on the interest of the individual staff member.

The Swedish Social Security Agency began with a pilot project in one office in 2014 but this is now being rolled out nationally, with the aim that all staff dealing with sick leave interviews should be trained in the new procedures by 2019.

Action: ensure that action to tackle psychosocial risks takes account of the specific concerns of women, who are more likely to face discrimination and harassment. In some cases it may be necessary to look specifically at domestic violence.

PRACTICAL ACTION



PRACTICAL ACTION

This section looks at practical ways to tackle the psychosocial risks which are present in central government. It makes use of proposals drawn up in a major report by the EU's expert agencies, Eurofound and EU-OSHA in 2014¹⁰ but it also includes real-life examples from central government in EU member states. These examples are included in the sections of the report for which they are most relevant, but they often have an impact over several areas.

THE OVERALL APPROACH

The wide variety of tasks undertaken by workers in central government means that the psychosocial risks they face are not the same everywhere. An individual working under enormous pressure on policy issues in a central ministry will be exposed to different risks to a civil servant dealing daily with potentially dissatisfied members of the public. And the risks faced by someone towards the top of the hierarchy may not be the same as the risks faced by someone at the bottom. Despite this, there are common approaches which can be adopted across central government.

The Eurofound/EU-OSHA report states that measures to prevent psychosocial risks are "best implemented on the basis of the traditional risk management framework". This means:

- assessing what the risks are;
- developing a policy to deal with them;
- implementing the policy;
- evaluating the policy to establish its success; and
- adapting the policy in the light of changes.

In dealing with psychosocial risks, it is also helpful to divide action into three levels, as the Eurofound/ EU-OSHA report and many other national guides suggest.

Primary-level interventions: these are actions taken to eliminate or reduce psychosocial risks at source within the organisation. Giving employees greater autonomy in how they arrange their work or reducing the threat of third-party violence by ensuring staff work in pairs are examples of this sort of action.

Secondary-level interventions: these are attempts to modify an individual's response to the risks and give them better strategies for coping with them. Examples here are stress-management or time-management training.

Tertiary-level interventions: these aim to help individuals who have already been damaged by exposure to psychosocial risks. Examples here are return to work programmes and employee assistance programmes.

However, the Eurofound/ EU-OSHA report emphasises that successful strategies to tackle psychosocial risks draw on all levels of intervention and do not depend on "either exclusively individual or organisational approaches".

In drawing up a policy to tackle psychosocial risks, it is also important to consider the needs of workers who may be particularly vulnerable (new workers, young and older workers, those with disabilities, pregnant workers and those whose first language is not that of the country where they work).

Action: tackle psychosocial risks in the same way you would tackle other risks in the workplace: as well as drawing up a policy, you need to implement it, see if it works and change it if it doesn't or can be improved. You should also aim to eliminate or reduce psychosocial risks. Just helping people to cope with them better or picking up the pieces afterwards is not enough.

SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

Involving employees and their representatives at all stages is likely to be crucial to any successful attempt to tackle psychosocial risks. In its 2014 report Eurofound/EU-OSHA says: "Evidence indicates that interventions have a better chance of having an impact upon psychosocial working conditions and the health and well-being of employees if they follow a structured process that involves the active involvement and participation of employees and social dialogue."

The support for this finding is provided by the EU-OSHA's ENSENER 2 survey in 2014. This found a clear link between formal employee representation and action taken to tackle psychosocial risks.

“Having an action plan to prevent work-related stress is significantly more likely among those establishments that have formal employee representation in the workplace than those without: 33% and 16%, respectively. Providing training on how to prevent psychosocial risks also seems to be linked with the presence of formal employee representation, being reported by 43% of these establishments, as opposed to 25% among those with no formal representation.”

The report on the survey went on to say that “the positive association between the adoption of measures to deal with psychosocial risks and the existence of employee representation bodies is ... particularly strong in public administration”.

Some of the reasons for this are clear. Employee representatives have a legal right to be informed and consulted (see page 16) and in many countries there is a joint health and safety committee composed of representatives of the employees and/or unions and management. Local employee representatives and unions can play an important role as “on-site experts” who can help management understand, evaluate, reduce and eliminate workplace risks. They can also provide a mechanism to ensure that policies work effectively and are implemented.

As well as the European and national-level collective agreements already referred to, some of the workplace level arrangements set out in the following pages are the result of formal agreements between management and the unions or other workplace employee representatives. This is the case, for example in the Belgian ministry of finance (page 55), the German ministry of interior (page 67) and the German ministry of labour and social affairs (page 65).

The example from France, where a new agency is being set up, provides an example of how union involvement in protecting against psychosocial risks can be built in from the start.

Example from practice: building in union involvement in risk prevention (France)

The National Agency for Public Health (L'Agence Nationale de Santé publique) in France is a new agency with around 550 employees formed in May 2016 by the merger of three previously separate institutions. In preparation for the setting up of the new agency, it was seen as vital to ensure the engagement of employees in the new structure. One of the elements of this was a monthly meeting with

the union representatives from the three existing institutions, and in September 2015 an agreement on how to approach this reorganisation (accord de méthode) was signed by the three unions representing staff in the new agency (SNAPI, CGT and UNSA).

The negotiations cover a wide field, from promotion policies to bonus levels, but a key concern is dealing with psychosocial risks linked particularly to the creation of the new body. Members of the health and safety committee are being given training in tackling psychosocial risks and monitoring units for psychosocial risks are being set up. One of the issues which the unions plan to take up is the right to disconnect.

Action: make sure that the unions and/or employee representative structure are involved in drawing up and implementing measures to tackle psychosocial risks. Their involvement is more likely to lead to a successful outcome.

ASSESSING THE RISKS

Carrying out an effective risk assessment and ensuring that it covers all types of psychosocial risk is the basic starting point in dealing with the problem. Identifying the risks is typically done through surveys, interviews or focus groups and, as the Eurofound/EU-OSHA report points out, “it is vital to include workers or their representatives in the risk assessment”.

There are a number of readily available survey tools for measuring psychosocial risks and it is clear that they are in use in central government, as the practical examples from Spain and Belgium show.

There are, however, differences between countries in who carries them out. In Spain, for example, figures from EU-OSHA's ESENER 2 survey show that 78% of risk assessments in public administration are carried out by external bodies, and the example on page 37 is in line with that.

The UK is almost at the other end of the spectrum, with 75% of risk assessments in public administration done internally. It is therefore no surprise that, while the two largest government departments DWP (employment and pensions) and HMRC (taxation) both use versions of HSE Management Standards Indicator Tool (the questionnaire-based survey tool on stress, produced by the official Health and Safety Executive) to assess psychosocial risks, they carry it out themselves.

The DWP assesses work-related stress by including the HSE questions on stress in its annual survey of all staff, while HMRC uses a customised

version, based on the six potential stressors in the HSE Management Standards Indicator Tool, which managers can use locally. Customisation – adapting an existing questionnaire to produce a version that “takes account of the culture of the organisation” – is also a key part of the Belgian approach (see page 37).

However, this is not always the case. In Italy, the Department of Civil Protection (Dipartimento della Protezione Civile) initially used a check list on psychosocial risks, produced by the Italian health and safety institution INAIL, to carry out two surveys in 2010 and 2012. However, the third survey, carried out in 2015–with the support of an external academic institution (Faculty of Medicine and Psychology at La Sapienza), was more specific to the Department, and for the future the Department plans to use its own questionnaire which can take account of its special circumstances.

Irrespective of how the questionnaire is drawn up, it needs to address potential psychosocial risks systematically – as the Spanish example does – and clearly identify areas of weakness and strength. The results of the assessment should be recorded and there should be concrete proposals on how to tackle the risks identified. In the Spanish example, the report by the external evaluators included a series of detailed recommendations for change, from improvements in communications to changes in working hours.

Employee representatives should be involved in the design of the method to assess risks – something emphasised in the Belgian case – and they should be informed of the results.

As well as the regular assessment of risk, it is important to respond to specific incidents indicating that risk is present (for example, sudden peaks of sickness absence or individual violent outbursts). It is also important that there is a mechanism for such events to be reported to management and employees should be encouraged to report them. An approach which seeks to downplay incidents of this type is not helpful.

Example from practice: risk assessment in a single workplace (Spain)

The Instituto Español de Oceanografía (IEO) – Spanish Oceanographic Institute – is part of the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness. It concentrates on research, development and innovation in maritime science and technology. As well as the headquarters in Madrid it has nine operational centres on the Spanish coasts, including one in A Coruña in Galicia.

In late 2013, an assessment of psychosocial risks in IEO A Coruña was undertaken by a specialist external organisation, ASPY Prevención, using a questionnaire, known as F-PSICO, developed by the Spanish national health and safety body INSHT (see page 20).

The questionnaire examines nine separate factors (working time, autonomy, workload, psychological demands, variety and content of work, participation/supervision, workers’ interest/compensation, performance of the role and social relations and support) to assess the level of psychosocial risks at the workplace. The responses to a series of questions are used to produce scores for each of these areas which allow the risk to be assessed as: adequate, moderate/can be improved, high and very high. The scores for each of the areas are presented both as a distribution (the proportion of employees for whom the risks fall into each of the four categories) and as an average score.

In the case of IEO in A Coruña, the assessment was preceded by a meeting with senior management and employee representatives in June 2013, where the procedure was explained. An information note was sent to all staff members immediately before the distribution of the questionnaires in October 2013, which was completed by 34 of the 63 employees – a response rate of 54%.

The results, which were also presented to employee representatives, were provided both for the centre as a whole and for six separate groups of employees, working in different operational areas.

The assessment for the centre as a whole found that the situation was satisfactory (“adequate”) for six of the nine areas evaluated. These were: working time, autonomy, work load, psychological demands, variety and content of work and performance of the role. For these areas, the proportion of employees who saw the situation as “adequate” ranged from 94% to 44% and the average scores were also in the “adequate” zone.

The situation was slightly worse in the area of social relations and support (covering interpersonal conflicts, harassment and discrimination), where only 32% or those responding saw the situation as “adequate” and 35% assessed the risk as “very high”. Overall the assessment was that the risk in the areas of social relations and support was “moderate” and improvements were needed.

In the area of participation/supervision (covering the employee’s involvement in new developments and the quality of supervision), only 18% saw the position as satisfactory, while 50% said the risks in this area were “very high”. The average risk score was “high”.

The risks were highest in the area of workers' interest/compensation (covering prospects of career development and promotion and satisfaction with pay levels). Here, 26% of those responding assessed the situation as "adequate" and 41% assessed the risks as "very high". In addition the average score for this group of risks was also "very high".

This overall assessment was complemented by the separate results for the six separate groups of employees, which highlighted the specific problems in each of the operational areas. For example, while workload was generally not a problem in the centre as a whole, it was seen as an area of high risk for those managing research on fishing. In contrast, this group of workers did not experience risks related to participation/supervision.

As well as producing the assessments for both the centre as a whole and groups of employees, the report by the external evaluators also included detailed recommendations on improving working conditions to reduce psychosocial risks.

In the area of workers' interest/compensation, where the risk was greatest – "very high" in the language of the assessment – the report proposed establishing or revising career plans and promotion possibilities, guaranteeing information transparency and equal opportunities. It called for appropriate ongoing training to be offered to each group of employees and said that the centre should introduce a personnel policy which took account of individual need and circumstances (making it easier to transfer between jobs and to achieve an acceptable work/life balance).

The report made similar recommendations in other areas. In the "high" risk area of participation/supervision, it proposed that the centre should "define, clarify and clearly communicate" the level of participation afforded to different people in the organisation. It recommended examining the communication channels within the centre to see whether they were effective and to consider whether new mechanisms were needed. It also proposed promoting employees' involvement in decision-making over issues that directly affected their work.

In the area of social relations and support, where the level of risk was assessed as "moderate" overall, but "very high" among some groups of employees, the report pointed to the need for greater contact between staff and made proposals, such as changes in work processes and working hours, which would promote such contact. It

also suggested that senior management should be given additional support to enable them be more effective in offering support to their own teams. Finally it suggested introducing measures that would reduce competition between colleagues, in areas such as pay systems, access to information and training, and promotion.

Example from practice: using an online survey to assess risks (Belgium)

In Belgium, BOSA, the central HR organisation in the federal administration, helps other parts of central government assess psychosocial risks, using an online questionnaire.

The first step in the process is the negotiation of a cooperation agreement with senior management in the ministry or department concerned, setting out the terms and deadlines for the project. The commitment of senior management is critical to ensure ongoing management support.

The next step is to set up a working group, involving those with primary responsibility for health and safety and wellbeing in the organisation concerned. This will include a senior representative from the occupational health service (preferably someone who has specialised in psychological matters), human resources managers, IT experts and representatives of the trade unions. All members of this group have the right to modify the questionnaire, and the aim is to produce a tailored version that everyone is happy with and which takes account of the culture of the organisation.

The questions are then put into an online survey tool (LimeSurvey) for completion by employees. (The questionnaire can be used with a focus group, but more frequently all employees are surveyed.) Each employee to be surveyed receives an email with a link to the questionnaire, and employees without access to the online survey get a paper version.

The results are ready within two weeks, with the software automatically producing a series of reports. The software points up correlations and draws attention to strengths and weaknesses and identifies critical areas. There are separate reports for different operational areas so that the heads of the various areas can compare their results with the general picture.

The working group decides on the appropriate action to take in the light of the survey results. At the end of the process the results

- are presented to the management board and the consultative committee of the ministry or department concerned, where the unions are represented.

Action: ensure you assess the psychosocial risks in your workplace. There are plenty of tools to do this, although you may need to adapt them to your circumstances. However, it is not enough just to do the survey. It needs to produce recommendations and they should be acted on. But keep alert as well for other indications that there may be problems.

Moving from assessment to action

After the assessment has been made, it may still prove difficult to move from the realisation that there is a problem to action to resolve it. The results of the ESENER 2 survey indicate that organisations find tackling psychosocial risks more difficult than tackling physical risks: on average establishments were between two and three times more likely to say that they lacked information or tools to deal with psychosocial risks than to say that they lacked the tools and information to deal with physical risks. For example, 29% said that they did not have the tools and information to deal with poor communication or cooperation within the organisation, and 18% said they lacked information and adequate tools to deal with difficult customers. But in relation to noise only 9% responded in this way, and for chemical or biological hazards it was just 7%.

Difficulties in tackling psychological risks seem to be a particular problem in public administration, with the proportion of establishments reporting that there is a lack of awareness among management or staff, or an unwillingness to address the issues, significantly above the average for the economy as a whole. The gap is largest in the area of lack of expertise or specialist support, which 34% of establishments in public administration see as a problem, compared with 22% in the economy as a whole. (All these percentages relate to enterprises where the risk concerned, whether physical or psychosocial, has been recognised as being present.)

These findings emphasise the importance of ensuring that action to eliminate or reduce psychosocial risks has the necessary support to take it through to a successful conclusion. This may include the involvement of external experts or appropriate training for those undertaking the process internally, so that they have the skills to take the issue forward, or a combination of these and other measures.

However this issue is tackled, it is important that the steps needed to move from the assessment of the risk to action to eliminate or reduce it are not neglected. If they are, there is a danger that attempts to tackle psychosocial risks will fail before they have properly begun

Action: ensure that the information, tools and support are available to translate the results of the risk assessment into a series of measures that can be implemented in practice. This may involve external experts or appropriate training for managers and others. However, it should not be neglected.

COMBATING SPECIFIC RISKS



COMBATING SPECIFIC RISKS

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT OR VULNERABLE CLIENTS/USERS (THIRD-PARTY VIOLENCE AND ABUSE)

Dealing with difficult or vulnerable clients/users is the most commonly reported psychosocial risk in public administration – present in more than two-thirds of establishments (68%) (see page 18). It is a very severe problem in important parts of central government, potentially leading to staff being abused or even assaulted. However, there is no reason to accept that high levels of third-party violence and abuse are inevitable, as there are practical steps that can be taken to reduce or eliminate many of the risks.

EU-OSHA has produced guidance on tackling third-party violence in the workplace which sets out a series of measures that can make a difference. In terms of organisation, it suggests:

- reducing the cash kept on the premises;
- ensuring that workers are not isolated;
- introducing a 'buddy' system, so that employees work in pairs;
- introducing/increasing security and accompanying staff;
- better information management for clients;
- increasing transparency about staff location;
- limiting access by outsiders; and
- introducing/improving management support.

In terms of the work environment, it suggests:

- video surveillance;
- adequate lighting;
- emergency exits;
- broad counters; and
- eliminating hiding areas close to entrance.

And in terms of additional support for staff, it suggests:

- teaching them how to recognise unacceptable behaviour and handle threatening situations; and

- providing them with training in de-escalating potentially threatening situations, and self-defence courses

The three practical examples, from a centre dealing with the unemployed in Germany, from a training programme for labour inspectors who have to enforce the law in Italy, and from a more general programme to protect labour inspectors in Portugal, include almost all of these practical measures. The case of the centre for the unemployed in Germany also includes one other crucial element in dealing with the issue – a clear statement from the organisation to its users that violence and abuse will not be tolerated.

The three examples show that, although it may be impossible to eliminate the threat of violence completely. It is possible to increase the safety of staff members and to make clear that they have the support of management. As the example from Germany makes clear, there is a greater degree of mutual trust among the staff." Individuals no longer look away; instead there is mutual support."

Example from practice: reducing violence and abuse in a centre dealing with the unemployed (Germany)

The Jobcenter in Hof, Bavaria, is one of Germany's 303 Jobcenters, which provide the main point of contact between the unemployed and the state. Employees in this service face violence, generally insults and threats, on a daily basis.

Following administrative changes in 2011, the health and safety situation in Hof was re-examined. Management and the employee representatives (the staff council – Personalrat) both committed themselves to a zero-tolerance attitude to violence, a position which was circulated to staff and displayed on the Jobcenter noticeboard. A questionnaire to staff on threats from clients established that the Jobcenter was at the highest level of violence on a three-point scale, widely used for assessing threat levels.

As a consequence, a number of modifications were made to the building, including:

- installing new door handles so that unauthorised individuals were not able to gain access to the staff at the reception;
- enlarging the smallest rooms and creating new escape routes for staff;
- rearranging the furniture both to make escape easier and to provide a barrier to possible assaults;

- repainting the corridors to make them lighter and apparently shorter;
- identifying first-aid points with clear signage;
- providing information notices for waiting clients (such as job vacancies);
- creating a children's play area to lessen the impact of waiting times;
- installing lockable electrical sockets in all areas open to the public; and
- providing an improved relaxation area for staff

There were also changes in working methods and support for employees:

- management ensured that at least two staff were on duty in all rooms where confrontation was possible;
- staff were grouped together in the building when the Jobcenter was open in the evening;
- employees were given individual high-pitched alarms which could also be taken to the car park;
- an emergency direct line to management was installed, allowing them to be summoned in case of problems;
- a system giving staff the possibility to use IT to call for help, which could also be used for medical emergencies, was introduced; and
- there were discussions with the local police to coordinate their role.

Other changes included:

- a constant flow of information to staff on issues linked to safety, using a variety of channels;
- clear procedures setting out how to respond to a range of commonly occurring incidents, such as threatened suicides, sit-down strikes and helpless individuals;
- strict rules on dealing with perpetrators, including instigating criminal charges and banning individuals from the premises; and
- the promotion of a team spirit through joint seminars and office outings.

A range of training was also provided covering: communication, assertiveness and intercultural competence, and some individuals were trained in psychological first-aid (with an appropriate qualification – CISM). To strengthen the support provided for staff, the threshold for the intervention of psychological first-aiders was set at a low level and a second individual responsible for health and safety (Sicherheits-

beauftragter) was appointed. Users have had it made clear to them that inappropriate behaviour in the Jobcenter will not be tolerated and that criminal charges will be brought.

The changes have led to a fall in the number of incidents, although they still happen. However, staff behaviour is marked by a greater degree of mutual trust and individuals no longer look away when incidents occur. Instead there is mutual support.

Example from practice: training labour inspectors who face violence and abuse (Italy)

Labour inspectors, in Italy, as in other countries, have frequent direct contact with employers in enforcing legal provisions relating to conditions of work and the protection of workers. Where they find that the legal provisions is not being properly applied, they can impose administrative and penal sanctions on employers, which are often considerable, so as to act as an adequate deterrent. In certain circumstances, they can also require the employer to halt unlawful activity. They have no discretion in the level of sanctions imposed and they are bound in their own behaviour by a code of conduct (Codice di comportamento degli ispettori del lavoro).

Particularly since the economic crisis, whose effects continue to be felt, employers increasingly respond to the activities of the labour inspectors with hostility. Rather than seeing the labour inspectors as playing an important role to ensure that all employers obey the law and thus ensuring that the market operates fairly, they consider that the inspectors are interfering in their business.

In these circumstances, in 2015, the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies – Directorate General for Labour Inspection – obtained central funding for a pilot training programme for 50 labour inspectors in the Lazio region be set up with the title "Responsible and productive management of conflict in the area of inspection". The unions were informed of this approach.

The training was provided by the John Cabot University of Rome in partnership with Elidea Psicologi Associati, a consulting, management and training company, and was provided to inspectors who had personal experience of incidences of difficulty, intolerance and aggression, both physical and verbal, in the exercise of their duties.

The purpose of the training was to allow those concerned to develop their negotiating, relationship and communication skills, to ac-

quire an understanding of potential risks to their own safety and to be aware of the danger signals. Beyond that they were given the tools and techniques to enable them to understand and visualise the dynamics leading to conflict and the methods of approach likely, from the very start, to avoid or reduce possible aggressive attitudes on the part of employers. These techniques start from an analysis of an individual's own way of relating to people and allow the participants to understand where they need to improve their own approach from the point of view of both efficiency and safety. There are therefore also used in cases of intimidation or violence.

This training was particularly useful as it was tied to the real problems and demands of staff undertaking inspections. Those participating also benefitted from a detailed examination of the criticisms made of the role of the inspectors which was provided by some experts from the Elidea Psicologi Associati during a dedicated meeting with a number of labour inspectors, organized at the interregional headquarters of the Labour Inspectorate in Rome.

The methodological approach adopted in the training was a key reason why it was such a success. It was made up of four sessions, each of two days, spaced two weeks apart, and it relied on a pedagogical approach based on experience. In that sense it was a real "skills laboratory", in which all the elements learned on the course were tried out in practice. Issues, such as the positive management of conflict, working in teams, effective time management, emotional control and assertive communication, benefitted particularly from this way of teaching. To aid this experience-based approach, the 50 inspectors were divided into two groups of not more than 25.

In light of the high level of success of the course, and the complete satisfaction expressed by the participants, senior management of the Directorate General for Labour Inspection decided to promote the organization of additional courses in all the Italian regions where there are local offices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies as part of the scheme "Project Value in Public Administration (Progetto Valore PA).

Example from practice: protecting labour inspectors (Portugal)

As in Italy, labour inspectors in Portugal working for the Authority for Working Conditions (Autoridade para as Condições do Trabalho – ACT) faced threats, violence and abuse in their daily work, and in 2014 a working group was set up to examine how to deal with the

problem. Since 2015, a range of measures have been implemented to deal with the issue. These have included:

- training in dealing with threatening situations, including the active participation of the public security police;
- the production of a technical document on risk prevention;
- a survey of staff to assess the extent of the problem;
- other research on the threat of violence; and
- a clear statement from senior management that preventing violence and abuse towards staff is a high priority.

The measures have all been developed in close consultation with employees.

Action: look at the practical steps that can be taken to eliminate or reduce violence and abuse, such as changes to the building or changes in working methods. Consider training to help to defuse threatening situations and make it clear to users that violence and abuse will not be tolerated. Ensure that staff are fully supported; before, during and after any incidents.

TIME PRESSURES AND WORKLOADS

Time and work-load pressure is the second most commonly found psychosocial risk in public administration (see page 7) and, with generally falling numbers of employees, this is perhaps not surprising. However, there may be ways-by which better management of the workload can reduce the pressure without cutting the amount of work produced. Better support for employees in difficult circumstances can also help reduce absence, which places further pressure on the staff who remain. In addition, the Eurofound/EU-OSHA report shows that workers are better able to deal with work pressures if they have a greater say in how the job is done. In other words, "autonomy helps workers to cope with high levels of intensity".

Other than simply reducing workloads and time pressures, there are no simply answers in this area. However, the case study from the Belgian Finance Department indicates an interesting and bold approach to managing workload.

Example from practice: allowing staff to structure their own working time in the finance ministry (Belgium)

Since the start of 2014, the around 22,000 staff in the Belgium finance ministry (SPF Finances in French, FOD Financien in Dutch) have

been able to organise their working hours in a way which better fits their workload and enables them more successfully to combine work and private life. Under this arrangement, which is open to all grades of staff, employees can choose to switch to a model of variable hours, under which it is the work delivered rather than the hours worked which is crucial.

Employees can arrive and leave anytime between 7.00 and 19.00. Their starting and leaving times are not recorded, although they must average the standard 38 hours a week over four months, and absences of more than a half day must be approved by their line manager.

Employees are given an agreed amount of work to do in advance and they are assessed on their ability to complete it, as well as on the quality of the work they do.

This system, which is an alternative to the standard flexitime system, with core hours in the middle of the day and non-core hours at the start and end, was agreed by the unions, although with some reservations. In particular, they were concerned that the maximum 50-hour working week and the 38-hour average might be exceeded.

This new scheme was initially popular, and, in its report on 2014, the Belgian finance ministry reported that 9,870 of its 23,370 employees were making use of the opportunity to work without recording their hours. However, there have subsequently been concerns that workloads have become too large, and the unions feel that the system should be evaluated, looking particularly at the difficulty of measuring acceptable workloads.

Nevertheless, management considers that these changes in working hours, together with other changes in working arrangements and other measures (see below) have helped cut absenteeism rates, which fell from 6.08% in 2014 to 5.82% in 2015, in contrast to rising rates elsewhere. The main changes in working arrangements were the ability to work from home and to work in satellite offices. In total, as the ministry's 2015 report points out, almost half of the staff (11,148) work in new ways.

The changes have also improved staff attitudes, with a 2.1 percentage point increase in the number of staff who think that employees can adapt their working time to their needs, and a 1.85 percentage point increase in the number who think that employees are actively involved in setting their own objectives.

The other initiatives that the finance ministry has introduced relate more directly to absence reduction. They include: the introduction of

10 absenteeism coaches who help organise interviews with staff returning from absence; raising managers' awareness of the issue and improving their competences in this area; and organising absenteeism interviews and a proactive contact system, so that there is an initial contact on the first day of absence.

Action: make sure that workloads are reasonable, and, where they are heavy, make sure that staff have as much freedom as possible in how to deal with them.

LACK OF COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION

Problems related to a lack of communication and cooperation are among the most frequently found psychosocial risk factors found in public administration, with more than a quarter of establishments (27%) reporting them (see page 18).

They can be the result of tensions between employees, leading to bullying or harassment, and they can also arise from the operation of the organisation itself, if goals are not clear or instructions are contradictory.

An important step in tackling the first of these problems, bullying and harassment, is for management to make it clear that it takes the issue seriously and that behaviour that belittles and humiliates colleagues, subordinates or even superiors will not be tolerated. This has been the approach followed in one of the practical examples, in the Austrian education ministry (Bundesministerium für Bildung). It adopted a new guide on the prevention of bullying in November 2016, with a foreword from the minister. As well emphasising the importance of showing respect to others and making it clear that bullying can lead to the dismissal of the perpetrator, the guide also contains advice for individual managers on their leadership style, both in relation to bullying and harassment but also more generally.

The second practical example, from the agricultural ministry in Lithuania, shows a bottom up approach, with the union becoming involved to protect an employee faced with bullying and even physical assault.

The third example in the section shows how joint sporting activities in a police force in Germany have helped to build better relationships between colleagues and reduce stress.

In the area of establishing clear objectives, so that staff know what is expected of them, many of the rules for better management set out in the European Commission's practical health and safety guidance for employers are directly relevant. These include:

- remembering that staff are people not machines;
 - do not exhaust them;
 - treat them with dignity and respect;
- listening and talking to staff;
 - be inclusive;
 - do it frequently;
 - value and develop people skills in supervisors and managers;
- fixing things promptly;
 - do not let issues fester;
 - keep people informed of progress;
- making sure the paperwork is worth having;
 - keep it current;
 - make sure it is meaningful;
- encouraging people to report bad news; and
- keep checking that what you are doing is working effectively.

Many of these recommendations are reflected in the fourth practical example in this section, the Leadership Statement from the UK Civil Service, which includes the need for clear communication. However, as senior management in the Civil Service recognises, there is still a gap between what is being aimed for and what is being achieved.

Example from practice: a guide on preventing bullying in a central government ministry (Austria)

The Austrian education ministry (Bundesministerium für Bildung) began a new project to deal with bullying (Mobbing in German) in March 2016. This resulted in a 13-page guide which was formally adopted by the minister on 22 November 2016. The guide sets out a definition of bullying and makes it clear that it is not the same as conflict between individuals. It points to the damaging effects of bullying for the organisation and sets out what can be done to prevent it. For individual managers the key points are to:

- make it clear that bullying will not be tolerated;
- set rules for resolving disputes;
- have a clear and transparent leadership style (with no preferential treatment for certain individuals);
- formulate clear goals and responsibilities;
- hold regular discussions with staff;
- use mediation, supervision and coaching to prevent existing conflicts from escalating; and

- support the victims of bullying (for example by giving them time off).

The guide points out that bullying is a disciplinary offence under the civil service code which can lead to dismissal, and it calls on all staff in the education ministry to cooperate in creating a workplace marked by respect and tolerance in which conflicts are allowed but resolved.

Example from practice: union action results in less bullying in a government ministry (Lithuania)

The central government union LVDPS became involved in a case of bullying after an employee in the Ministry of Agriculture (Lietuvos Respublikos žemės ūkio ministerija) was assaulted by his superior. Bullying and harassment are strictly forbidden under the legislation which governs the Lithuanian civil service and can lead to the dismissal of the perpetrator. However, the aim of the union, which raised the case with senior management, was not to have the individual dismissed, but rather to find a permanent solution to the problem.

The union and senior management, working together, proposed a successful solution which involved an apology by the manager involved and an undertaking that the offence would not be repeated. This had a positive impact both inside the ministry and more widely and helped the union to develop a more general anti-bullying campaign. This included a seminar on bullying at work with an external expert for employees in the Ministry of Agriculture. The high level of response to this seminar and the fact that more cases of bullying were subsequently reported led to the creation of a committee to investigate bullying.

The simple existence of this committee produced a significant improvement in the situation and the Ministry of Agriculture has become an example to other government departments of how it is possible to create a better atmosphere at work.

Example from practice: using sport to build teams and to improve cooperation (Germany)

The Federal Police (Bundespolizei), who are part of central government, have a separate role to that of the normal police in Germany, who are the responsibility of the German regions (Länder). The Federal Police are used to protect the country's borders and impor-

tant infrastructure, as well as to police demonstrations and football matches, and deal with major violent incidents.

Dortmund is one of nine inspectorates in the Federal Police Region covering North Rhine Westphalia, covering 3.5 million inhabitants and an area with a relatively high level of violence. After assessing the situation local management concluded that the causes of stress felt by employees went beyond those directly linked to the circumstances of their actions. Organisational/structural factors, such as police officers having incomplete information or being unaware of the practical constraints faced by other areas, were also stressors. At core there was a clear need to intensify communication between shifts and between the different functional areas of the Federal Police in Dortmund.

To help tackle this, the official health management structure decided to offer team-building activities to staff. Sporting activities, like rowing, are provided for staff across the whole inspectorate, and, as well as the health and fitness benefits, they allow colleagues to meet and get to know their counterparts from different operating areas.

The aim was to produce a greater level of understanding for the actions of colleagues and staff from different areas of the operation. This has fostered communication within the inspectorate and has reduced stress levels, as greater transparency means that the actions of other colleagues are more easily understood and accepted.

Example from practice: the Civil Service Leadership Statement (UK)

In February 2015, senior management in the UK Civil Service, the employees of central government launched what they described as a Leadership Statement, as a way of getting leaders within the Civil Service to improve the quality of the leadership, by, among other things, being honest about areas they were falling short in, and taking appropriate action to address them.

This specifically referred to communications stating: that manager should communicate their objectives with “clarity and enthusiasm”; that they would be “straightforward, truthful and candid in [their] communications, surfacing tensions and resolving ambiguities”; and that they would be “visible, approachable, and welcome challenge, however uncomfortable”.

Senior management in the Civil Service, which has supported the Statement with major changes in management training and assess-

ment procedures, believes it has made a difference. However, it is clear that there is still some way to go. In 2016, the head of the UK Civil Service reported that the latest annual survey of staff (the People Survey) showed that 57% thought that their manager met the standards set in the Leadership Statement. However, for senior managers this fell to just 35%. He went on to say that, “this highlights the gap between our aspirations and our current position”.

Action: ensure that all staff understand that bullying and harassment at work is unacceptable, attempt to foster good relations among colleagues and avoid staff being given unclear or contradictory instructions.

Employees’ lack of influence over work pace or process (includes job content)

A lack of control over the way that work is organised or the pace at which it must be done is an important cause of stress among employees, and around a fifth (19%) of workplaces in public administration report that employees have insufficient control (see page 18).

One way to resolve this difficulty is to involve employees in decisions about work organisation and work processes. As well as reducing or eliminating an important psychosocial risk factor, this can have the additional benefit of improving efficiency as employees, who do the work every day, often have suggestions for improvements.

The first practical example, from the Finnish tax authority, shows the work it has done to ensure that its growing number of older employees (aged over 55) continue to be fully engaged in the work of the authority. A key part of this is that they feel that they are in control of their work, and the tax authority instituted a range of measures to ensure this is the case. The second example comes from the Federal Criminal Office in Germany where varying the tasks and a voluntary approach are key methods in ensuring that employees can continue to do jobs with extremely challenging content.

Example from practice: ensuring the engagement of older staff by giving them greater control (Finland)

The Finnish Tax Administration (Taustatietoa Suomen Verohallinnosta) employs just over 5,000 people and is responsible for col-

lecting tax in Finland. As a result of increasing efficiency, the number employed has fallen by almost a fifth (19%) in the last ten years, dropping from 6,285 to 5,089. Three-quarters of the staff are women, and a high proportion of employees (38%) are now aged 55 or over. The tax administration already has an intensive programme of occupational wellbeing, including regular monitoring of key indicators by senior management, training for supervisors on handling conflicts between staff, an online course on time management and ongoing training for all involved in health and safety issues.

However, in view of the high proportion of older staff, the tax authority launched a pilot programme “Vero 55+” with the specific aim of “increasing the feeling among the over 55s that they are in control of their work”. The expectation was that this would lead to improved occupational wellbeing, a positive environment in terms of age-related issues, increased job satisfaction, longer careers and positive effects on the image of the authority as an employer.

The project was launched with two groups from different parts of the authority and began with an electronic survey covering employees’ current views of their work situation, from work-life balance to the support they received from their managers. A workshop at the start of the pilot asked how the tax administration could increase support for those aged over 55 and this provoked a range of positive responses, including making changes to training methods and changing duties. Working groups of over 55s met monthly to discuss topics such as career plans, the division of duties, information overload, and the feeling of being under pressure.

The intention is to follow the pilot, which was due to conclude at the end of 2016, with new measures in support of work management and careers for the authority’s staff aged over 55.

Example from practice: variation and a voluntary approach help deal with challenging work (Germany)

Staff in the Federal Criminal Office (Bundeskriminalamt – BKA) who work on crimes linked to child pornography and Islamic terrorism face particular psychosocial risks.

It is their job to examine and evaluate visual and audio material, which is extremely violent and horrific in nature, and which for some people can cause severe psychological damage including flashbacks and the symptoms of depression and/or burnout.

As these risks cannot be eliminated, it is part of the duty of care of the employer and the immediate managers of the employees engaged in this work to take appropriate steps to reduce their impact on those involved. In meeting this responsibility, the managers have been given specific professional support by the BKA’s Psychological Service.

The following framework has been established:

- choice of staff – the particular demands of the work are considered in the appointment process;
- variation in tasks – the immediate managers of those involved in this area are required to ensure that their work does not consist exclusively in viewing or evaluating such extremely violent and horrific audio and visual material;
- participation – a crucial principle is that work in this area is voluntary;
- period of service – there is a maximum five-year period of service for this work, which can be extended for a further five years by mutual agreement between the employee and his or her manager; and
- transfer on request – BKA employees who no longer wish to work in this area can be transferred to work in another part of the department at their request. This transfer is organised rapidly – normally immediately.

In addition, all employees in these areas receive full psychological support in their work (see section on support – page 68).

Action: ensure that staff have as much control as possible over how their work is done and organised.

JOB INSECURITY (INCLUDES ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES AS WELL AS REDUNDANCY)

Change and restructuring has been almost constant in central government in recent years so it is not surprising that a fifth of workplaces in public administration see job insecurity, in the sense of both job changes and job losses, as a psychosocial risk factor (see page 18).

It makes sense to implement change in an open and transparent way by ensuring that employees and their representatives are fully informed about what is planned and have an opportunity to influence it. It may also be possible to reduce the impact of on staff by making relatively small alterations to the plans.

The two practical examples in this section are both cases where new technology has been used to reduce the impact of major structural changes on the daily life of employees. In the case of the central government offices in France, employees were able to work for one department but be employed in the building of another around 100 km away. In the case of the German interior ministry, agreement was reached with employee representatives to allow staff to spend more time working outside the office, where their section of the ministry transferred from its previous offices in Bonn to Berlin.

Example from practice: new technology means employees don't have to transfer (France)

At the end of July 2015, the French government instructed the prefect in Bourgogne-Franche-Comté (the senior official of the central French state in the region) to trial new methods of working, including “working at a distant site” (TSD in French). There is where, for example, an employee works daily at one site (in this case Besançon) but, according to the structure of the service (organigram), he or she should actually be working at another site (in this case Dijon.) The region of Bourgogne-Franche-Comté was chosen for this experiment because of the relative proximity of the two main centres in the region, Dijon and Besançon –they are around 100 km apart. (This form of working is not the same as telework (télétravail), which involves both working at the employer’s premises and working elsewhere, normally at home. In the case of TSD, the staff member spends all of his or her working time at the employer’s premises.)

Working at a distant site (TSD) was offered as an alternative to mobility, either geographical (moving to a new location) or functional (doing a new job). TSD was not seen as a permanent answer, with individuals permanently working at a site other than the location linked to the job they were doing, but as a three-year interim solution.

At the start of the reorganisation, management drew up a definition of jobs/posts which could not be undertaken using TSD. (These included managers, those needing specific equipment that was only available in certain places and those permanently dealing with the public.) All other jobs could be undertaken using TSD. Of the 261 posts concerned, TSD working was considered possible for 207 (79%).

Management also accepted that the TSD posts could be filled not just by staff who had done that work before, but also by staff who

had done different work, but had the skills to do the TSD job being offered. In these cases, management checked that staff wanting to take up a new post had the appropriate skills.

Staff members were guaranteed that, when they took a TSD job, they would be able to stay in their current geographical location for at least three years. However, if someone in a TSD job moved, this post was not then offered to other staff under TSD terms.

Those working in TSD jobs are employed under the same conditions of service as all other staff. They are considered to be part of the structure to which their job belongs, not the structure at the site where they work. If there are meetings, those working in TSD jobs participate in them in the same way as other members of their work group. If this requires travelling, this is done in working time and the costs are covered in line with the official regulations. Management also fixes other conditions of the work, such as allocation of offices, IT and telephone arrangements. Staff working at a location which is not that of their work group have electronic access to all the material produced by their work group, and, if possible, that produced by other parts of the central administration. Videoconferencing is also made available, and staff and management have been trained in its use.

It was recognised that TSD posed management challenges, both in ensuring that staff working in TSD posts were aware of their duties and completed them appropriately, but also in ensuring that TSD staff felt that their efforts were appreciated. The overall aim was to ensure that staff in the TSD posts should be subject to the same degree of management other staff. As part of the process, management were offered training in “management at a distance”

Example from practice: giving greater flexibility to transferred staff (Germany)

The Federal Interior Ministry in Germany (Bundesministerium des Innern –BMI) employs around 1,500 staff, split between Berlin and Bonn, and in 2014 it was decided that employees in further sections of the ministry covering sport, migration and crisis management would leave Bonn to join the majority of their colleagues in new premises in Berlin.

To ease this transfer the head of the personnel department agreed with the staff council (Betriebsrat) in January 2015 that staff members in these sections, who would not be permanently moving to

Berlin or would be commuting to it, could benefit from the ministry's existing agreement on mobile working. This allows employees to work outside their offices, provided that, in most circumstances, they are connected to them using new technology. The agreement for the transferred staff stated that they only needed to spend 60% of their contractual hours (80% for section heads) in Berlin, and that time travelling to and from Berlin would count as time in Berlin.

The overall agreement on mobile working, which was updated in October 2015, states, among other things, that employees working in this way must not be disadvantaged, that mobile working must be undertaken responsibly, to maintain the division between work and private life, and that health and safety concerns must be taken into account.

Action: ensure that staff are informed and consulted about restructuring and other workplace changes in advance. Where possible carry out change in a way which has the least effect on staff's daily lives.

LONG OR IRREGULAR HOURS

A concern that employees are working long or irregular hours is found in a fifth of the workplaces in public administration (see page 19). In some cases it will be simply too many hours spent at the workplace, whether it is long shifts worked by prison officers or long hours at the desk for officials whose caseload is too great.

However, in many cases the problem is new technology potentially makes staff "permanently available". It is not just that employees are permanently connected and can be contacted by managers, colleagues and, in some cases, users for reasons linked to work outside normal contractual hours; it is also that they can work at home to complete tasks, which in the past could only have been done at work. The boundary between work and private life has been eroded.

In some areas outside central government this problem has been tackled by turning off the server sending messages and emails outside working time. This has been the approach adopted by the Germany motor manufacturer Volkswagen, where service stops half-an-hour after the end of the normal working day.

This measure has not been adopted in central government, but something similar has been agreed in the German ministry of labour. Here managers are prohibited from contacting their staff outside working hours in all but the most exceptional circumstances (see box).

This German case is likely to be soon joined by others in central government in France, as legislation passed in 2016 (loi Travail – article 55), which came into effect in January 2017, included a right to disconnect. The law states that the subject must be included in the obligatory annual negotiations on working life at company or organisation level. Where these negotiations fail to reach a successful conclusion, the employer must set out a charter defining how this new right to disconnect will be applied.

Example from practice: contact outside working hours only in exceptional circumstances (Germany)

In 2013 the German ministry of labour and social affairs (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales – BMAS), which employs around 1,000 people, agreed new rules with the staff council (Personalrat) on management contact with staff outside working hours. This states that "no-one with mobile access to a phone is obliged to use it outside their own individual working hours" and that to avoid self-exploitation the basic principle is that there should be "the least possible intrusion into leisure time". Contact can only be made where tasks cannot be postponed until the start of the next working period and managers must "take account of personal and family situations", and contact during a period of annual leave is completely ruled out. The rules state as far as possible any contact should be by telephone rather than email. In addition, no one may be disadvantaged because their phones are switched off or they do not pick up messages outside working time.

Action: make sure that staff do not work excessive hours, have proper breaks from work and are not treated as permanently contactable.

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is found less frequently in public administration than other psychosocial risks although it is still present in 4% of workplaces (see page 19), and where it does exist, the consequences for the individuals and organisations concerned can be devastating. Equally organisations which serve the public benefit if their employees reflect the society they serve and if they can draw on the talents of the whole of society and not just part of it.

The starting point in tackling discrimination is a clear policy indicating that it will not be tolerated. However, it is important to go beyond that

and implement measures that eliminate discrimination. The experience of a government department in the UK, which like all central government in the country is subject to a so-called “public sector equality duty” to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and encourage good relations between those potentially subject to discrimination and others, provides an example of how discrimination has been tackled.

Example from practice: a public duty to eliminate discrimination (United Kingdom)

Like all public bodies in the UK, the Department of Health is subject to a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity; and
- foster good relations between different parts of the community.

This duty covers, age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and motherhood, race (including ethnic or national origin, colour and nationality), religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation.

The department must publish its equality objectives every four years and report annually on its progress in meeting them. In addition it publishes detailed annual statistics of its around 1,800 staff, broken down by gender, ethnicity, disability, age, religion and belief, sexual orientation and caring responsibilities. The figures on gender, ethnicity, disability and age are also broken down by grade so that it is possible to see the proportion of each group in the more senior and more junior positions in the department. Over a period, this makes it possible to see the progress of potentially discriminated groups among the staff, and, although this alone is not enough, it provides a basis of fact for further discussion and action.

Action: make it clear that discrimination is unacceptable and monitor progress towards greater equality.

MAKING THE STRATEGY WORK

As well as tackling specific psychosocial risks organisations need to ensure that the measures and policies they have put in place are acted upon.

One challenge is to communicate to employees what is available and how they can both take advantage of the available support and contribute themselves. The case of the ministry of interior in France, which

aimed to reinforce its existing policy on tackling psychosocial risks, following the agreement covering the whole of the French public sector, signed in 2013 (see page 21), shows what can be done.

Example from practice: getting the message across in an innovative way (France)

As part of the measures to implement the collective agreement for the French public sector signed in 2013, the ministry of the interior (Ministère de l'intérieur) set up monitoring units linked to each health and safety committee (CHSCT). The monitoring unit covering the central administration wanted to produce a booklet on psychosocial risks for the staff it covered. However, after thinking about the issue, it was agreed to present the information in a different form.

Rather than a booklet, the information was printed on a square cardboard cube, which functions as desk holder for pens and pencils. The four sides of the holder have four separate messages on psychosocial risks directed at staff:

- that preventing psychosocial risks is everyone's business – it needs to be considered collectively and not limited to a purely individual approach;
- that it is better to talk about it than stay isolated – also pointing to the range of bodies and individuals who can provide support, including the occupational doctor, line management and senior management;
- that a wide range of warning signs may indicate the impact of psychosocial risks on colleagues – including changes in behaviour, anxiety and isolation; and
- that it is important to take action and not ignore the problem – three possible types of action are suggested:
 - talking to the individual;
 - suggesting that he or she talks to others, like the occupational health services, management or the employee representatives; and,
 - where the situation has become serious, passing on concerns to those able to provide support, like the occupational health services, management or the employee representatives.

The cube was distributed among 3,800 staff in the central administration and it has been very popular. The same messages have also been reproduced in poster form and through the ministry intranet

employees have access to nine separate brief practical guides covering psychosocial risks. These range from the detailed procedure to follow after an assault, through the support provided to individual employees to the composition and operation of the monitoring units. Although the unions have some criticisms of how the policies have been implemented, in particular that monitoring units have not been set up everywhere and in some cases have not been sufficiently proactive, the overall impact has been seen as positive.

Action: ensure that the measures to tackle psychosocial risks are known about and acted upon.

TRAINING TO MANAGE STRESS

Training for employees and managers forms a crucial part of the process of tackling psychosocial risks and it is an element of most of the practical examples already examined, such as learning to defuse potentially violent situations, learning new skills to be able to manage staff at a distance or techniques to resolve conflicts between staff. To be effective, as the examples show, this training should relate to day-to-day practice and not be too technical and it must also be available to all staff potentially concerned, and not exclude part-timers or agency workers. As the European Commission's practical health and safety guidance for employers points out, it is particularly important that this training is provided:

- upon recruitment;
- when employees are transferred or change jobs;
- when new technology or new equipment is introduced; and
- when the workplace risks change.

As well as this form of training there is also training that aims to modify an individual's response to the risks and give employees better strategies for coping with them, so-called secondary-level interventions (see page 31). The emphasis here is not on reducing or removing psychosocial hazards but on changing how individuals respond to them. This approach has been extensively adopted in central government in the EU as the examples from Luxembourg, Hungary and Belgium show. However, as the Eurofound/EU-OSHA report points out: "Despite evidence supporting the effectiveness of these approaches, stress management programmes are most effective when coupled with primary-level interventions to control or eliminate the psychosocial hazards." In other words, training to manage stress and pressure at work on its own is unlikely to be enough.

Example from practice: course on managing stress and emotions (Luxembourg)

The Luxembourg government offers a course open to employees in both central and local government under the title "Manage one's stress and emotions and make life at work better" (Gérer son stress, ses émotions et mieux vivre son travail). The course, which lasts two days, is intended to give participants a range of tools, tips and techniques to manage stress and emotions, and it includes elements such as learning to say "no" in a non-aggressive way, dealing with toxic individuals and learning to relax physically. The course, which has been offered for more than four years, is very popular and there are long waiting lists to join it. The course is highly interactive, with exercises which are practice-orientated and take into account the individual needs of the participants.

Example from practice: training in mindfulness for management (Belgium)

Through its *In Vivo* programme BOSA, the central HR organisation in the Belgian federal government, offers a range of courses for senior management, which include elements intended to help the deal with the stress of their jobs. In total 1,000 key individuals have taken part in the courses since they started in 2008. One of the courses offered in 2016 consisted of eight half-day sessions on Mindfulness, based on the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn, who has written extensively on using meditation. (This is only one of a range of courses linked to psychosocial risks which have been developed and are offered by the Belgian federal government.)

Example from practice: website tips on healthy eating and sport (Hungary)

The website for central government employees in Hungary (<http://mkk.org.hu/>) contains a section (Health corner) which links to advice on coping with stress. This suggests making changes to diet and doing more sport to reduce stress. There is an eight-week diet programme, which includes eating more fruit and vegetables, and suggestions for a six-week exercise programme, which includes exercises that can be done at work.

Action: ensure that a range of training and other activities is available to help employees deal with those psychosocial risks which are unavoidable.

SUPPORTING THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN DAMAGED BY PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS

Despite efforts to eliminate or reduce psychosocial risks or improve individuals' ability to cope with them, there may be cases where individuals have been negatively affected or are likely to have been and organisations need to develop mechanisms to help and support them. These are tertiary-level interventions (see page 31).

Employee assistance programmes, which help employees resolve their problems, are an example of this type of support. This is what is on offer in the Department for Work and Pensions – DWP, the largest central government department in the UK, which employs 84,920 people. It has an employee assistance programme, which offers immediate telephone support for employees 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

The German Interior Ministry (Bundesministerium des Innern) also has an extensive system of support for its staff. It has a social service consisting of a 15-strong team of social workers covering around 22,500 employees spread across 55 institutions, primarily in Berlin, Bonn and Cologne.

In 2015, they provided advice and support to 1,593 individual employees, around 7% of the workforce covered. Of these, more than a third (35%) reported work-related problems – 16% had conflicts with colleagues, 14% had problems such as overwork or work that was insufficiently challenging, and 5% said they found it difficult to reconcile work and their private life. However, the service also supported employees facing other difficulties, such as psychiatric problems and mental illness (19%), dealing with physical illness and disability (11%), and relationship and family problems (9%).

As well as giving the individuals concerned an opportunity to discuss their problems, allowing them perhaps to gain a new perspective, the ministry's social service team seeks to provide practical solutions, such as suggesting mediation to resolve workplace conflicts. In some cases the service provides links to external bodies, such as specialist medical and psychiatric services.

As well as providing advice and support to individuals who approach it, the members of the team, who are all highly qualified, also support those working with individuals facing problems, offer advice to manage-

ment, make suggestions on work organisation and develop new ways of tackling problems at work.

Other support programmes identified in the Eurofound/EU-OSHA report include return to work programmes helping employees who have been absent because of stress, and rehabilitation measures providing support for individuals who have suffered trauma. This is the case, for example, for the Federal Police in Dortmund, Germany (see example on page 51), where there is follow-up after up extreme events. Where individual officers are so affected that further treatment seems appropriate, the medical service of the Federal Police has access to external institutions, such as military hospitals or other specialist clinics.

The four practical examples set out in this section, covering a former government agency in the UK, the prison service in Romania, the Federal Office of Administration in Germany and the Federal Criminal Office, also in Germany, all provide support to individuals facing problems, although in the last example, the support is provided routinely to all staff, because of the nature of the work.

Example from practice: dealing with mental health problems (UK)

Highways England is a government company which operates, maintains and improves England's motorways and major roads and was previously an executive agency of the Department for Transport. It employs some 3,700 staff, including 1,600 work traffic officers, who work on the roads and are often the first on the scene after an accident. Since 2012, two traffic officers have been killed in the course of their work.

Realising that Highways England had particularly high levels of absence linked to poor mental health, a joint management-union working group was set up in 2013. This led to training courses for line managers to help them discuss mental health issues with staff, in a way that they had been reluctant to do previously. Following the introduction of this approach, sickness absence related to mental health fell by 18%.

Example from practice: supporting prison staff with new technology (Romania)

The Romanian prison service, which employs around 12,500 people, has identified 313 staff who need psychological assistance and/or

emotional support. Unfortunately there are only ten psychologists in the prison service, but the staff needing support are spread across all 46 prisons in Romania. To solve this problem, the service has created and developed an online service of psychological counselling (via Skype) giving all the staff who need it access to a psychologist. The programme, which began in June 2016, has required investment in equipment and additional training for the psychologists providing the support. However, it is hoped that it will benefit those who were previously left to struggle on their own.

Example from practice: agreement provides basis to support employees with addiction problems (Germany)

The Federal Office of Administration (Bundesverwaltungsamt – BVA) provides administrative services to the central government in Germany, employing 3,700 people in 14 locations. As in any organisation of this size, some members of staff have problems with addiction, which can be to alcohol, prescription medicines or drugs, as well as to forms of behaviour such as gambling.

Until a few years ago the organisation's attitude to employees with these problems was uncertain, with local managers unsure how to respond to their behaviour. In 2012, senior management decided that a new approach was needed and reached a formal agreement with the employee representatives (the staff council – Personalrat) on the treatment of staff with addiction problems.

The 8-page agreement makes clear that addiction is an illness not a sign of personal weakness, and that it can be successfully tackled. It aims to make those affected aware of the risks that their behaviour poses for their employment, including the possibility of dismissal. In addition it aims to set out clearly the duty of care that managers have and provide a common framework for their actions.

Ensuring that managers are able to recognise problems at an early stage and respond in an appropriate way is seen as crucial to the success of the agreement, and under its terms they are required to take part in training courses on the issue. These courses are run by the BVA's own social service, which includes a specially appointed addiction support worker, together with an external expert.

The courses are practice-based, including role-playing using typical work experiences. A key aim is that local managers should feel supported in their actions but also should be able to recognise the

point at which the issue must be passed on to the HR department or the BVA's social service.

Since 2012 more than 110 managers have participated in the training and the feedback has been positive. Other individuals have also taken part in the training on a voluntary basis.

The agreement also includes a five-stage procedure for those with addiction problems, which starts with confidential discussion with the local manager and can end, if the situation does not improve with dismissal. Central to the process, as the agreement states is that the individual is given "a concrete offer of help".

Since the agreement was signed, 112 members of staff have received external help to overcome their addiction, and only three cases resulted in dismissal.

Example from practice: support for staff facing extreme demands (Germany)

Staff in the Federal Criminal Office (Bundeskriminalamt – BKA) who work on crimes linked to child pornography and Islamic terrorism (see page 62) need particularly high levels of support to help them deal with the potentially negative consequences of such demanding work.

To provide this support all employees in this area are required to take part in six-monthly monitoring interviews. The employees can choose freely between an internal monitor (the BKA's own Psychological Service) and an external monitor (working outside the BKA), although the BKA's Psychological Service continues to be accessible to all employees as part of the employer's overall duty of care. These discussions primarily cover the problematic or demanding aspects of the work that the employee has experienced or has to prepare for. The monitors undertake a psychological clinical diagnosis, including the use of an academically proven clinical questionnaire. The contents of these discussions are subject to a legal duty of confidentiality. However, in extreme cases where the employee poses a threat to him or herself or to others, or where this has already occurred, the monitor has a duty to take appropriate measures to avoid such an outcome.

Action: recognise that those who have been affected by psychosocial hazards need support and establish ways in which it can be provided.

**REFERENCES
AND SOURCES
OF FURTHER
INFORMATION**

NOTES

REFERENCES AND SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

EUROPEAN MATERIAL

EU-OSHA, Psychosocial risks and stress at work

This website includes good practice resources on this topic.

<https://osha.europa.eu/en/themes/psychosocial-risks-and-stress>

EU-OSHA, A practical e-Guide to managing psychosocial risks

This multi-lingual e-guide helps employers and people working in small and micro enterprises to deal with psychosocial risks. It has 30 national versions, each including references to the national legislation and information on national resources and practical tools.

<http://hw2014.healthy-workplaces.eu/en/tools-and-resources/a-guide-to-psychosocial-risks>

EU-OSHA, Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards 2014–2015: Managing stress and psychosocial risks at work, 2015

This multi-lingual publication provides examples of good practice in 23 separate workplaces in 16 countries.

<https://osha.europa.eu/en/tools-and-publications/publications/reports/healthy-workplaces-good-practice-awards-2014-2015/view>

EU-OSHA, Second European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER-2) - Overview Report: Managing Safety and Health at Work, 2016

This report summarises the result of the survey, looking particularly at psychosocial risks and including cross-nationally comparable information.

<https://osha.europa.eu/en/tools-and-publications/publications/second-european-survey-enterprises-new-and-emerging-risks-esener/view>

EU-OSHA, Calculating the costs of work-related stress and psychosocial risks – A literature review, 2014

This study examines the national and international material on the costs of work related stress and psychosocial risks, available in several languages.

https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/literature_reviews/calculating-the-cost-of-work-related-stress-and-psychosocial-risks/view

EU-OSHA and Eurofound, Psychosocial risks in Europe: prevalence and strategies for prevention, 2014

This detailed report presents comparative information on the prevalence of psychosocial risks among workers and their links with ill-health. It also provides examples of workplace action to tackle psychosocial risks

<https://osha.europa.eu/en/tools-and-publications/publications/reports/psychosocial-risks-eu-prevalence-strategies-prevention/view>

Eurofound, Sixth European Working Conditions Survey – Overview report, 2016

A survey of work in Europe today based on face-to-face interviews with 43,850 workers in 35 European countries.

<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2016/working-conditions/sixth-european-working-conditions-survey-overview-report>

Eurofound, Work-related stress, 2010

This comparative study, based on national reports, looks at how work-related stress is dealt with at national level.

https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_files/docs/ewco/tn1004059s/tn1004059s.pdf

European Commission, Promoting mental health in the workplace: Guidance to implementing a comprehensive approach

It introduces and provides guidance for employers, employees and other stakeholders on the management of mental health issues in the workplace.

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=716&langId=en>

European Commission, Health and Safety at Work is Everybody's Business: Practical guidance for employers, 2017

This is a practical guide for employers, providing an overview of

the main obligations in health and safety and the existing tools and resources to help meet those obligations.

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16876&langId=en>

European Commission, The European Pact for Mental Health and Wellbeing, 2008

The conclusions of a high-level conference on mental health and well-being.

https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/mental_health/docs/mhpact_en.pdf

European Commission, Study on the implementation of the autonomous framework agreement on harassment and violence at work: Final report, by Emanuela Carta, Helen Frenzel, Inès Maillart, Tina Weber, Nora Wukovits, July 2015

This study provides an assessment of the implementation of the agreement at national level, as well as looking at the extent of violence and harassment across Europe

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7922&type=2&furtherPubs=yes>

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7922&type=2&furtherPubs=yes>

European Commission, Report on the implementation of the European social partners' Framework Agreement on Work-related Stress SEC(2011) 241 final, 2011

This report sets out how the agreement has been implemented at national level.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/registre/docs_autres_institutions/commission_europeenne/sec/2011/0241/COM_SEC%282011%290241_EN.pdf

NATIONAL MATERIAL

These documents and websites set out various national approaches to dealing with psychosocial risks and work-related stress.

Belgium

Risques psychosociaux au travail

<http://www.emploi.belgique.be/defaultTab.aspx?id=564>

France

Mesurer les facteurs psychosociaux de risque au travail pour les maîtriser: Rapport du Collège d'expertise sur le suivi des risques psychosociaux au travail, faisant suite à la demande du Ministre du travail, de l'emploi et de la santé, 2011

http://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport_SRPST_definitif_rectifie_11_05_10.pdf

INRS, Risques psychosociaux : Sommaire du dossier

<http://www.inrs.fr/risques/psychosociaux/facteurs-risques.html>

Germany

baua, Psychische Belastung und Beanspruchung im Berufsleben. Erkennen – Gestalten, Joiko, K.; Schmauder, M.; Wolff, G, 2010

https://www.baua.de/DE/Angebote/Publikationen/Praxis/A45.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

GDA, Leitlinie Beratung und Überwachung bei psychischer Belastung am Arbeitsplatz, 2015

http://www.gda-portal.de/de/pdf/Leitlinie-Psych-Belastung.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

Italy

INAIL, Valutazione e gestione del rischio da stress lavoro-correlato, 2011

<https://www.inail.it/cs/internet/docs/alg-valutazione-gestione-rischio-stress-lavoro-correlato-ita.pdf>

Poland

PIP, Czym jest stres?

<https://www.pip.gov.pl/pl/bhp/stres-w-pracy/6421,czym-jest-stres-.html>

Spain

INSHT, Algunas orientaciones para evaluar los factores de riesgo psicosocial, 2015

<http://www.insht.es/InshtWeb/Contenidos/Documentacion/FICHAS%20DE%20PUBLICACIONES/EN%20CATALOGO/PSICOSOCIOLOGIA/Maqueta%2018%204%20Angel%20lara.pdf>

its, Guía de actuaciones de la Inspección de Trabajo y Seguridad Social sobre Riesgos Psicosociales, 2012

http://www.laboral-social.com/files-laboral/Guia_psicosociales.pdf

UK

HSE, Managing the causes of work-related stress, 2007

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg218.pdf>

NOTES

- ¹ The social dialogue committee for central government administrations (SDC CGA) has representation from all 28 member states on the employees' side (Trade Unions' National and European administration Delegation – TUNED) through the European Public Service Union (EPSU) and the European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CESI), while on the employers' side (European Public Administration Employers – EUPAE) there are 11 full members, Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom, and six observers, Austria, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Malta and Portugal. (EPSU is responsible for the TUNED secretariat nsalson@epsu.org; for EUPAE the project was coordinated by DGAFP simon.loreal@finances.gouv.fr)
- ² These are just some of the potential consequences for the individuals affected. A report for EU-OSHA (the EU's health and safety agency) stated: "Prolonged exposure to psychosocial hazards has been shown to be associated with a wide range of mental and physical health outcomes, including anxiety, depression, suicide attempts, sleep problems, back pain, chronic fatigue, digestive problems, autoimmune disease, poor immune function, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and peptic ulcers." Calculating the costs of work-related stress and psychosocial risks – A literature review, EU-OSHA 2014
- ³ Unfortunately the standard industry breakdown used by most EU and national statistics does not identify central government separately and figures for public administration, defence and compulsory social security are the closest proxy.
- ⁴ Coutrot, T., Davie, E., Les conditions de travail des salariés dans le secteur privé et la fonction publique, Dares Analyses n°102, décembre 2014 and Davie, E., Les risques psychosociaux dans la fonction publique, Rapport annuel sur l'état de la fonction publique, Faits et chiffres, édition 2014, DGAFP, décembre 2014.
- ⁵ Gesetz zur besseren Vereinbarkeit von Familie, Pflege und Beruf für Beamtinnen und Beamte des Bundes und Soldatinnen und Soldaten sowie zur Änderung weiterer dienstrechtlicher Vorschriften (19 October 2016)
- ⁶ Civil Service statistics: 2016
- ⁷ Rapport annuel sur l'état de la fonction publique, 2016
- ⁸ DGAEP – síntese estatística do emprego público 4 trimestre 2016, 2017
- ⁹ Personal al servicio del Sector Público Estatal 2015, 2016
- ¹⁰ Psychosocial risks in Europe: Prevalence and strategies for prevention – A joint report from the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) 2014

More information

www.epsu.org

www.cesi.org

www.fonction-publique.gouv.fr