

Edito

24, 25 and 26 November 2010 will go down on record as special days of celebration of the work performed by the different international, European and Belgian occupational welfare networks. During these three days, workshops and conferences were organised in the European Parliament and the Square conference centre in Brussels by the European Network for Workplace Health promotion, the European Network for Education and Training in Occupational Safety and Health, the European Network of Safety and Health Professional Organisations, the Partnership for European Research on Occupational Safety and Health, the European Association of National Productivity Centers, the International Safety and Health Construction Co-ordinators Organisation, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU OSHA) and VCA-Besacc.

The conferences addressed numerous topical issues, including economic stimuli for investment in prevention; the costs and benefits of preventive measures; third-party violence in education; promoting healthy working by means of more safety coordination; the uniform qualification for safety advisers in Europe; working with subcontractors and safety and health; and the relationship between research and practical experience. Some 150 participants from all over Europe attended the conferences and internal network meetings. Between sessions, they were glad to take the opportunity to swap experiences with other OSH professionals, as can be seen from the photo report on the inside pages of this edition of *PreventInfo*.

On day three, at the end of the closing colloquium, guest of honour and ESA astronaut Frank De Winne gave a well-received account of working conditions in his old workplace: the ISS or international space station. He described how astronauts cope with living and working in enclosed spaces and the difficulty of preserving work/life balance so far from home. You can read the entire account of his view of well-being at work (in space) in our magazine.

The Prevent team wishes you much enjoyment in reading and looking through this newsletter and above all a productive and healthy 2011!



Marc De Greef, Managing Director

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RESEARCH

New assignments for the Topic Center Occupational Safety and Health

From January 2011 onwards Prevent is again participating in several research projects of EU OSHA's Topic Center for Occupational Safety and Health.

The **State-of-the-art-review on OSH Peer Review Processes** will involve a literature study of the peer review approaches found in Europe in connection with safety- and health-related topics among other areas. In certain sectors such as the nuclear sector and petrochemicals, companies are in the habit of exchanging experiences with one another. Thus a number of experts from different plants come together to discuss a specific problem, formulate good practices with regard to it, visit one another's workplaces and so on. The aim of the project is to find out whether such practices are widespread, whether they also exist in other sectors, and whether genuine methodologies have already been developed for them.

Prevent is the task leader for the **State-of-the-art-review of training requirements for safety professionals**. This is a survey of the national implementation of the Framework Directive on Safety and Health at Work in the 27 EU Member States and the EFTA states. The aim is to draw up a practical overview of the requirements for internal and external OSH professionals with respect to training. Among other things, the research will examine:

- *training requirements in the EU Member States and EFTA states for OSH professionals (i.e. the implementation of Art. 7 of Paragraph 5 of the Framework Directive)
- *the institutes that provide this training in the different countries
- *the competencies required in order to perform a risk assessment in the different countries.

The **Literature review on reasons, arguments and motivation for employers and workers to carry out workplace health promotion** will identify the main reasons for involvement in initiatives in this area.

Finally, in the **State-of-the-art-review on occupational safety and health in the supply chain** Prevent will among other things consider how welfare at work can be promoted throughout the chain of subcontractors, and will give an overview of recent developments in the EU Member States with regard to occupational welfare in purchasing and recognition schemes.

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PUBLICATIONS

Ergonomics on Beswic

Since August 2010, the website of the Belgian Safe Work Information Center (BeSWIC), the Belgian section of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, has included a comprehensive section on ergonomics.

The ergonomics pages contain a wealth of information about subjects such as ergonomics in the workplace, screen working and ergonomics in the transport and distribution sector. The content has been devised by the ergonomists at Prevent. As well as the theoretical background, you will also find plenty of practical tips on how to improve ergonomics on the workfloor. What's more, each chapter also contains links to relevant documents.

For more information: www.beswic.be/nl/topics/ergonomie.

QUALITY

Prevent obtains the ESF quality label

Prevent has gained the ESF (European Social Fund) quality label following a successful quality audit. The label is awarded to ESF promoters which ensure high-quality, sustainable business management. Prevent also holds the ISO 9001 quality label.

The ESF Agency developed its own quality model which is based on the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) model, with nine areas of focus and five quality levels. The levels describe the developmental phases through which an organisation passes on the way to achieving excellence. The ESF quality label represents a guarantee of quality of work and of a future-oriented quality strategy. The label is valid for three years, after which a follow-up audit is conducted.

Thanks to the support of ESF Flanders, Prevent is currently leading the project DM@Work. This is working out the details of the Disability Management methodology so that businesses, while taking account of their own specific characteristics, can set up a systematic approach to the retention and reintegration of employees with long-term health problems. DM@Work is a follow-on project to the Equal project Intro_DM "Introduction to Disability Management", which developed the Disability Management methodology.

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TRAINING

Professional training programme for Health & Safety managers

At the end of November 2010, the first module of the four-part Euroshec training course started in Bruges. With this programme Prevent, with the support of the multinational Georgia Pacific, wishes to increase the knowledge and skills of health and safety managers with regard to the setting up, implementation, promotion and evaluation of a health and safety policy at company level. Those who attend the course will gain the European OSH Excellence Certificate.

The second module, which runs from 14 to 16 March 2011, will be held in the German capital, Berlin, and the third will take place in Rome. The course will therefore primarily attract participants from companies which are internationally active. In Bruges, there were 17 participants, from the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Spain, Greece, the United States, the Netherlands and Belgium. At the end of the first day of training, they had the chance to taste Belgian beer at the Halve Maan brewery.

The training course originated in response to the perception that safety and health managers are doing their job in ever-changing and increasingly demanding conditions. The financial crisis, the ever more exacting requirements of customers and competitive pressure have prompted a continuing search for the optimal balance between raising quality and reducing costs in businesses. In these circumstances, health and safety managers are trying to focus company's attention on health and safety at work.

In order to be truly successful, they will need to establish the connection between their core business – occupational health and safety – and the company's core business and goals. When the welfare policy is embedded within the corporate policy, the company will achieve better and more sustainable results in the area of occupational welfare, and health and safety will also remain on the agenda in the event of organisational changes, mergers, restructuring programmes, rapid technology change and so on.

This approach requires structural, cultural and international aspects within the organisation and workplace to be open for discussion. How is welfare policy formally organised? Who is responsible for what, and where does power come into the equation? Can the welfare policy be integrated more effectively into existing management programmes and systems? How do you avoid discrepancies between formal rules and

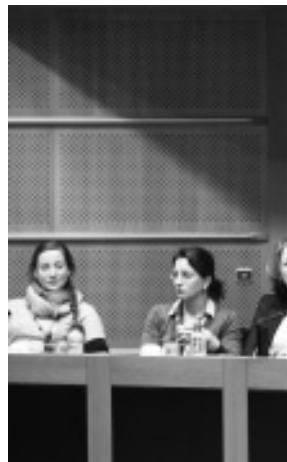


procedures and local customs, adaptations and improvisation? What informal aspects play a role? What are the underlying convictions on the part of employees? What kind of leadership is wanted most? How can you initiate and stimulate learning processes within the company? How do you set up efficient communication to do with welfare at work? How do you get it on the management's agenda?

In three modules running from November 2010 to autumn 2011, the participants will learn in more depth about the topics of safety culture, the integration of welfare in business policy and communication. In the final module, during spring 2012, they will present a final dissertation. It is still possible to join the programme: participation in just one module is possible.

For more information contact training@prevent-academy.be.

Occupational Safety and Health Networking Days

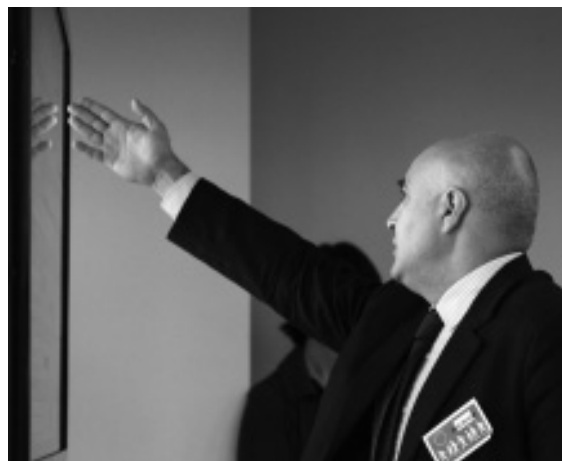




ENSHPO
 European Network of Safety and Health Professional Organizations
 The voice for OSH professionals in Europe

ENSHPO's objectives are to:

- bring together European OSH professional organizations
- influence key stakeholders at national and European level
- develop a pan-European certification standard
- promote OSH in education and training
- establish a Professional Code of Conduct
- enable access of OSH Good Practice



PUBLICATIONS

EU-OSHA reports

The research conducted by Prevent along with other European prevention institutes for the EU OSHA Topic Center for Occupational Safety and Health usually generates overview reports, recommendations, surveys of good practices, and so on. The following are brief summaries of reports that have been published recently.

Safety and health at work for maintenance workers

The report "Maintenance work and safety and health at work – a statistical picture" gives a comprehensive overview of the dangers associated with maintenance work and the health risks to which maintenance workers in the European Member States are exposed. Thus the report cites a Spanish survey of working conditions which shows that maintenance workers are more exposed to noise, vibrations and various kinds of radiation than the rest of the working population. Among other things, they face heat in the summer (44% compared with 19% in other occupations), cold in the winter (44% compared with 17%) and a damp atmosphere (25% compared with 13%), and are more exposed to hazardous substances, vapours and smoke. Again, Eurostat data show that approximately 20% of all accidents that occurred in Belgium in 2005-2006 were connected with maintenance work.

New case studies on the prevention of work-related musculo-skeletal conditions in agriculture

Agriculture is the sector in which musculo-skeletal conditions and exposure to the risk of them are most common. The majority of agricultural workers report exposure to repetitive hand and arm movements, tiring or painful physical postures or the carrying or moving of heavy loads. The percentages of cases of backache and muscular pain are twice as high as average in this sector. This report collects good practices, providing practical details about ways of avoiding musculo-skeletal conditions in agriculture.

Economic stimuli improve safety and health at work

This report about economic stimuli shows that governments can reduce work accidents and occupational diseases in a cost-effective manner by means of economic stimuli that encourage businesses to invest in risk prevention.

Many EU Member States already offer various financial rewards to businesses that invest in their employees' safety. For example, these include lower insurance premiums, government subsidies and supplements, but also tax breaks and preferential conditions for bank loans for the businesses with the best record in this area.

For example, when a stimulus scheme was introduced in the German slaughterhouse sector in 2002, the number of reportable accidents fell by 28% during the subsequent six years, compared with a fall of 16% in the sector as a whole. In total, this means that around 1,000 fewer accidents took place every year in businesses that participated in the stimulus scheme.

Occupational health and safety for the self-employed

The number of self-employed workers is fairly stable in Europe, but the proportion of them in the service and construction sectors has risen. The high numbers of self-employed in risk sectors such as agriculture and construction makes the accurate monitoring of data relating to welfare and safety at work even more important. This report describes the current monitoring systems and lays stress on recent initiatives intended to improve the monitoring of data relating to welfare at work for the self-employed.

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Prevent is a multidisciplinary institute centred on the prevention of occupational risks through the promotion of the quality of working conditions and the improvement of work organisation. The institute provides support, advice and information for businesses and organisations, such as occupational accident insurers, external prevention and protection services, sectoral organisations, the social partners, the government and other societal actors.

Prevent is dedicated to the development, collection and mobilisation of occupational safety and health knowledge. To this end, the institute carries out research and studies centred on practical experience. In addition, it gathers information and documentation from all over the world. Lastly, the institute contributes actively to the development of regional, national, and international networks in order to exchange information and experience.

The institute transfers its accumulated knowledge using various means such as consulting, disseminating information and documentation, writing and editing publications, developing training programs and carrying out information and awareness campaigns. The institute gives particular attention to the issue of occupational safety and health in SMEs.

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