



PROMOTING HEALTH AND SAFETY AT THE WORKPLACE

Health and safety at work concerns everyone. Businesses across the European Union, including which small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), are realising that placing health and safety at the heart of their workplace not only ensures the avoidance of injuries and production loss but also helps employers and employees to achieve better results for the business itself, as well as the employee and the customer.

Improving health and safety at work has been one of the goals of the European Union ever since its inception 50 years ago. Since then, accident rates have dropped, making workplaces healthier and safer for the employee and even the employer.

Following the 2004 and the 2007 enlargement, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work launched the 'Healthy Workplace Initiative' (HWI) campaign in the last 12 new Member States namely Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania as well as in Croatia and Turkey.

This initiative helps businesses throughout Europe implement more effective health and safety measures. It aims at providing both employers and employees with the necessary tools and information on how to make their workplace healthier and safer and hence more productive.

The HWI focuses on the need to assess the working environment risks by involving employees in preventive

activities, disseminating information to employers and employees on topical matters in the field of occupational health and safety, as well as explaining the importance of these matters.

Unfortunately, there are still a number of employers and employees to whom this means nothing, as a result of which not enough attention is being paid to protection issues and that is why avoidable accidents in the workplace are still taking place.

Through this initiative, the European Agency for Safety and Health, with the assistance of Euro Info Centres, is trying to make employers aware that a safe working environment is good for business. A healthier and safer working environment is essential not only for the health of workers, but also for the health of the firms that employ them. Successful and sustainable companies will lead to economies that thrive in the long term.

The initiative will run until November 2007, bringing together managers and staff, businessmen and employees with the intention of enhancing occupational health and safety and increasing awareness.

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