STOP THE PANDEMIC

EU OSHA and Psychosocial risks

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Skopje, 28 October 2022

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Safety and health at work is everyone's concern. It's good for you. It's good for business.

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU OSHA)

- The European Union **information** agency for occupational safety and health
- Decentalised agency with tripartite Management Board
- Network Agency with a focal point in every Member State and IPA beneficiaries
- *We work to make European workplaces safer, healthier and more productive — for the benefit of businesses, employees and governments.*
- *We promote a culture of risk prevention to improve working conditions in Europe.*

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EU OSHA: What we do, don't do, with what, and for whom

What and with what?

✓ Collect, analyse and disseminate Information
- ~~Make legislation~~
- ~~Inspect workplaces~~
- ~~Enforce the law~~

- Budget: EUR ~15 mio.
  - EUR ~ 8 mio. operational
- Staff: ~64 staff (BIO, BXL)

For whom?

- Policy-makers
  - Law and policy makers
- Researchers
  - Researchers in all related fields
- Workplace actors
  - Workers, managers, duty-holders, inspectors, practitioners
- Other actors
  - Teachers, architects, health professionals

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Corporate strategy and work programme

EU strategic positions on OSH

Corporate strategy (2018 – 2023)

Programming document (3 year, rolling)

- 6 priority areas in Corporate strategy
  - Anticipating change (circular economy)
  - Facts and figures (WES, ESENER, Digitalisation, Supporting Compliance, etc.)
  - Tools for the OSH management (OiRA)
  - Raising awareness of OSH (HWC)
  - Networking knowledge, for policy-makers (OSHWiki, e-tools, etc.)
  - Networking: FOPs, CPP/EEN

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EU OSH Strategic Framework 2021-2027

- 3 key objectives:

1. Anticipating and managing change driven by green, digital, and demographic transition

2. Improving prevention of workplace accidents and ill-health

3. Increasing preparedness for any potential future health crisis.

Focal points and their national networks

- One focal point per Member State
- Created by founding regulation
- Gatekeepers to the national level
- Operational not strategic
- Focal point implements annual task list
  - Mandatory and portfolio tasks

- Focal points and national networks give Agency massive reach
- Focal point chosen by Member State
  - Typically Institute, LI, or Ministry
- National network MUST contain social partners
  - According to national practice
- Composition of national network decided by Member State
  - Which actors and how many to include

EU OSHA OSH knowledge transfer to IPA Beneficiaries

- **EU OSHA**

IPA Actions

IPA FOPs
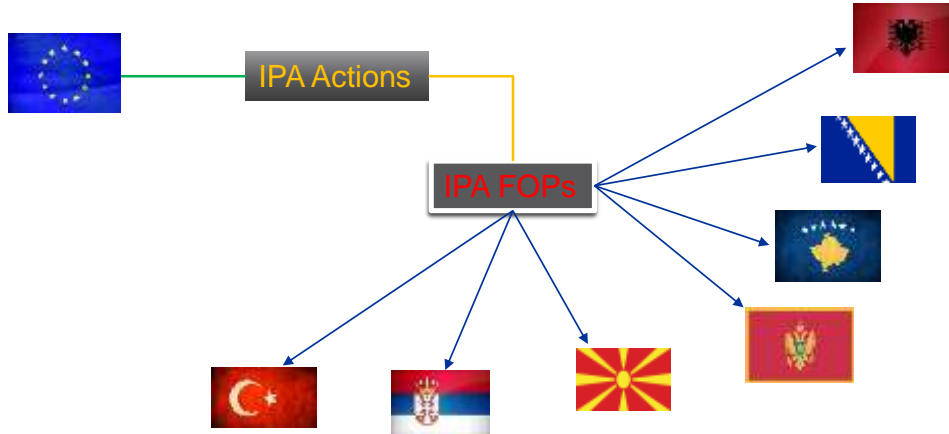
Contribution Agreement – IPA/2019/412-828 (2020-2022)

➤ **Target Groups**:
1. OSH stakeholders (central authorities = ministries and LIs);
2. Social partners (organisations of employers and workers);
3. NGOs and Research community

Awareness raising (e.g. HWC)   Knowledge sharing   Capacity building

Good safety and health practice to *PREVENT* and *REDUCE RISK* of ill health and injury to workers

Workers   Managers of enterprises   Intermediaries
(SMEs)   (e.g. sector organisations, worker and employers organisations)
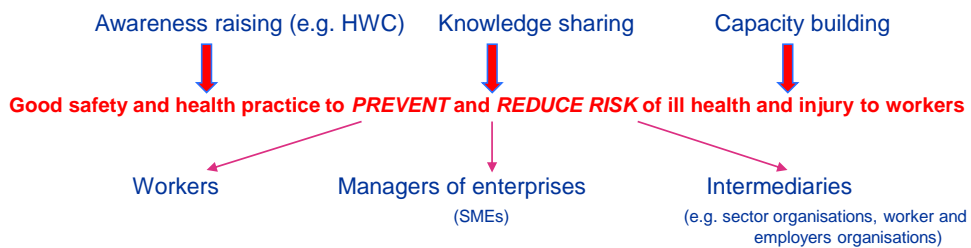
The IPA project

- **Overall objective**: preparatory measures in view of their future participation in EU Agency activities upon EU accession (or earlier)
  - ➤The example of Croatia (from IPA to EU)
  - • Awareness raising activities
  - • Technical support capacities
- **Beneficiaries**: IPA 7 (ALB, BiH, KOS*, MTN, NMK, SR, TRK)
- **Actions**: INTEGRATION INTO EU OSHA NETWORK, AND ACTIVITIES
  1. FOPs network in place;
  2. IPAs participation at FOP meetings in Bilbao;
  3. IPAs participation at FOPs at capacity building events in EUMSs;
  4. Support of training and awareness raising events in IPAs;
  5. Translation of EU OSH documents and publications to IPA languages;
  6. Development of OiRA and RAs tools for SMEs.

The designation Kosovo is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on its declaration of independence

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Mental health at work in Europe after COVID-19 and recent EU-OSHA projects on work-related psychosocial risks

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EU-OSHA Flash Eurobarometer 2022: OSH in post-pandemic workplaces

% of workers reporting exposure to psychosocial risk factors:
- **46% - Severe time pressure or overload of work**
- **26% - Poor communication or cooperation**
- **18% - Lack of autonomy or lack of influence over the pace of work**
- **16% - Violence or verbal abuse from third parties**
- **7%** - **Harassment or bullying at work**

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Flash barometer 2022 – disclosing mental health problems

% of workers agreeing that...

50%
Disclosing a mental health condition would have a negative impact on my career

50%
The COVID-19 pandemic has made it easier to talk about stress and mental health at work

59%
I would feel comfortable speaking to my manager or supervisor about my mental health

44%
My work stress has increased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

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Stress-related health problems – Flash Eurobarometer 2022

% of workers experiencing health problems caused or made worse by work

Overall fatigue — **37**%	Stress, depression or anxiety — **27**%
Headaches, eyestrain — **34**%	Infectious diseases (including COVID-19) — **21**%
Bone, joint or muscle problems or pain — **30**%	

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Flash Euro barometer 2022 – exposure to 'digitalisation' risk factors

% of workers reporting negative influence of digital technologies:

- **52%** - Determine the speed or pace of work
- **33%** - Workload increase
- **44%** - Working alone
- **37%** - Surveillance increased
- **19%** - Autonomy reduced

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Digitalisation and psychosocial risk factors

- **Collaboration vs machine/system driven**
  - More varied tasks – overload?
  - More mundane tasks –underload?
- **Teleworking – benefits and challenges**
- **Platform work – control and flexibility for who?**
- **Poor human-machine interaction/ poor software**
- **Lack of social support - isolation**
- **Monitoring, control and evaluation**
  - Algorithmic management, continuous evaluation
- **Blurring of work and life**
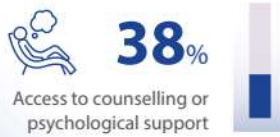
Digitalisation and psychosocial risk factors

- **Prolonged sitting – links to depression??**
- **Gender bias and discrimination**
- **Fear for the future – role changes, job loss**
- **'Traditional' risks – e.g. poor communication, change management**
- **Online/cyberbullying**
  - from the public or internal
- **Gamification of work**
- **Increased importance of change management**

What are employers doing in practice
Flash Eurobarometer 2022: OSH in post-pandemic workplaces

Workplace initiatives to address stress at work
% of workers replying that this initiative is available at their workplace

42% Information and training on well-being and coping with stress

59% Awareness raising or other activities to provide information on safety and health

38% Access to counselling or psychological support

43% Consultation of workers about stressful aspects of work

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Economic impact

- **United Kingdom:** 'work-related stress, depression and anxiety' accounts for **37%** of work-related ill health cases and **45%** of days lost in 2015/16 (HSE, 2017)

- **Spain:** between **11% and 27%** of mental disorders can be attributed to working conditions. Direct health cost estimated at €150-€372 million (UGT, 2013)

- **Germany:** job strain costs **€29 billion** annually; reduced performance estimated to cost twice that of absence (Bodeker & Friedrichs, 2011)

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ESENER-3: Risk factors present in the establishment
(% establishments, EU-28)

Having to deal with difficult customers,…
Repetitive hand or arm movements
Risk of accidents with machines or hand tools
Lifting or moving people or heavy loads
Risk of accidents with vehicles in the course…
Time pressure
Chemical or biological substances
Increased risk of slips, trips and falls
Heat, cold or draught
Long or irregular working hours
Loud noise
Poor communication or cooperation within the…
* Fear of job loss

0   20   40   60   80   100

■ 2019

Base: all establishments in the EU-28.

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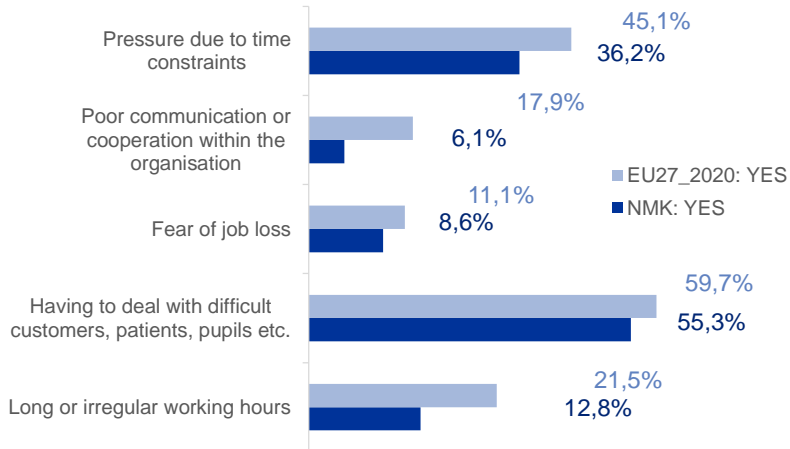for Safety and Health
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ESENER-3: Psychological risk factors present in the establishment
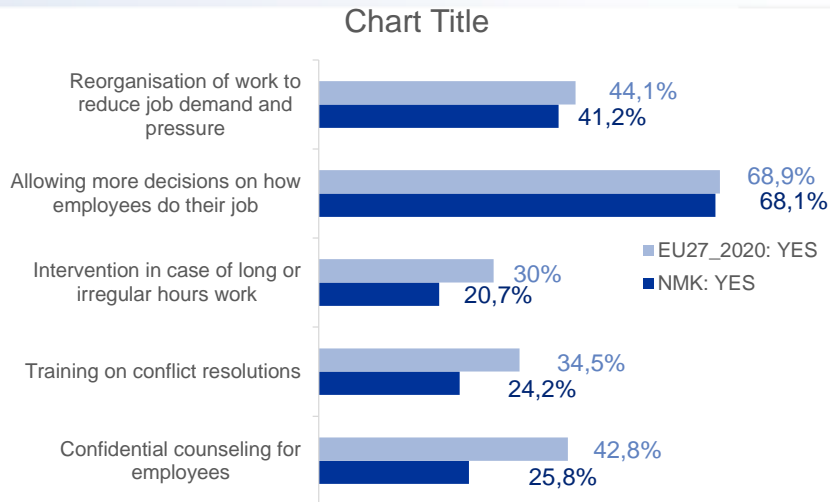### (% all establishments size, EU-27 vs NMK)

Chart Title

Pressure due to time constraints — 45,1% / 36,2%

Poor communication or cooperation within the organisation — 17,9% / 6,1%

Fear of job loss — 11,1% / 8,6%

Having to deal with difficult customers, patients, pupils etc. — 59,7% / 55,3%

Long or irregular working hours — 21,5% / 12,8%

■ EU27_2020: YES
■ NMK: YES

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ESENER-3: Measures to prevent psychosocial risks in the last 3 years
(% all establishments size, EU-27 vs NMK)

Chart Title

- Reorganisation of work to reduce job demand and pressure: 44,1% (EU27_2020: YES), 41,2% (NMK: YES)
- Allowing more decisions on how employees do their job: 68,9% (EU27_2020: YES), 68,1% (NMK: YES)
- Intervention in case of long or irregular hours work: 30% (EU27_2020: YES), 20,7% (NMK: YES)
- Training on conflict resolutions: 34,5% (EU27_2020: YES), 24,2% (NMK: YES)
- Confidential counseling for employees: 42,8% (EU27_2020: YES), 25,8% (NMK: YES)

Legend: ■ EU27_2020: YES   ■ NMK: YES

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Psychosocial risk management

- **Risk assessment - same principles and processes as for other hazards**
  - Raise awareness and ensure common understanding
  - Identify hazards and those at risk
  - Evaluate and prioritise risk
  - Take action on preventive and corrective measures
  - Document, monitor and review
- **Worker consultation and involvement**
- **Manager support**
- **Do what works for you and your workers**
- **Improve work environment, then look for individual measures**

Cycle diagram: Preparation → Screening → Action planning → Taking action → Evaluation → (Preparation)

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Implementing interventions – examples of effective measures

- Enough time for workers to perform their tasks, providing support when necessary (*allocating more staff, deciding about priorities*
- Clear job descriptions
- Match workloads to worker capabilities and resources
- Stimulating tasks
- Reward good performance
- Enable workers to make complaints and take them seriously
- Control over how work is done, participation in decisions affecting them
- Opportunities for social interaction
- Avoid ambiguity regarding job security and career development.
- Minimise physical risks (including risk factors for MSDs)

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Raise awareness and facilitate communication

Building foundation for managing stress in your workplace

- **common understanding about …**
- - …the long term health impacts
- - …the causes
- - …the steps the organisation and individual workers can take
- **Commitment from all involved to effectively manage stress,**
  • particularly managers
- **Develop and make workers aware of a stress policy**
  • to outline the steps to be taken and to clarify roles and responsibilities associated with implementing these steps
- **Open communication and channels to communicate**

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Success factors

- **Prevention, support, return-to-work, promote mental health – holistic policy**
- **Human resources and occupational safety and health**
  - Common strategy and planning – e.g. risk prevention, return-to-work, health and wellbeing promotion, purchase of equipment, staff surveys, organisational change plans and work organisation, training, interventions to support older workers
  - Systematic cooperation, two-way cooperation
- **Worker participation**
  - Hazard identification and solution
  - Ownership, feeling of worth and being valued – positive psychosocial factors
- **External expertise if necessary**
- **Training**
- **Open communication and communication channels**
- **MSDs (physical risks) and psychosocial risk managed together**
- **Health promotion, prevention, support, return-to-work – in one policy**

Managing psychosocial risks – to have in mind

- Despite its sensitive nature, stress and psychosocial risks at work can be **successfully reduced and dealt** with in the same logical and systematic way as other OSH issues

- Tackling stress in the workplace leads to **improved worker wellbeing** and **better organisational performance**

- **Leadership and worker participation** is crucial to tackle psychosocial risks and work-related stress effectively

Benefits of managing psychosocial risks

The **benefits** of managing risks at individual and organisational level **outweigh implementation costs**

Positive outcomes include**:**
- Worker **well-being and job satisfaction** improved
- **Healthy, motivated** and **productive** staff
- **Performance** and **productivity** improved
- **Absence** and **staff turnover** reduced
- **Reduced societal costs**
- **Legal compliance**

Psychosocial risks and mental health: OSH Overview

- **2022 - Published 10 October (World mental health day)**
  - Flash Eurobarometer survey - Summary report, Country profiles
- **2023 - Expected publication published**
- **Literature review –**
  - Mental health of workers with low socioeconomic status - report
  - Psychosocial risks and Health Care sector - article
  - Cardiovascular disease – article
  - Domestic violence and work - article
- **2023 - Expected to be commissioned**
  - Member State policies – field work in selected countries
  - Working with mental health conditions - report (TBC)
  - Other publications to be decided

Thank You for your Attention!

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Psychosocial risks theme page:
https://osha.europa.eu/en/themes/psychosocial-risks-and-stress

MSDS and psychosocial risks reports
https://osha.europa.eu/en/themes/musculoskeletal-disorders/research-work-related-msds

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