



Luxembourg Declaration

on Workplace
Health Promotion in
the European Union



The Luxembourg Declaration on Workplace Health Promotion in the European Union*

Workplace Health Promotion (WHP) is the combined efforts of employers, employees and society to improve the health and well-being of people at work.

This can be achieved through a combination of:

- improving the work organisation and the working environment.

- promoting active participation.
- encouraging personal development.

The implementation of Workplace Health Promotion can be supported by the application of health management principles.

Introduction

The EU 3rd Health Programme outlines the strategy for ensuring good health and healthcare for Europe. It feeds into the overall Europe 2020 strategy which aims to make the EU a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy promoting growth for all – one prerequisite for which is good health. Keeping people healthy and active for longer has a positive impact on productivity and competitiveness. WHP programs contribute to this European strategy by the establishment of a healthy, engaged and well-qualified workforce.

The EU OSH Strategic Framework 2014-2020 aims at ensuring that the EU continues to play a leading role in the promotion of high standards of working conditions both within the European Union and internationally. In line with the Europe 2020 Strategy, it contributes to improving job quality and job satisfaction, while improving the competitiveness and productivity of European companies.

Supported by the European Commission, the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion was established more than twenty years ago to support the European strategies in these areas by developing WHP into a powerful instrument to contribute to the creation of a healthy, engaged and well-qualified workforce. The European Network includes organisations from all Member States, countries of the European Economic Area and Switzerland. By doing this the Union is encouraging the Member States to place WHP high on their agenda and to incorporate workplace health issues in all relevant policies. The objective of the Network is to identify and disseminate examples of good practice of WHP by exchanging experience and knowledge. It also aims to support the development of WHP throughout Europe by undertaking research, developing training and accreditation of good practice.

Challenges for the working world in the 21st century

The world of work is undergoing major change - a process that will continue. Some of the key issues to be confronted are:

- A global, fast-changing and competitive working environment.
- Industry 4.0: new technologies, innovative processes, big data, nanotechnologies, robotics, artificial intelligence, ICT.
- Diversification of employment forms (e.g. part time and temporary employment, telework and virtual labour).
- Greater diversity in terms of age, gender, cultural and functional capacity in the working population.
- High unemployment in many countries.
- Productivity growth.
- The increasing importance of service sector.
- Downsizing of organisations.
- An increasing number of people working in small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).
- Greater focus on customer orientation and quality management.

In addition to these strategic and operational challenges, workplaces will also face both new and emerging health issues as well as more traditional ones that include:

- Chronic illness.
- Mental health problems in the workforce.
- Musculoskeletal disorders.
- Disability.

The future success of organisations is dependent on having well-qualified, engaged and healthy employees. WHP has a significant role to play in preparing and equipping people and organisations to face these challenges.

Workplace Health Promotion: an organisational investment for the future

Traditional OHS has significantly improved health in the workplace by reducing accidents and preventing occupational diseases. However, it has become obvious that OHS alone cannot address the wide range of issues mentioned above.

By promoting health in the workplace organisations will see a reduction in sickness related costs and an increase in productivity. This results from a healthier workforce with increased motivation, higher morale and improved working relationships.

WHP is a modern corporate strategy that aims to prevent ill-health at work (including work-related diseases, accidents, injuries, occupational diseases and stress) and enhance health-promoting potentials and well-being in the workforce.

Workplace Health Promotion: healthy people in healthy organisations

The workplace influences health and disease in various ways. Work can cause ill-health if employees have to work in health-damaging working conditions, the available skills are inadequate, or the mutual support from colleagues is lacking. At the same time work can be a resource for personal development and the enhancement of personal skills. WHP contributes to a wide range of work factors that improve employees' health. These include:

- Management principles and methods which recognise that employees are a necessary success factor for the organisation rather than only a cost.
- Leadership principles and a culture that promotes employee participation and encourages motivation and responsibility of all employees.
- Work organisation principles which provide employees with an appropriate balance between job demands, control over their own work, level of skills and social support.
- A personnel policy which actively incorporates health promotion issues.
- An integrated occupational health and safety service.

Workplace Health Promotion: is evidenced-based and successful

WHP is based on multisectoral and multidisciplinary co-operation and can only be successful if all key players are committed to it.

WHP can achieve the aim of "healthy people in healthy organisations" if it is oriented along the following guidelines:

1. All staff must be involved (participation).
2. WHP must be integrated in all important decisions and in all areas of organisations (integration).
3. All measures and programs must use a problem-solving cycle: needs analysis, setting priorities, planning, implementation, continuous control and evaluation (project management).
4. WHP must include both individual oriented and environment-oriented measures from a variety of fields. It combines the strategy of risk reduction with the strategy of the development of protective factors and health potentials (a balanced approach).

Priorities of the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion

The European Network for WHP coordinates the exchange of information and the dissemination of examples of good practice in Europe. Its member organisations have committed themselves to initiate networks at national level. All activities and priorities are based on the principle of subsidiarity and support co-operation between Member States.

In view of the future challenges and with the aim to expand health-promoting workplaces, the European Network for WHP regards the following priorities as a basis for future activities:

1. Increase awareness of WHP and promote responsibility for health with regard to all stakeholders.
2. Provide experts with state-of-the-art knowledge.
3. Help develop the EU research agenda and promote awareness of the results of research.
4. Identification and dissemination of models of good practice.
5. Support best practices and develop guidelines and accreditation for effective WHP.
6. Develop training for WHP.
7. Ensure commitment of the Member States to incorporate respective policies.
8. Address the specific challenges of working together with SMEs.
9. Develop supportive infrastructures at national level involving all relevant stakeholders, creating a lasting basis for the dissemination and incorporation of WHP.

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