

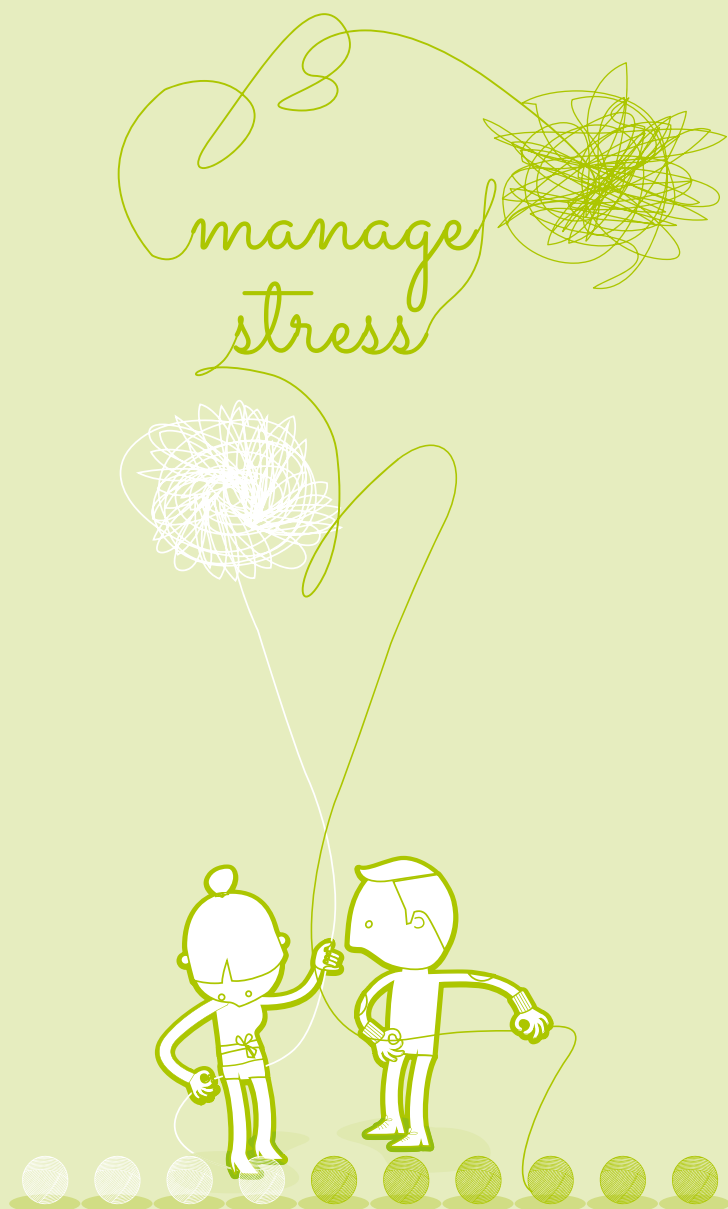
# Healthy Workplaces



[www.healthy-workplaces.eu](http://www.healthy-workplaces.eu)

## Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards 2014–2015

Managing stress and psychosocial risks at work



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# Introduction

The Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards were organised by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) as part of the 2014–15 Healthy Workplaces Manage Stress campaign. The 2014–15 awards aimed to highlight leading examples of companies or organisations actively managing stress and psychosocial risks at work.

The awards recognise outstanding and innovative contributions, and a strong management commitment and participative approach when dealing with psychosocial risks. Through the competition, EU-OSHA promotes good practice solutions in the workplace and shares information about good practice across Europe.

In total, 55 entries were received, including 48 national entries (from 26 countries) and seven entries by Official Campaign Partners. Organisations of all sizes (including 12 small companies) from a wide variety of economic sectors were represented.

An evaluation panel — the Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards jury, including representatives of the four interest groups of the EU-OSHA Governing Board and an expert in the subject — validated and assessed the examples submitted, and selected the award winners and commended examples.

## The importance of managing stress and psychosocial risks

Psychosocial risks arise from unfavourable work organisation and management, as well as a poor social context at work. Risks include excessive demands, job insecurity, harassment and violence, among others. These risks, as well as a lack of adequate resources or support, can result in workers experiencing stress, which leads to a deterioration in their functioning in and outside of work and, if prolonged, can lead to serious mental and physical health problems, such as burnout, depression, cardiovascular diseases or back pain.

A recent Eurobarometer survey by the European Commission<sup>(1)</sup> found that 53% of workers believe that stress is the main safety and health risk they face in the workplace, and 27% of workers reported experiencing 'stress, depression, anxiety' caused or worsened by work during the last 12 months.

A poor psychosocial work environment can also have negative effects on organisations, as well as national economies. Increased absenteeism and presenteeism (workers turning up when sick and unable to function properly) because of stress-related illness, as well as

increased accident and injury rates caused, for example, by working faster under pressure, can lead to significant costs to a business or organisation. At the national level, the cost for businesses and society is estimated to run into billions of euros.

Moreover, there is considerable misunderstanding and sensitivity surrounding psychosocial risks in the workplace, and there is still a stigma around mental health. EU-OSHA's European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER)<sup>(2)</sup> found that over 40% of employers consider psychosocial risks more difficult to manage than 'traditional' occupational safety and health risks.

## Healthy Workplaces Manage Stress

A significant number of managers surveyed in Europe through ESENER (79%) reported being concerned about stress in their workplaces, but fewer than 30% said they have procedures in place to deal with psychosocial risks. However, psychosocial risk management is necessary and possible in companies of all sizes, and can be done using the same principles applied for managing any other occupational safety and health risk.

Therefore, this campaign aims to raise awareness of stress and psychosocial risks in the workplace, to improve understanding of the issue and to provide support and guidance for employers and workers to deal with those risks effectively.

It is the employer's responsibility and legal obligation to assess and manage psychosocial risks in the workplace. It is essential that managers are committed to tackling stress and involve workers in identifying risks and planning and implementing solutions. Improvements in the work environment must always be considered and implemented first, before individual measures. A supportive work environment and an open dialogue between managers and workers is particularly important for psychosocial risks, as this fosters a climate of trust in which workers can feel comfortable raising issues. In addition, an understanding of difficulties outside work, although not a legal responsibility, can help create a good psychosocial work environment.

As for all occupational safety and health risks, prevention is the most effective way of dealing with psychosocial risks in the workplace. Once work-related stress and ill health set in, absenteeism is usually already on the increase, and therefore productivity and innovation are already in decline. Therefore, having a plan and pre-empting problems is crucial.

<sup>(1)</sup> European Commission, 2014. Eurobarometer 398 'Working Conditions'. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/flash/fl\\_398\\_sum\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_398_sum_en.pdf)

<sup>(2)</sup> European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2010. The European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER). Available at: <https://osha.europa.eu/en/esener-enterprise-survey/enterprise-survey-esener>

The benefits of psychosocial risk management are wide reaching. For workers, it means improved wellbeing and job satisfaction. For managers, it means a healthy, motivated and productive workforce. For organisations, improved overall performance, reduced absenteeism and presenteeism, reduced accident and injury rates and greater retention of workers may all come from reducing work-related stress. And, finally, reduced costs and burdens on individuals and society as a whole are invaluable benefits.

## Recognising good practice — what the jury was looking for

When selecting good practice examples, the jury was looking for examples of:

- genuine and effective management of psychosocial risks and work-related stress;
- workforce diversity being taken into account;
- participation and involvement of the workforce and their representatives;
- implementation of successful interventions in the workplace;
- demonstrable improvements in safety and health;
- sustainability of interventions over time;
- transferability to other workplaces, including to those in other Member States and to small and medium-sized enterprises.

## Winning and commended cases

Awarded and commended entries are presented in this booklet. Each example gives the issues faced, the measures taken and the results achieved. The entries come from both large and small (fewer than 100 workers) companies, as well as from Official Campaign Partners — multinational organisations that support the campaign.

A wide range of organisations were awarded. From Germany, a global stress management campaign was run by a leading postal and logistics company, while in Denmark, work-life balance in the high-pressure financial sector was tackled. An IT outsourcing company in the Netherlands considers its culture of honesty and transparency invaluable in achieving its guaranteed 100% result in delivering IT systems and reducing stress, and a Slovak steel manufacturer is aiming for a zero-injury workplace by creating a stress-free work environment. Successful initiatives were also run by small enterprises. A Spanish

hotel is improving employee influence and recognition through participative meetings and assessments, and a Polish prison service runs workshops and skills coaching sessions on psychosocial risk management in a diversity of situations.

All workplaces have their own specific problems, and solutions should be tailored to these problems. However, the ideas and concepts demonstrated in this booklet can be adapted and customised to suit the needs of organisations of any size, in any sector, in all Member States.

## More information

The EU-OSHA website (<https://osha.europa.eu>) contains a wealth of information on workplace safety and health in over 20 European languages.

Details on the Healthy Workplaces Manage Stress campaign can be found at [www.healthy-workplaces.eu](http://www.healthy-workplaces.eu)

All EU-OSHA publications can be downloaded free of charge from <https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications>

## Acknowledgements

EU-OSHA would like to thank its network of focal points in Member States, the European Economic Area and candidate countries (competent authorities, or bodies nominated by them, responsible for occupational safety and health) for assessing and nominating examples for the Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards. The competition would not have been possible without their assistance.

EU-OSHA would also like to thank the Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards jury for their input: the chair, Peter Kelly of the Health and Safety Executive in the United Kingdom, and the jury members, Francisco Jesús Álvarez from the European Commission — DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; Jan Kahr Frederiksen of the Danish FTF trade union; Eckhard Metze of the Commission for Occupational Health and Safety and Standardization in Germany; and Hannu Stalhammar from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in Finland.

Last but not least, many thanks to all the organisations that participated in the Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards 2014–15, with special thanks to those that feature in this publication.

# Preventing burnout and stress to achieve 'Lives in Balance'



Siemens, Belgium

[www.siemens.com](http://www.siemens.com)



## The issue

Siemens is a globally operating technology company but aims to address health management at global and local scales. Recent global surveys on health management and psychosocial risks have been conducted and, at the local scale in Belgium, it was found that about 16 % of employees experience high levels of stress. Irregular or long working hours, worries about job security, the impact of mistakes and work intensity have been identified as particular risks.

## Action taken

Global evaluations and feedback from Siemens organisations in more than 70 countries led to the development of 'Life in Balance' (LiB) — a company-wide methodology based on five areas identified as essential to successful psychosocial risk and resource management: awareness, leadership involvement, communication, training and the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). LiB, as an important part of the overall Health Management programme Fit@Work, was implemented in Belgium from 2013 and the most appropriate measures for their specific risk factors were selected and were adjusted to fit local cultural and company conditions.

Risk factors for burnout/stress and a high level of stigmatisation of these issues were identified. To raise awareness of and destigmatise these issues, a video was created from the perspective of an affected manager who volunteered to share his experience. An instructional video was also created to enable other branches globally to take a similar approach and develop 'educational' videos.

To improve involvement and awareness of leadership, stress management training for managers and two-day health seminars are run, targeted at managerial staff. Both initiatives promote health and highlight possibilities for support with regard to both prevention and rehabilitation. Interested workers without personnel responsibility are also invited to attend and these workers contribute a valuable perspective.

To improve communication, the Siemens Social Network was set up in 2013. In Belgium, the Fit@Work group was set up within this network and is now an active community of employees, health experts and voluntary members discussing stress and psychosocial issues, among other health topics.

Worries about job security in Siemens Belgium have been addressed through the Employability Index. This is a tool via which individual development plans are created and long-term learning areas are proposed. Suitable paths are revealed for every employee.

Finally, about 66 % of Siemens employees worldwide have access to the EAP. Based on the recent local risk assessment and a global survey on EAPs, quality management documents have been created for EAPs to help improve the use of this valuable resource.

As a result of the LiB programme in Belgium, the existing EAP was reviewed and is now offering professional support for psychosocial risks and juridical problems to all employees and direct family members.



## Results achieved

- Health Management seminars have been rated as 1.8 on a scale from 1 (very good) to 6 (not at all useful), with about 10 % of the workforce having attended seminars to date.
- Around 70 % of all managers have attended stress management training on a voluntary basis. 90 % of participants would recommend this training strongly to their colleagues.
- There has been a strong decrease in absenteeism since the implementation of Fit@Work.
- More than 250 employees (~20 %) have joined the social network community and about 400 health-related posts have been created in the last six months.
- Increased commitment among management and employees to a healthy lifestyle.
- Siemens was granted the Belgian Employer of the Year 2014 as recognition of LiB implementation, amongst other initiatives, and the Employability Index played a significant part in this.



*We are convinced that only through a holistic health management, true physical and mental health can be achieved.*



# Bank in Motion — involving managers and employees in improving wellbeing at work



Lån & Spar Bank, Denmark

[www.lsb.dk/lsb](http://www.lsb.dk/lsb)

## The issue

In the high-pressure environment of the financial sector, work pace and demands are high. This leads to an increased risk of stress, which in turn can lead to increased sickness absence. To tackle this situation, the bank wants to address psychosocial risks and support employees in achieving a better work-life balance, which is often difficult in demanding job roles. To achieve their ambitious business goals, the company believes that having employees who are fit and well equipped is essential.

## Action taken

‘Bank in Motion’ is a lifestyle concept Lån & Spar employs to equip employees for the high-pressure environment. Under this concept, a wide variety of activities have been initiated in all branches of the company.

To reduce stress from high workloads and demands, the bank set up the ‘DO IT NOW’ project. The aim was to improve efficiency within the company by giving workers the tools to complete work in a more structured way and reduce wasted time. The flat organisation and informal tone of the bank, as well as employee influence over their working day, also help to reduce stress. Systematic planned overtime is specifically avoided so individuals are not overloaded, and mandatory breaks involving physical activity have been introduced.

Within ‘Bank in Motion’ there is a strong focus on employee wellbeing. ‘The Good Life’ is a course run for employees focusing on wellbeing, values, attitudes and habits in work and at home. In addition, the Wellbeing Compass is a dialogue tool that lets employees discuss challenges, such



as bullying and high workload. Moreover, all managers are certified coaches for both private and work lives and all employees have access to the company’s psychologist scheme.

Lån & Spar also believes that mental and physical health go hand in hand. Workplace assessments are conducted annually in connection with health checks, and these assessments are used to prioritise actions in the workplace. If sickness absence is considered out of the ordinary for an employee, a care interview is conducted to assess if the absence was the result of conditions in the bank and what the bank can do to help.

Finally, employee development interviews are conducted at least once a year, which involve an appraisal of employees’ abilities and creation of development plans, improving employees’ job satisfaction.

## Results achieved

- After one year of The Good Life course, 55% of employees reported that their work-life balance had improved.
- There was a fall in self-assessed daily/weekly stress.
- Care interviews have resulted in the halving of sickness absence/stress-related leave in the bank.
- In the 'Great Place to Work' survey, the bank has risen from position 69 to 20 over four years. In 2013, 93% of employees were satisfied or very satisfied with working at Lån & Spar.
- In 2014, the psychological environment improved significantly compared with 2013.
- The company has also experienced increased productivity, earnings and customer satisfaction.



*Care interviews are conducted to assess if an absence is the result of conditions in the bank and what the bank can do to help.*



# Towards inner stability — reduced absenteeism and increased work satisfaction in the manufacturing sector

Daimler AG, Germany

[www.daimler.com](http://www.daimler.com)

## The issue

At all levels of the organisation, Daimler, a motor vehicle manufacturer, has observed an increase in problems related to mental health and increased costs as a result of absenteeism. As one example, maintenance engineers are particularly at risk of psychosocial stress. The job can involve complex problem solving on a variety of machines, and a high degree of responsibility and time pressure. Interruptions during maintenance operations were also identified as a cause of increased stress levels.

## Action taken

To evaluate psychological stress in specific job roles, Daimler developed a new procedure for psychological stress risk assessment, including clear distinctions between external factors, objectively determined work-related pressures and the internal effect of those factors. To improve the working

situation of maintenance engineers in particular, a trained team of analysts, together with immediate superiors and post holders, examined this job role using a standardised analysis tool. Based on this analysis, it was decided that, in future, supervisors would prevent disturbances during maintenance operations, and areas of responsibility were reorganised.

Moreover, the company medical service and the employee advisory unit, together with internal partners, ran a multimedia campaign entitled 'Towards inner stability'. The aim was to involve as many employees as possible from all levels of the organisation to raise awareness of personal mental health issues. The year-long campaign focused on preventive measures and included significant intranet presence; brochures, posters and flyers; an e-learning module encouraging self-evaluation; health courses on relaxation and stress prevention; talks by experts; and a health quiz, among others.



## Results achieved

- Illness-related absenteeism was significantly reduced, as were costs caused by absenteeism.
- Employees rated their work situation as subjectively better than before the assessment, and their commitment and work satisfaction increased.
- The health campaign web page was viewed more than 100 000 times, and the health quiz had more than 1 900 participants, helping to raise awareness of mental health issues in the workplace.
- The working climate and atmosphere were significantly improved.
- The management culture regarding psychosocial issues was improved.
- Productivity increased.

*Illness-related absenteeism was significantly reduced, as were costs caused by absenteeism.*





# Global management of stress in demanding postal job roles



Deutsche Post DHL Group, Germany

[www.dpdhl.com](http://www.dpdhl.com)

## The issue

As the world's leading postal and logistics group, Deutsche Post DHL Group's customers have high expectations of the speed and quality of their service, so demand and time pressures are high. The utilisation of new technologies, working in new business areas and working within a globally networked context are additional challenges for DHL employees. Employing around 200 000 workers in Germany alone, good management of stress in all parts of the company must continually be taken into account for maintaining a high-quality service.

## Action taken

In 2013, Deutsche Post DHL Group issued the Health, Safety and Well-Being strategy in which mental health takes a central role. A variety of policies and principles that apply worldwide — including the corporate culture, Code of Conduct, Corporate Health Policy and workplace health promotions conducted in collaboration with the

Works Councils — are influenced by this strategy. In the same year, the company also became one of the founding members of the European initiative 'Target Depression in the Workplace'.

The commitment of management to the mental health of employees is considered essential in Deutsche Post DHL Group. Thus, in 2012, the Leadership and Mental Health web-based training programme targeting managerial staff was developed. This tool gives examples and advice on how managers can remain healthy themselves and also protect employees from stress. In parallel, an expert forum was hosted on 'Don't Stress Out About Stress — Mental Health in the Workplace', in which strategies for promoting mental health in the workplace were discussed. Managers also regularly attend workshops and seminars on psychological stress in the workplace.

Giving employees the opportunity to shape their working day is also recognised as good for mental health. Therefore, employees are directly involved in the design of working practices.

At the individual level, check-ups are carried out by the company physician. Employees are given advice and recommendations on the results of these check-ups and the physician facilitates any interventions required, ranging from coaching on individual resource management to rapid interventions in the case of severe depression. Seminars are also run for employees on stress management skills for their professional and personal lives.

In addition, individual commitment and motivation is enforced by activities such as the Global Volunteer Days that offer employees the opportunity to take part in civic engagement, improving community spirit and employees' levels of personal satisfaction.



## Results achieved

- In the 2013 worldwide employee survey, results showed improvement over the past eight years, including improvements in working conditions and active leadership.
- Around 1500 managers have registered for the 'Leadership and Mental Health' training programme.
- Productivity has been maintained and often boosted.
- Illness-related costs are limited.
- Deutsche Post DHL Group received an award for mental health in 2010 in the Move Europe awards, and, in the area of safety and health, the management system received an A+ grade.



*The commitment of management to the mental health of employees is considered essential.*

# Hotel management and staff working together to improve working conditions



Hotel Colón, S.A., Spain

[www.colonhotelbarcelona.com](http://www.colonhotelbarcelona.com)

Fewer than  
100 workers

## The issue

Hotel Colón is a small business with only 78 employees. In the past there was little opportunity for staff to have a say on how day-to-day work was organised. The hotel management realised that addressing this issue could help to improve staff commitment and involvement and increase employees' satisfaction at work.

## Action taken

A working group was set up including both management and staff representatives, and this group implemented a psychosocial risk prevention procedure. One of the main outputs of the risk assessment was the decision to adapt and reorganise the hotel's working methods.

As a first step, departmental meetings were implemented. The purpose of these meetings was to provide information on, discuss and make decisions about day-to-day operations and possible improvements. Meetings take place every two weeks during working hours and allow both management and staff to discuss upcoming challenges and develop solutions together.

In preparation for these meetings, workers can submit topics they wish to be discussed via an anonymous suggestion box. These subjects must be discussed at the meeting, and the discussion must conclude with a proposal to address the issue. Hotel management is then required to provide a verbal and a written response to the issue. The working group has the responsibility of informing the workforce of actions carried out, and of when a proposal has not been viable.

To date, various solutions have been suggested and successfully implemented. The changes have been easy to implement, but have significantly contributed to creating

a smoother and more successful working procedure and a fairer distribution of work. For example, one proposal aimed to improve the distribution of tasks related to setting the tables before lunch and dinner. The solution proposed was to rotate this preparatory task between different shifts. Another example of a successfully implemented measure was a change in the format of taking orders for lunch and an improvement in the technical equipment used for this task.



In addition, every two months, the working group assesses the meetings and the implementation of changes suggested by staff, and proposes changes that it deems relevant. This procedure has been implemented in departments throughout the hotel, including the restaurant, linen rooms, cleaning department, reception and kitchen. A review of the entire process is planned for 2015.



## Results achieved

- Of the 51 measures proposed to date, 26 have been implemented, 13 are in the process of being implemented and 12 have been postponed.
- These measures have affected key areas of the business, and some measures resulted in a reorientation of business strategies.
- Both the head of human resources and hotel staff legal representatives have shown a positive attitude towards the change.
- Both the organisation of work and the wellbeing of the workforce have improved.

*Workers submit topics to be discussed at meetings, and the discussion must conclude with a proposal to address the issue.*



# A culture of honesty and transparency in IT outsourcing = a 100 % result



Schuberg Philis, Netherlands

[www.schubergphilis.com](http://www.schubergphilis.com)

## The issue

Schuberg Philis is an IT outsourcing company with clients such as online banks, energy companies and government organisations. They give clients a 100% result guarantee; if the systems were to go down, these organisations could not function. This makes work extremely challenging and demanding — there are periods of intense pressure, a high workload and a great sense of responsibility — and so the risk of overwork is always lurking.

## Action taken

A 100% guarantee could be interpreted as meaning that no errors can be made, but Schuberg Philis believes this result can be achieved only by accepting that mistakes are part of the process, being completely honest about them and then learning from them. Honesty, transparency

and openness characterise internal relationships and are considered essential for achieving company goals.

This company culture and a focus on working in tightly knit and independent teams gives employees the opportunity to ask for help and be open about their personal strengths and weaknesses. This supportive environment means employees feel comfortable raising issues and are able to develop professionally and personally.

To deal with high workloads, the scrum method (the team works as a unit to reach a common goal) is used to assess and divide work into manageable blocks. The team also holds 'stand-ups' every day to discuss progress, preventing team members from becoming overloaded or isolated and ensuring deadlines are met.

Employees are involved in annual meetings on the future direction of the company, and have significant input into their daily working lives. Moreover, through peer reviews that take place in association with annual appraisals, workers help each other to growth. Therefore, workers can make a meaningful contribution to and feel a responsibility for the company, their working lives and their colleagues.

The company devotes attention to both the physical and the mental health of employees. Employees have access to a certified in-house therapist and a physiotherapist, and participation in sports activities is expressly encouraged, as is healthy eating.

The commitment of management to workers' wellbeing is demonstrated at family days that take place twice a year; senior employees make it their business to get to know everyone. Moreover, the company reinvests approximately one-quarter of its profit every year into the wellbeing of all its employees and their families.



## Results achieved

- Staff turnover (staff leaving against the will of the company) is extremely low: less than 1%.
- The sickness absence rate is very low: 0.9% in 2013, far below the average in the ICT sector. This corresponds to direct savings of EUR229 000 in absenteeism costs per year.
- Customer satisfaction is very high and for five years there has been a 100% rate of customers recommending Schuberg Philis to others.



*The supportive environment means employees feel comfortable raising issues and are able to develop professionally and personally.*

# Better communication, conflict solving and stress management among prison officers



Regional Inspectorate of Prison Service in Koszalin, Poland

[www.sw.gov.pl/pl/okregowy-inspektorat-sluzby-wiezionej-koszalin](http://www.sw.gov.pl/pl/okregowy-inspektorat-sluzby-wiezionej-koszalin)

Fewer than  
100 workers

## The issue

The Inspectorate of Prison Service in Koszalin supervises, controls and coordinates the tasks of penitentiary units. Contact with prisoners is an obvious cause of stress in prison services, but there are other possible sources of stress, including high workloads, time pressure and a lack of support. Moreover, there is great diversity in the situations that employees find stressful.

## Action taken

A consequence of long-term exposure to stress is burnout. Therefore, in 2012, the Inspectorate conducted a survey examining burnout in the subordinate units. The results showed that the risk of burnout varied depending on contact with prisoners, shift systems and sex. In direct response to the survey findings, workshops and activities were organised to deal with the stress factors in these diverse situations.

Initial stress prevention workshops were conducted in which employees were presented with a variety of solutions for dealing with stressful situations and relieving tension in their professional and daily lives. Anti-stress skills workshops were then set up to build upon the skills learned and to allow employees to practise the stress prevention techniques.

A psychosocial skills coaching programme was also run to provide participants with principles of efficient communication, assertive strategies for solving interpersonal conflicts, and strategies for combatting unethical behaviour, aggression, discrimination and mobbing, among other skills.

Moreover, balancing the requirements of superiors with those of employees was reported as an intense source of tension among officers at the middle management level. Therefore, stress management workshops were run for managers and heads of divisions to help them achieve this balance and to quell tensions.

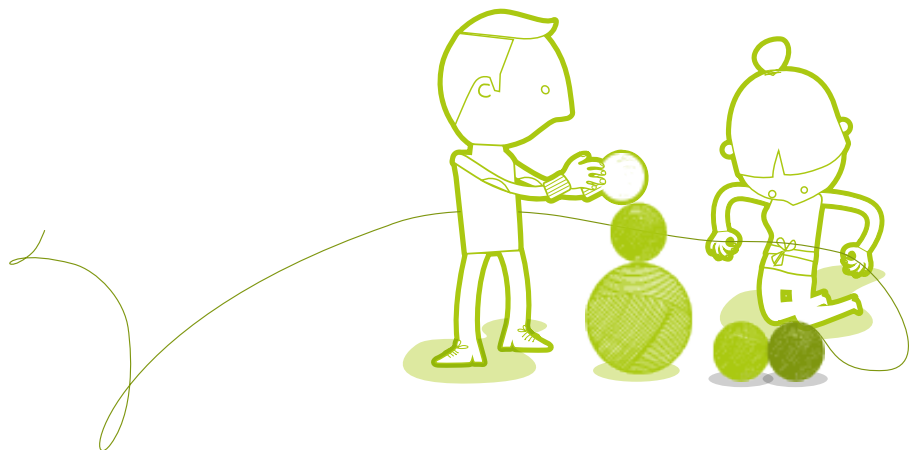


To develop and improve the process, all activities and workshops are subject to an evaluation, involving a survey to assess several factors, including accuracy and quality, covered topics and the potential for practical application of the content, as well as to evaluate the teachers/coaches.

*A psychosocial skills coaching programme focused on efficient communication and assertive strategies for solving interpersonal conflicts in the workplace.*

## Results achieved

- Awareness of reducing stress in both professional and personal lives increased among employees.
- The number of employees requesting information about and participating in workshops on preventing and managing stress increased.
- There is a greater openness and willingness to look for help and support in difficult situations.
- Sick leave because of difficult situations decreased.
- Job satisfaction improved.





# Taking a leading role on psychosocial risks in insurance



Zavarovalnica Triglav, d.d., Slovenia

[www.triglav.si](http://www.triglav.si)

## The issue

Zavarovalnica Triglav is an insurance company with units across Slovenia and over 2000 employees. Despite the good results of the annual survey measuring the organisational climate, several psychosocial risks were identified. The risks were related to management and work organisation issues, perceived unfair treatment, inefficient communication and work-life imbalances. The consequences included experiencing stress, burnout and poor work atmosphere.

## Action taken

With the aim of achieving long-term effects on health, satisfaction and enthusiasm of each employee, and better management of psychosocial risks, the company has developed the Triglav.smo programme. Numerous events and activities are conducted under this programme which take place at all regional units.

Various measures in the programme target management. These include a 'leadership school', coaching for leaders including managing directors, conferences for leaders to improve communication and information flow, and a

manual for leaders including the most important tasks that all managers should undertake.

A psychologist is available to provide counselling for employees, particularly if they have encountered work-related traumatic events, e.g. threats, attacks or robbery. Lectures, education programmes, traineeships and workshops are also run on topics such as successful management of workloads, stress management and improving communications and relationships in the workplace.

Protecting the dignity of employees is a traditional core value of the company and is included in the company's Code of Good Business Practices. A confidant is always available who accepts reports about conflicts and unwanted (hostile, intimidating or demeaning) behaviour in the workplace. This is followed up by either mediation by trained personnel or, in more serious cases, assessment by a committee.

Moreover, job evaluation and promotion criteria have been improved, and cooperation between employees and divisions is greatly encouraged, as is innovation. These improvements in employee career development and involvement have led to increased job satisfaction.



## Results achieved

- The annual poll of employees showed that the organisational climate rating is increasing; in particular, better ratings have been gained in management categories.
- Absenteeism has fallen every year since 2008.
- From 2011 to 2013, the cost of sick leave was lowered by 8.6% (EUR 141 000).
- Satisfaction and enthusiasm of employees is increasing, and cooperation between units, departments and services has increased.
- The number of accidents at work is low and is decreasing.

*Protecting the dignity of employees is a traditional core value of the company and a confidant is always available who accepts reports about conflicts.*



# A stress-free workplace = a zero-injury workplace in steel manufacturing



U. S. Steel Košice, s.r.o., Slovakia

[www.usske.sk](http://www.usske.sk)

## The issue

In the steel manufacturing sector, hazards and dangerous conditions are common. The objective of U. S. Steel Košice (USSK) is zero injury. It provides training allowing employees to feel secure and to believe in their abilities and skills. In addition, the company believes that completely eliminating stress in the workplace will allow employees to fully concentrate on their work and better control and respond to hazards that they may encounter.

## Action taken

USSK employs several organisational strategies to reduce stress in the workplace. The Stop & Act programme provides employees with a procedure to follow if risks are encountered, allowing them to stop their activities and seek advice from a supervisor or colleagues, thereby reducing stress levels in these situations.

In addition, an IT application allows employees to submit risks they have encountered in the workplace, as well as ideas for preventive measures. Managers and the safety and health department then consider these proposals and implement interventions based on the suggestions. The most active employees in this system are rewarded for their proactive attitude. Finally, 'safety huddles' are meetings conducted by a supervisor which take place at the start of each shift and highlight specific hazards that workers should be wary of, including psychosocial hazards.

Furthermore, the company believes that, for its success, it is necessary that each team member achieves a balance between their work, family and private lives. Free

counselling is provided as part of the Work Life Coaching programme, in which both employees and their family members have access to unrestricted 24/7 phone and e-mail consultations. In addition, employees are able to see a psychologist at the USSK premises, where advice is given on both work and personal matters. In fact, the most common matter dealt with in these consultations is interpersonal relationships in the workplace. As part of this programme, lectures are also given on topics such as burnout prevention, assertiveness in working and personal lives and healthy lifestyles.

Events out of working hours are organised, including sports events, such as the USSK Soccer Championship and the Family Are Sporting project, which encourage employees and their family members to be active as well as sociable. In addition, the Family Safety Day helps to raise awareness of the importance of safety and health while employees relax in a friendly atmosphere with their families.







## Results achieved

- Since 2006, the injury rate has reduced by 79%.
- In the same period, injury resulting in days away from work has reduced by 95%.
- Employees report higher personal satisfaction, a better work-life balance and better mental 'comfort'.
- Knowledge, skills and abilities, professional efficiency and work performance have all been reported to be improved.

*Managing stress contributed to reducing injury rates, as well as better wellbeing, job satisfaction and performance.*



# Caring = sharing — a participative approach to tackling stress among engineers



Fastems Oy Ab, Finland

[www.fastems.com/en/home](http://www.fastems.com/en/home)

## The issue

Fastems supplies customised automation systems and so requires specialist expertise in the latest technologies. The work is highly demanding and deadlines are tight, and engineers are often required to travel overseas to install systems. This means the risk of experiencing stress is high and, because of the need for specialists, this issue cannot be resolved simply by increasing resources. This has led to requests for changes in job descriptions, extended family leave and a significant number of resignations, among other issues.

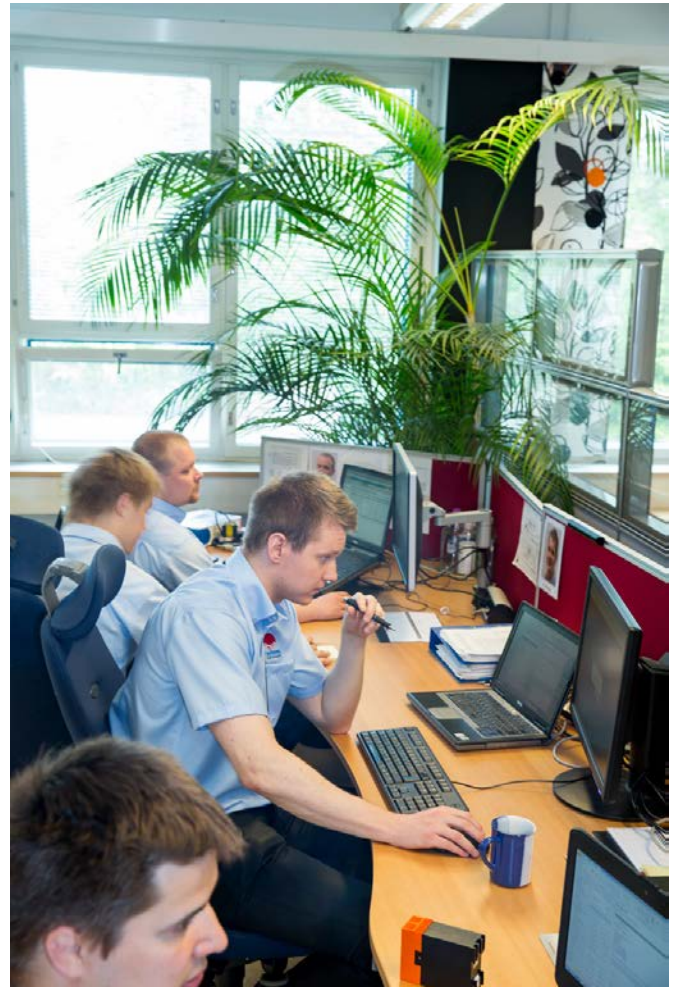
## Action taken

Since early 2009, the Integrated Total Work Stress Evaluation ('TIKKA' <sup>(1)</sup>) procedure has been used by Fastems in collaboration with its occupational health service partner. TIKKA is a comprehensive assessment of work stress factors conducted via small group interviews, supervisor interviews, personal questionnaire forms and joint meetings of the entire team.

The interviews concentrate on job-content issues (e.g. clarity of work objectives, work pace and workload, provision of feedback) and social climate in work (e.g. community spirit, cooperation, equal treatment). Answers and results from the interviews, as well as suggestions for development and improvement, are discussed in a mutually constructive spirit by workers, supervisors and a human resources representative at 'feedback and support' events.

Personal questionnaires are used to assess fitness for work and the performance ability of personnel. Adverse factors relating to stress are also mapped out using a health questionnaire. On the basis of the answers to these questions, individuals are selected if necessary for a more detailed health examination, and are given support.

Fastems has shifted its approach to a focus on early intervention. In this early intervention model, supervisors are given continuous training and are encouraged to bring up in the workplace potential worries about coping with work, combatting problems at the earliest possible stage.



<sup>(1)</sup> TIKKA stems from Työn Integroitu KokonaisKuormituksen Arviointi.



## Results achieved

- There has been a significant reduction in stress-related sick leave.
- The number of resignations has reduced.
- Changes in work arrangements, process descriptions and specifications of responsibilities, and an increase in the use of electronic tools, have led to radical reductions in the amount of travelling required.
- A reorganisation of work has improved employee satisfaction.
- The work atmosphere has greatly improved. The implemented procedure has demonstrated that the employer is willing to spend time and money on improving working conditions.
- The TIKKA results of Fastems have led to an increased interest in this process from other enterprises.

*Interview results are discussed in a mutually constructive spirit by workers and supervisors at 'feedback and support' events.*

# Participative and proactive policies and procedures



## Nottingham City Homes, United Kingdom

[www.nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](http://www.nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk)  
[satori-uk.co.uk](http://satori-uk.co.uk)

### The issue

A stress survey carried out at Nottingham City Homes by union representatives in close cooperation with management found that the three main causes of stress were being set unrealistic targets, a lack of communication within the organisation and insufficient time to do the job. To improve the working conditions, the company aimed to develop a stress policy and a proactive stress and wellbeing risk assessment process, and to boost awareness about the importance of managing stress across the whole organisation.

### Action taken

Nottingham City Homes set out to implement an official stress management policy in close cooperation with the trade union. The policy is based on the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Management Standards for work-related stress and it focuses on managing the causes of and tackling work-related stress. Based on the trade union feedback, there is great emphasis on participation and proactive measures.

Proactive stress and wellbeing risk assessments (PSWRAs) are conducted by managers with the help of a health and safety team. The results of the previous union stress survey as well as trade union feedback were used to inform developments where possible. Results of PSWRAs will be used to amend and refresh both the stress management policy and stress management training. Moreover, as part of the PSWRA process, all employees are given stress information sheets focusing on actions related to the main areas included in the HSE's Management Standards (demands, control, support, relationships, role and change).

As part of the stress management policy, training on psychosocial risks and stress was delivered to all line managers to increase their skills to manage stress in their teams. Employees were also provided with wellbeing training, including discussions on how to deal with difficult conversations they may have with customers on issues such as taxes.

A number of mental health awareness-raising activities have been run, including regular 'Tea and Talk' sessions to encourage employees to talk about aspects affecting their health and wellbeing at work. A learning management system has also recently been introduced to give employees easier access to stress awareness training and related materials.

All employees receive an annual personal development review and regular one-to-ones with managers, where performance and potential support needs are discussed and reviewed, including tight deadlines, communication problems and work demands.







## Results achieved

- There has been a noticeable rise in stress awareness. There is a greater understanding of stress factors and new ideas are being raised about how they could be managed.
- The stress management policy and associated training contributed to the company being awarded the Investors in People Gold award.
- Sickness absence due to stress, depression and other mental health problems is closely monitored year on year and a downward trend is expected in the next few years.

*There is a greater understanding of stress factors and new ideas are being raised about how they could be managed.*

# Better involvement, participation and communication in an elderly care organisation

COMMENDED

VitaS, Belgium

[www.vitas.be](http://www.vitas.be)

## The issue

Over five years, elderly care company VitaS grew rapidly, extending from one to three sites. The changes brought about some challenges. Unclear communication to employees during this expansion sometimes resulted in a tense atmosphere. Absenteeism increased and conflicts in the workplace occurred. In certain cases, existing employees were worried by the growing number of new employees and became uncertain about the content and security of their jobs. The management noticed that in some cases workers became less motivated and even stressed.

## Action taken

A risk assessment on psychosocial risks was carried out focusing on three main areas: organisational structure, personnel policy and the promotion of workers' wellbeing.

Action taken focused on involvement, participation and communication from and towards the workers. Job descriptions were prepared and work instructions and other relevant documentation were digitised and made easily accessible to the whole workforce. Conflict management sessions, an attendance policy, regular performance appraisals and team-building sessions were introduced and a monthly newsletter was set up to improve the flow of information. Based on survey results, workers were actively involved in changes to roster planning, shifting to a more participative approach based on self-scheduling.

A diversity plan, to improve recruitment and training of lower-skilled workers and to overcome possible glass ceilings, was put in place.

The success of the project can be credited to involving the entire organisation and the step-by-step approach taken in various areas — such as infrastructure, personnel, training and teamwork — to make the overall implementation more achievable.

VitaS has brought change to the structure and culture of the organisation, its management and staff welfare. VitaS found that results can be achieved from inside the organisation, often simply by engaging workers, making them feel involved and allowing them to actively participate. The company discovered that developing a large base of increasingly motivated workers within an organisation allows greater goals to be achieved.



*Workers were actively involved in changes to roster planning, shifting to a more participative approach based on self-scheduling.*



## Results achieved

VitaS found that improving the issues identified by the employees themselves had a direct impact on individual empowerment. In turn, empowering individuals led to a more motivated and productive workforce keen to help resolve issues at an organisational level.



# Safety and security — a natural part of working in a housing association

COMMENDED

Boligkontoret Aarhus, AAB Aarhus AAB and ESL, Denmark

[www.bk-aarhus.dk](http://www.bk-aarhus.dk)

Fewer than  
100 workers

## The issue

Violence, threats of violence, abuse and harassment from residents have been a growing problem for property workers in Denmark's housing organisations in recent years. A combination of working alone and a tradition of not speaking about emotional pressure and stress at work, as well as accepting violence as 'just part of the job', led to mental overload among property workers in Boligkontoret Aarhus.

## Action taken

A method to systematically and effectively prevent violence, threats and harassment against property workers was developed. An analytical tool was used to map the employees' experiences and wellbeing both before and after the project.

Clear procedures for recording and following up on incidents of violence and threats were created by drawing up an anti-violence policy and updating existing crisis management plans. Experience exchange groups were set up, in which property workers analyse the challenging situations at work together and exchange experience concerning preventive measures.

Enabling property workers, alone or in partnership with the safety and health group, to make assessments and take preventive measures was key. In addition, the fact that managers visibly backed the project was critical to its success. By doing so, employees felt supported and found that management took their incident reports seriously and, importantly, acted upon them. Experience exchange groups were also set up to encourage discussion of incidents of violence among property workers.

A comprehensive training programme was developed, delivered in the form of seminars for property workers. Video clips were also produced to support the training. All new employees are introduced to the training concept.





## Results achieved

- A reduction in the number of incidents of violence and threats.
- A reduction in stress and symptoms of mental overload among property workers.
- Increased awareness among property workers of the influence of violence on wellbeing and job satisfaction.
- Considerable change in attitude among property workers towards speaking freely with each other about incidents of violence.
- Substantial improvement in the experience of support from both management and colleagues after experiencing incidents of violence.
- Three-quarters of the property workers and managers participated in the seminars.
- Property workers feel their relationship management skills at work had improved.

*The fact that managers visibly backed the project was critical to its success.*

# Risk evaluation and management of work-related stress in the refuse collection sector

COMMENDED

Prevention Centre of Occupational Risk (KE.P.E.K.) of Central Greece and Municipality of Chalkida, Greece <sup>(1)</sup>

[www.dimos-xalkideon.gr](http://www.dimos-xalkideon.gr)

[www.ypakp.gr](http://www.ypakp.gr)

## The issue

The management team dealing with refuse collection in the municipality of Chalkida realised that there were certain challenges when it comes to working conditions, such as irregular shift work. In addition, concerns were raised about issues such as role ambiguity and poor overall communication. It emerged that employees were sometimes unsure of their obligations and duties, and active participation in decision making was not always facilitated. Consequently, good work practices were put at risk in certain circumstances, leading to increases in the number of accidents and cases of absenteeism and sick leave. When the problem of presenteeism and work-related stress first appeared, it became clear to management that change was needed.

## Action taken

Preventive interventions were oriented towards collective solutions and encouraged active participation from all workers and managers. Using a systematic approach, the foundations were laid for the creation of a working environment based on confidence, collaboration, comprehension and support in which employees and management actively participate to improve working conditions.

The first focus was addressing organisational deficiencies. Changes in work organisation were implemented through work scheduling, distribution of work according to legislation, work contracts and employees' needs. Employees' duties and obligations were clarified and their participation in decision making was promoted.

Ergonomic planning of work practices was brought on board by minimising exposure to extreme temperatures and creating teams of refuse collectors based on their level of experience. Global positioning systems were installed in refuse vehicles to enable communication during emergencies and older vehicles were replaced. In addition, changes were made to the health and safety policy. These aimed to enforce social and interpersonal relationships, give workers the opportunity to express their concerns and improve the training system.

At an individual level, the introduction of the employee assistance programme allowed workers to acquire the necessary competencies and skills to recognise and tackle problematic situations. This helped reinforce the employee's ability to prevent stress through changes in his or her approach and behaviour.

<sup>(1)</sup> This project was realised through the efforts of its steering group, whose members were Toukas Dimitrios (Occupational Health and Safety Inspector) and Delichas Miltiadis (Occupational Health and Safety Inspector) from the Prevention Centre of Occupational Risk (KE.P.E.K.) of Central Greece; and Metaxas Nikolaos (Safety Consultant), Simitzi Athanasios (Occupational Physician), Vrakas Alexandros (Head of Refuse Collection Department Administration), Basoukos Alexandros (Health and Safety Representative of Employees), Boulougouras Vasilios (Health and Safety Representative of Employees), Athanasopoulos Athanasios (Health and Safety Representative of Employees) and Tsokou Froso (Health and Safety Representative of Employees) from the Municipality of Chalkida.





## Results achieved

- A reduction in the overall risk of work-related stress from 'medium' to 'low'.
- A reduction in the number of accidents due to human errors.
- Reductions in the number of cases of absenteeism, sickness absence and medical emergencies.
- Increased awareness and responsibility among employees and administration on issues related to stress.
- Active participation from employees in tackling work-related stress.



*The foundations were laid for the creation of a working environment based on confidence, collaboration, comprehension and support.*



# A comprehensive plan for the prevention of psychosocial risks

COMMENDED

ACCIONA ENERGIA, Spain

[www.accionna.com](http://www.accionna.com)



## The issue

The majority of employees at Acciona Energía, a global operator in the renewable energy sector, are engineers, administrators or surveyors. Psychosocial risk assessment showed that one position was particularly hazardous: control centre technician. Certain aspects of this job — working time, autonomy, workload and role performance — were identified as potential psychosocial risks. The corresponding plan of action included both preventive and corrective measures.

## Action taken

Immediate, short-term, corrective actions specific to the role of control centre technician were taken. These included the implementation of a communication protocol, which allows employees to alert management if they feel they have a heavy workload, and new software for the installation's control. The new tool helps to reduce mental workload and makes the technicians' jobs easier. A new procedure was also implemented to ensure that information and instructions are clear and understood; each technician's interpretation of the instructions is either verified as correct at sign-off or further clarified.

The work improvements implemented for control centre technicians showed good results and were met with great

interest among employees in other areas of the company. This encouraged Acciona to implement a longer-term, company-wide, comprehensive plan for the prevention of psychosocial risks.

Both collective actions, for the whole company or a single department, and individual actions, driven towards a particular employee or for workers to apply by themselves, were developed.

Collective preventive actions relied on strong commitment from managers. Acciona recognised that managers are the principal vehicle for maintaining a culture based on respect and encouraging teamwork and individual and collective development. Acciona's characteristic management style is deeply rooted in its team of directors and managers, but it was recognised that, to sustain this culture, these attitudes would need to be passed down to the next generation of managers. A coaching programme, supported by structured training activities, was developed in response. In addition, a protocol for action to deal with harassment has been put in place.

Individual actions, including stress management and health promotion workshops and computer applications for stress monitoring, helped promote employees' development and keep them healthy and motivated.





## Results achieved

There have been no absences resulting from psychosocial-related illnesses. Good cooperation, worker participation and a good psychosocial work environment are among other benefits. Acciona's comprehensive plan has actively contributed to fostering a positive working environment, where people are treated with respect and which promotes employees' health and development. It has helped Acciona to strengthen its position and sustainability.



*Collective actions to prevent psychosocial risks relied on strong commitment from managers to maintain a culture of respect, teamwork and growth.*

# Different work-related stress prevention measures for different situations in a global aircraft manufacturer

COMMENDED

Airbus, France and Spain

[www.airbus.com](http://www.airbus.com)



## The issue

In recent years, Airbus has launched a lot of new products to remain leader in the aircraft manufacturing market. Hundreds of improvement projects have been carried out which aim to boost performance and support new developments. Optimisation also concerns organisation changes including mergers and acquisitions.

In order to reach the desired increased performance while also taking care of the adaptation for the workers concerned, there was a need to thoroughly consider the effects of changes on working conditions and employees' well-being, implementing adequate change management and worker involvement.

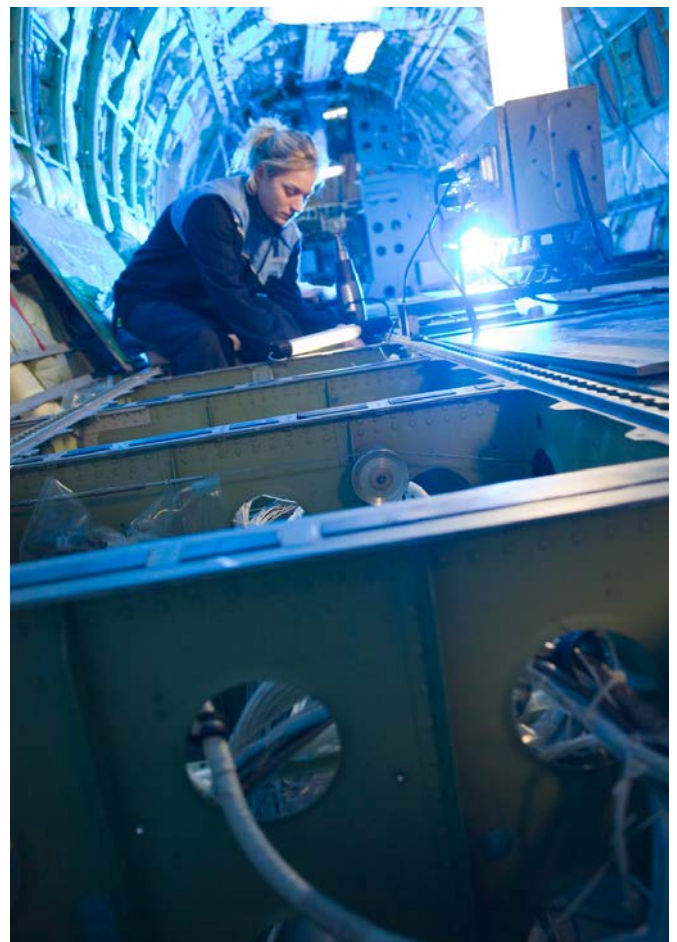
In addition, there was the need to improve work-related stress prevention by combining the Airbus Group policy requirement and local legal frames and tools.

## Action taken

### Airbus France

Airbus France has developed a prevention methodology which consists of assessing in an exhaustive and participative way the impact of change, which may result in psychosocial risks in the company, and drawing up key recommendations which will be transformed into an action plan.

The first step of the process consists of applying a checklist to select only the significant projects from a psychosocial risk point of view that deserve a full analysis. In a second step, the methodology involves an 'impact workshop' in which participants from a variety of hierarchical levels give their inputs in an exhaustive review of human and social risks related to the project or change being assessed, based on a structured questionnaire. The session is conducted by two qualified facilitators in which the objectives, the affected groups and any related events or projects are discussed. A systematic review is conducted of the impacts of the change on working conditions including workload, autonomy and recognition at work. The initial vulnerability of workers with respect to psychosocial risks can be assessed in parallel. A summary report is issued which synthesises the main impacts detected and gives recommendations for each risk. The project leader then creates an action plan based on these recommendations, and this action plan is then reviewed after around three months.



© Airbus Military, Photographer Luis Olivas

This methodology has, to date, been applied around 15 times to varying projects ranging from aircraft final assembly line to IT department reorganisation.

### Airbus Spain

Airbus Spain regularly conducts screenings to identify groups at risk of psychosocial issues. Assessments of these groups are then conducted to diagnose problems and guide the development of corrective collective measures through workshops and feedback sessions. Identifying risk areas through screenings serves as a preventive measure, minimising the possible occurrence of hazardous situations and mitigating the existing ones.





©AIRBUS, Photographer Hermann Jansen

Individuals are also monitored by medical services to identify those at risk, and workers can request psychological attention if required through unions, managers or human resources. Psychological counselling is provided in the form of face-to-face sessions as well as via the web (the latter being an ongoing pilot project).

After six to eight months, the situation is reassessed and the interventions are evaluated. A guide detailing improvement actions has also been developed. It is applicable to a wide range of areas and is a functional tool for practically implementing this methodology.

## Results achieved

### Airbus France:

- There is greater awareness of the importance of change management and the effects psychosocial risks can have on the success of a project.
- It has been noticed that a relatively small amount of time is required by managers and participants (about six working hours for about 15 people) for significant benefits to be observed.
- Standard project management methodology in Airbus will now include more exhaustive change management that includes psychosocial risk prevention.

### Airbus Spain:

- There is greater awareness of psychosocial risks and mental health in the workplace.
- After reassessment, progress can be seen in participation and role performance factors in almost all reports.
- This approach has been successfully extended to workplaces located in different provinces.
- The range of potential actions has continued to increase and the process can now assist a larger number of workers.

*A systematic review is conducted of the impacts of the change on working conditions including workload, autonomy and recognition at work.*

# Psychosocial risk prevention measures within a major international industrial group

COMMENDED

Schneider Electric, France

[www.schneider-electric.com](http://www.schneider-electric.com)

## The issue

Schneider Electric, an electrical utilities group, has recognised the importance of psychosocial risks in the workplace since 2002. With 20 000 workers across 20 sites this is an ongoing challenge, and since 2009 the company has adopted a more systematic approach to psychosocial risks. Some areas had been detected as needing a more specific focus on psychosocial working conditions and risks. Accordingly, management decided to take measures addressing these areas.

## Action taken

The company introduced a preventive approach, outlined in a company agreement by the social partners, using internal staff and resources already available. It found that recognising the importance of the role played by people at all levels within the organisation costs very little. Systematic psychosocial risk assessment (e.g. in-depth risk assessments by a participatory working group) was central to the success of this strategy.

A prevention programme was set up for each site, filtering down to organisational unit level where necessary. This programme was designed to identify hazards and assess risks through a participatory workplace risk assessment approach. It also aimed to train staff involved in prevention to develop a common language and to be alert to psychosocial risks, including burnout, and to develop tools to prevent bullying or suicide risks and to help affected employees to remain in employment.

A training programme was set up to raise awareness of the hazards, risks and consequences of psychosocial risks and their prevention, and this was tailored to different groups of employees. Psychosocial risk assessment was also built into the planning for every reorganisation project. Furthermore, under the 'Cool Site' programme, workplaces were ergonomically improved to make them more user-friendly and improve workers' quality of life.

A committee has been set up to monitor the agreement and consolidate the data resulting from psychosocial risk assessments with a view to producing country-wide action plans.



*All those responsible for health and safety work together in the common cause of improving quality of life at work and preventing psychosocial risks effectively.*





## Results achieved

Schneider Electric has succeeded in mobilising all those responsible for health and safety — managers, the personnel department and the health and safety committee — as well the workers and their representatives to work together in the common cause of improving quality of life at work.

A significant number of managers, health and safety officers and employees have received training on psychosocial risks so far. Raising awareness about psychosocial risks is one of the priority training topics for 2015.

The first results from the measures implemented show that the number of managers suffering from burnout has decreased by more than 50%.

# Implementation of company initiatives to reduce stress and psychosocial risks

COMMENDED

Cofely Italia SpA, Italy

[www.cofely-gdfsuez.it](http://www.cofely-gdfsuez.it)

## The issue

Like many organisations trying to survive the global financial crisis, construction company Cofely Italia was being forced to keep production levels high and costs down, intensifying workloads as a result. In the midst of a corporate merger, its number of employees was gradually falling and the remaining staff felt uncertain about the future of their jobs. As all these factors could lead to potential increases in absenteeism and accidents, action was taken to establish a good psychosocial work environment.

## Action taken

Two separate studies were carried out in 2010 to identify the causes of psychosocial risks: a work-related stress risk assessment and a working environment survey. Together they confirmed the need to increase management involvement in matters relating to health and safety and to improve communication with staff and increase their awareness and involvement. They also highlighted the importance of putting initiatives in place for improving the corporate structure, primarily involving the company's managers and supervisors.



Work improvement initiatives that focused on the central role played by staff as a means of improving individual wellbeing and increasing productivity and growth were key to the success of this project. Preventive safety visits, for example, were introduced as a tool for highlighting any potential problems or difficulties but also for finding common solutions, putting forward improvement initiatives and strengthening good practice. The aspects that were looked at during the visits included work organisation, the working environment and the activities performed. One of the main challenges addressed was overcoming the perceived barriers between employees and managers, which required establishing an environment of mutual trust.

Cofely Italia recognised the fundamental and crucial role of communication. Communication to staff became more effective as managers got more involved and were present on the shop floor during operational activities, leaving behind their corporate role. This commitment from managers, combined with the involvement and participation of all employees, helped the company move towards a proactive approach and a shared prevention culture.

In addition, two preventive health initiatives were launched in 2014: screening of older workers for cardiovascular disease and a telephone service providing counselling and psychological support. Both initiatives are available free of charge to all employees.



## Results achieved

- The number of accidents fell by 85% between 2010 and 2013.
- The number of preventive safety visits conducted increased from 208 in 2011 to 438 in 2013. There has also been a considerable fall (by around 80%) in the number of cases of 'unsafe' behaviour observed.
- In a survey carried out in 2013, nearly 5% of workers answered 'To a small extent' or 'Not at all' to the statement 'I enjoy working in this environment'. This compares with over 30% in 2010. The survey also showed that workers were more motivated, felt more committed to the company and were more aware of the role they played.

*Work improvement initiatives that focused on the central role played by staff were key to the success of this project.*

# A comprehensive programme for the prevention of psychosocial risks in government administration

COMMENDED

Public Administration HR Office, Office of the Prime Minister, Malta

[opm.gov.mt/en/PAHRO/Pages/PAHRO.aspx](http://opm.gov.mt/en/PAHRO/Pages/PAHRO.aspx)

## The issue

Problems observed in a number of departments included increased sickness absence, increased staff turnover, high workload and work demands. It emerged that few risk assessments or interventions for psychosocial risks were being carried out.

## Action taken

The Public Administration of Malta addressed psychosocial risks at all levels of the organisation, from management to workers.

The personnel department developed a well-structured employee support service programme with the aim of identifying psychosocial risks and developing and implementing appropriate control measures to address these risks. The programme, which uses a preventive approach to psychosocial risks, covers the provision of risk assessments, the implementation of specific control measures, training courses, seminars, information services and counselling services. It highlighted the necessity of focusing on primary levels of intervention including the introduction of policies on work-related stress, bullying and harassment, and addressed both secondary (training and awareness sessions) and tertiary levels of intervention (individual support).

First, psychosocial risk assessments were carried out across all ministries in order to collect data about psychosocial risks and their effects on employees' wellbeing. This included formal questionnaires as well as semi-structured individual interviews and focus groups.

Next, training initiatives were organised. These included an initial 32-hour training course for senior management on psychosocial risks, which was also used to present and discuss the results from the primary risk assessments. Ten general information sessions and a launch conference were organised for management to introduce the new



programme and services, followed by 33 awareness-raising sessions for middle management and over 300 sessions for employees addressing issues of work-related stress, mental health and other psychosocial risks.

Finally, a counselling service was developed for employees whose work performance was being affected by work-related and/or personal issues, including stress. Awareness sessions and a leaflet were used to promote the use of this service.





## Results achieved

It is clear that there is increased awareness of psychosocial risks at work as well as of work-related stress among both employees and management. This cannot be quantified, but it can be felt through the number of requests for assistance from different departments as well as from employees in relation to psychosocial risks at work.

In an evaluation of training, the majority of participants stated that they were satisfied with the initiatives and suggested that ongoing awareness sessions should be organised. The majority of employees also stated that they were very satisfied with the counselling service and would recommend it to a colleague.

*Psychosocial risk assessments were carried out across all ministries in order to collect data about general wellbeing among employees and develop preventive measures.*

# An organisational approach to preventive psychosocial risk management

COMMENDED

Portuguese Institute of Oncology (O Porto) <sup>(1)</sup>, Portugal

[www.ipoportom.min-saude.pt](http://www.ipoportom.min-saude.pt)

## The issue

The Portuguese Institute of Oncology, O Porto, a specialist hospital, is a complex organisation that integrates various professional groups and services. The Institute's challenge is to ensure the effective prevention of all kinds of psychosocial risks — such as stress, burnout, emotional pressure, workplace violence and harassment — across the whole organisation.

## Action taken

Risk management at the Institute is based on an organisational approach to prevention and health promotion. It is treated as a strategic function of the organisation.

Systematic risk assessment is at the heart of the Institute's general framework for managing psychosocial risks at work. Every job is subject to the risk assessment process. A general evaluation questionnaire is used to identify the main psychosocial risks and develop an evaluation report with a proposed psychosocial intervention plan, and these are discussed by a focus group.

Written policies for the prevention of psychosocial risks ensure leadership commitment and manager and worker participation in the preventive management process. The organisation is divided into 80 areas of risk management, with each area coordinated by a local risk manager. Middle managers are responsible for managing psychosocial risk activities in their departments. Both managers and workers participate in risk management activities, such as brainstorming sessions, focus groups, questionnaires, health needs surveys and developing health and training plans. An annual training plan containing actions related

to the prevention of psychosocial risks has been drawn up. In addition, newsletters and reports are distributed on a regular basis.

The prevention of psychosocial risks and promotion of health is carried out based on the expertise of an occupational health psychologist, cooperating, when necessary, with an occupational physician and a technician responsible for safety at work. The most complex cases are handled by a psychologist or other external expert.

Finally, initiatives have been established to encourage workers to manage their own health, such as anti-smoking campaigns, encouraging physical activity breaks during work time and partnerships with local fitness facilities.



*Systematic risk assessment is at the heart of the Institute's general framework for managing psychosocial risks at work.*

<sup>(1)</sup> The implemented activities were based on a contribution from Professor J. Aguiar Coelho, Hospital Administrator and a pioneer in Portugal in the study, dissemination and implementation of stress and psychosocial risk prevention practices in hospitals.

## Results achieved

- Since 2006, 25 psychosocial risk assessments have been developed. Several health-at-work projects have also been developed.
- Since 2010, 57 training activities have been held on the topic of psychosocial risk management.
- The hospital has observed reductions in absenteeism and levels of stress.
- Because problems are resolved rather than ignored, there is improved job satisfaction among workers and an improved psychosocial work environment.



# Efficient management of psychosocial risks in a petrochemical company

COMMENDED

Slovnaft, a.s., Slovakia

[slovnaft.sk/sk](http://slovnaft.sk/sk)

## The issue

Work in Slovnaft, part of the petrochemical industry, largely involves the operation of control systems and machinery. The company aimed to identify the jobs and activities that were most hazardous not only to employees' health, but also to the company's overall performance. Human error is the source of many major industrial accidents; by systematically assessing psychosocial risks, Slovnaft aimed to reduce human error and prevent accidents and stress-related health problems.

## Action taken

Slovnaft launched its COHESIO (Compliance with Occupational Health of Ergonomics and Stress Identification Optimum) project in 2012, focusing on three areas: stress management, shift work and ergonomics. In the first area, the objectives were to eliminate or minimise psychosocial risks, improve productivity and reduce sickness absence due to the negative impact of psychosocial risks.

In cooperation with the occupational health service provider, psychosocial risk assessments have been carried out in eight production units among a total of 800 employees.

The preventive approach has been implemented with full support from management and staff engagement — workers are taking part in activities dedicated to health

protection, and are aware of the importance of this in relation to their work.

One of the main goals of the project was the identification of job positions and activities which are hazardous and where the 'human factor' plays an important role. When badly managed, they can have consequences for the employee's life and health, the neighbouring population, the environment and the company itself. Practical emergency simulation training has been implemented to reduce the probability of stress appearing in a variety of situations and to improve workers' skills to deal with them. The comfort of personal protective equipment was also examined.

In addition, a stress management seminar was organised to increase employees' understanding of this issue. A one-day training session covered, among other topics, basic knowledge of the topic, communication skills and tackling stress strategies.

Other activities included establishing preventive examinations — comprehensive, targeted medical examinations and psychological checks.

Further, activities dedicated to health promotion, such as pilates, were organised and sports clubs were set up to encourage regular exercise among employees. In the 'Healthy Food' programme, a dietary specialist assessed the foods available to staff in the canteen and suggested healthy alternatives to add to the menu.







## Results achieved

The practical emergency simulation training was considered by employees to be the most valuable training session. In the four years since the emergency simulation testing device was introduced, there have been two genuine emergencies; operators confirmed that they better handled each of these situations. In a safety-at-work survey, three-quarters of employees expressed their satisfaction with the activities that have been carried out.

The company has seen reductions in both injury rate and sickness absence.

Employees feel more content as a result of improvements in comfort when using personal protective equipment.

*Practical emergency simulation training has reduced the probability of a stressful situation emerging for workers and has also improved their skills.*

# Good work! Action for wellbeing at work

COMMENDED

Satakunta Hospital District, Finland

[www.satshp.fi](http://www.satshp.fi)

## The issue

The social and healthcare field employs technical, cleaning, catering and administrative staff, in addition to front-line medical professionals such as doctors and nurses. The different working cultures of these occupational groups, as well as the distribution of work sites across a region, have made it challenging for Satakunta Hospital District, with 3 600 employees, to develop comprehensive arrangements to ensure occupational wellbeing of employees.

## Action taken

In 2008, Satakunta Hospital District introduced a holistic wellbeing at work programme, entitled 'Good work!', with four areas of emphasis: productive leadership, securing know-how, a successful work community, and motivating and meaningful work.

In the first stage of the programme (2008–10), a number of personnel management and occupational safety and health (OSH) guidelines were updated. In the second stage (2011–13), each work unit drew up its own wellbeing at work plan. In the current stage (2014–16), work organisation and processes have been put centre stage, recognising that wellbeing at work cannot be 'created', it is something brought about by good work organisation.

Structural factors, such as leadership, managing know-how, smooth procedures, maintaining a good work atmosphere and improving the work environment, are the responsibility of supervisors. Various tools and procedures have been drawn up to address these. The employee's contribution is equally important. Employees are encouraged to extend their capabilities and take up learning opportunities.

Other measures to improve work organisation and promote a culture of OSH include the development of internal communication, supporting units during times of change and establishing OSH measures in the work units. A 'fitness-for-work' operational model, targeting employees fit for part-time work, was developed to avoid early retirements. Supervisors were given training in leadership and in supporting the development of know-how. A process for dealing with problems at work has been created and challenging situations are resolved through collaborative working.

In 2014, the 'workday activity' campaign was launched, which aims to increase physical activity among staff. The campaign started with a basic examination of the physical condition of employees. More than 1 500 employees have enrolled on the programme.





## Results achieved

- Sickness absence was reduced by 9.1 % over the period between 2013 and 2014 (equivalent to a saving of almost EUR 1.5 million).
- Fitness-for-work planning produced net savings, for 2013 alone, of over EUR 1 million.
- There was a decline in the number of accidents at work (by as much as 25 % annually).
- A study carried out among employees showed that work satisfaction has improved.

*Wellbeing at work cannot be 'created', it is something brought about by good work organisation.*



# A comprehensive approach to eliminating psychosocial risks

COMMENDED

TOFAŞ Factory, Bursa, Turkey

[www.tofas.com.tr](http://www.tofas.com.tr)

## The issue

Vehicle manufacturer TOFAŞ is aware that inappropriate working conditions, inadequate equipment and poor levels of physical activity are hazardous to employees' physical and mental health. The company wanted to create a good and pleasant working environment and promote the health of its employees.

## Action taken

TOFAŞ set up a comprehensive 'Happy Employees Programme', focusing on employees' health and wellbeing and covering both the work environment and employee activities. It has been acknowledged that the end goal —

healthy and happy employees — could not be reached without the continued support of management.

The 'Stress Analysis' element aimed to follow up on problems with work-related stress. Results are discussed by special committees, relevant activities are planned to alleviate the problems and necessary administrative steps are taken. The improvements, focusing, for example, on monitoring and adjusting work pace, are supported by senior management and play an important role in reducing work strain, with the aim of achieving a stress-free working environment.

The 'Happy Living Spaces' element also aimed to create better working conditions. Ergonomic improvements and various facilities were put in place for use by employees, including recreation areas, a shopping market and a small cinema.

In addition, customised software was implemented to minimise stress by taking employees out of their work routine. Every shift begins with five-minute exercises to allow employees to relax and prepare for work. Further, 11 recreational clubs and 9 sports clubs were set up by volunteers. These colour social and cultural life for employees and help to increase participation, promote creative thinking and establish new connections.

Finally, the 'Employee Assistance Service' provides information and advice from mental health experts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service is intended to be used not just by employees, but also by their families. It aims to support employees through difficult times while ensuring that they continue to contribute to the company.







## Results achieved

An overall improvement in general wellbeing among employees, accompanied by increased productivity and quality, has been observed. There has also been a decrease in the number of health problems, occupational accidents and human errors.

Feedback from employees verifies that efforts have been successful. Factors affecting mental and physical health conditions are managed and risks of stress and psychosocial problems that may occur have been minimised.

*Alleviating work strain and providing better working conditions, opportunities for social interaction and health promotion result in healthy and happy employees.*



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*The Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2014–15, 'Healthy Workplaces Manage Stress', emphasises the importance of recognising work-related stress and other psychosocial risks. It promotes their management as part of an integrated approach to maintaining a healthy workplace.*

*Psychosocial hazards occur in every place of work, but they can be successfully managed with limited resources. This campaign provides the support, guidance and tools needed to effectively manage work-related stress and psychosocial risks.*

The **European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)** contributes to making Europe a safer, healthier and more productive place to work. The Agency researches, develops and distributes reliable, balanced and impartial safety and health information and organises pan-European awareness-raising campaigns. Set up by the European Union in 1996 and based in Bilbao, Spain, the Agency brings together representatives from the European Commission, Member State governments, employers' and workers' organisations, as well as leading experts in each of the EU Member States and beyond.

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