

Mid-term review of the European strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work

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PURPOSE: to propose a mid-term review of the European strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work.

CONTENT: the Commission adopted in February 2007 the Communication "[Improving quality and productivity at work: Community strategy 2007-2012 on safety and health at work](#)". The strategy provides a political framework for the improvement of occupational safety and health at both national and European level and a roadmap for stakeholders to play their role in the implementation of the objectives identified by the strategy. In its [resolution of 15 January 2008](#), the European Parliament called on the Commission to report to the Parliament on progress at the half-way stage of the 2007-2012 strategy. The present Staff Working Paper is based on the results of this consultation process. It provides a summary of the main achievements and of the problems and improvements necessary to enhance the implementation of the Strategy.

It aims at laying the basis for a discussion involving all parties in the preparation of future EU policy initiatives in the area of occupational safety and health (OSH), in particular as regards the preparation of a new strategy for the period post-2012.

Conclusion: the mid-term review has given a unique opportunity to take stock of the past achievements and to set out priorities for future action within the Strategy. Several stakeholders are already closely involved in the development of the Strategy who will take further initiatives to reinforce its outcome.

From the viewpoint of the Commission services, it is possible to draw from the assessment of the first half of the development of the Strategy the following priorities for action:

- simplify and update existing legislation through the finalisation of legislative initiatives, after extensive consultation of social partners and stakeholders, notably in relation to the proposal for a new Directive on ergonomics replacing the existing Manual Handling and Display Screen Equipment Directives;
- draw conclusions from the discussion on sub-contracting, self-employed, prevention services and integration of occupational health and safety into education, and consider the use of non-binding instruments such as Recommendations;
- consolidate and further develop the encouraging results of the first phase of implementation as regards the adoption and implementation of national strategies.

Furthermore, it is necessary to start carrying out the final evaluation of the current strategy and preparing the outline of a future EU strategy. In order to identify the priorities of the new strategy a large consultation process will be launched in the course of 2011 and continued in 2012, involving all the main actors in the field.

Main recommendation: in the meantime, EU policy on health and safety at work shall maintain its course, underpinned by a three-tiered approach:

1. a solid legal framework setting binding minimum requirements for all Member States;
2. the involvement of social partners, from the EU level down to company level, through tripartite and autonomous bi-partite social dialogue;

3. a strategic vision promoting a preventive culture which is at the core of the current European Strategy on Health and Safety at Work 2007-2012.