Community strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work

2007/2146(INI) - 31/05/2013 - Follow-up document

This Commission Staff Working Document provides an evaluation of the second European Strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work.

It is based on data from a range of sources, including the results of a study outsourced by the Commission in December 2011, and a consultation with stakeholders in the context of the study and through the EU's consultative bodies in this area, i.e. the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work (ACSH) and the Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC). In addition, the outcome of the work of Scientific Committee on Occupational Exposure Limits (SCOEL) was also taken into consideration. A preliminary stocktaking of the outcomes of this evaluation was carried out for a conference organised by the Danish Presidency of the Council, held in Copenhagen in June 2012.

The **main results of the evaluation of the Strategy** are as follows:

- Relevance: all stakeholders considered it highly relevant, to the extent that it provided a framework for coordination and a common sense of direction, even if some of them did not agree fully with its content.

- Target: setting a quantitative target (25%) for reducing the number of accidents at work had positive effects, because it gave more visibility to this policy area and encouraged Member States to focus on measures to reduce the number of accidents. It may however have **diverted attention from preventing occupational diseases** (for which there is no such target).

- Implementation: the strategy helped improve the implementation of OSH legislation and clarify EU rules, making them easier to interpret. However, implementation continues to be a challenge, in particular for SMEs, for whom it is particularly difficult to cope with some regulatory requirements. While the implementation of the strategy was **effective overall** and its **objectives were achieved**, there were **gaps, particularly in terms of its impact on individual companies at local level, especially SMEs**.

- National strategies: all Member States but one now have a national strategy or equivalent measures in place. The strategy prompted many of them to adopt a national strategy or equivalent measures.

- Room for improvement: while the collection of statistical data on accidents improved, there is still room for improvement in terms of their timeliness and the comparability of data on occupational diseases. There are good indications that the 25% target for reducing the number of accidents at work has been reached. However, the objective of curbing the incidence of occupational diseases may have not been achieved.

- Shortcomings: the strategy contains many specific actions, sometimes quite detailed, but it lacks internal logic and evaluation indicators.

- Ownership: while government authorities actively participated in implementing the strategy, it was more difficult to develop a sense of ownership among the EU's partners, especially **national social partners**, who tended to be less committed overall. This is because they see the strategy as the Commission's, not theirs.

- **Overall impact:** the Strategy was very useful for guiding EU-OSHA's activities. These activities had important impacts on the level of risk awareness.

- **Research:** there is scope for more coordination in research on OSH.