Basic information

2015/2107(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2014-2020 **Subject** 4.15.15 Health and safety at work, occupational medicine	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	CHRISTENSEN Ole (S&D)	10/12/2014
	Shadow rapporteur BACH Georges (PPE) MCINTYRE Anthea (ECR) WEBER Renate (ALDE) SYLIKIOTIS Neoklis (GUE/NGL) DELLI Karima (Verts/ALE) AGEA Laura (EFDD)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality	BORZAN Biljana (S&D)	06/05/2015

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	THYSSEN Marianne

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
06/06/2014	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2014)0332	Summary

21/05/2015	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
13/10/2015	Vote in committee		
26/10/2015	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0312/2015	Summary
24/11/2015	Debate in Parliament		
25/11/2015	Decision by Parliament	T8-0411/2015	Summary
25/11/2015	Results of vote in Parliament		
25/11/2015	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2015/2107(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/8/01770

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE557.257	29/05/2015	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE560.889	14/07/2015	
Committee opinion	FEMM	PE557.295	15/07/2015	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A8-0312/2015	26/10/2015	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T8-0411/2015	25/11/2015	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission document (COM)	COM(2014)0332	06/06/2014	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2016)105	05/04/2016	

National parliaments

Document type	Parliament /Chamber	Reference	Date	Summary
Contribution	PT_PARLIAMENT	COM(2014)0332	16/12/2014	

EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2014-2020

2015/2107(INI) - 26/10/2015 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Ole CHRISTENSEN (S&D, DK) on the EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020.

Members recalled that occupational health and safety (OHS) is a basic interest for society that has a positive effect on companies' productivity and competitiveness and allows people to work in good health until the statutory retirement age.

They considered that workplace accidents and occupational diseases are a major societal burden and improvements in occupational health and safety across Europe can contribute to the economic recovery and to reaching the Europe 2020 objective.

The EU-OSH strategic framework: Members stressed that all employees, including in the public sector, have a right to the highest level of protection regarding health and safety in the workplace. In this regard, they called on the Commission to work out labour specific strategies covering all forms of employment under the EU-OSH regulatory framework. They also called on the Commission and the Member States to **draw up indicative reduction targets for occupational diseases and accidents at work following the 2016 review of the EUOSH strategic framework** and to rely on the latest peer-reviewed research findings when reviewing the framework.

National strategies: Members considered it essential to continue to initiate and coordinate policies at EU level while applying a stronger focus on **implementation and enforcement of the existing OSH legislation** with a view to ensuring a high level of occupational health and safety for all workers. They called on the Member States and the Commission to ensure that national OSH strategies reflect the EU-OSH strategic framework.

Implementation and compliance: Members called on the Commission to continue taking into account the specific nature and situation of SMEs and micro-enterprises when revising the strategic framework in order to help these companies **meet the objectives set as regards health and safety in the workplace**. They recalled that the SME concept covers approximately 99% of all companies in its current form. They urged the Member States to use the European funding for OSH actions in general and the development of e-tools in particular with the aim of supporting SMEs.

In parallel, they called on the Member States to support the active involvement of employees in implementing **preventive OSH measures** and on the Commission to take all necessary steps to **monitor the implementation and enforcement of OSH legislation in the Member States**.

Enforcement of the legislation: Members encouraged the Member States to follow the ILO standards and guidelines on labour inspection, to ensure that **adequate staffing and resources are available to labour inspectorates** and to improve training for labour inspectors. They also called on the Member States to **carry out stringent inspections and impose appropriate penalties on employers** using undeclared workers.

They urged the Commission and the Member States to take all necessary measures to combat undeclared work and highlighted that a majority of fatal accidents at work occurs in labour intensive sectors, in which undeclared work is more prevalent than in other sectors.

Prevention of work-related diseases and new and emerging risks: Members firmly reiterated their call on the Commission to present a proposal for a revision of Directive 2004/37/EC on the basis of scientific evidence adding more binding occupational exposure limit values where necessary and to develop an assessment system in cooperation with the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work that is based on **clear and explicit criteria**. They believe that possible regulatory overlaps resulting in unintended non-compliance should be addressed in this context.

Moreover, Members stressed the need to introduce more stringent protection of workers, taking into account not only exposure periods but also the mix of chemical and/or toxic substances to which they are exposed.

Asbestos: the report pointed out that many workers are still being exposed to asbestos in their workplaces. It called on the Commission to work closely with social partners and the Member States to promote and coordinate Member States' efforts to develop national action plans, provide adequate funding and take appropriate action for the management and safe removal of asbestos. Members reiterated their call on the Commission to **design and implement a model for asbestos screening and registration** in accordance with Article 11 of Directive 2009/148/EC. They also called for a European campaign on asbestos, and **urged the Member States to compensate workers exposed to asbestos**.

Other important measures: Members also called for the following:

- developing and implementating a programme for systematic monitoring, managing and support for workers affected by psychosocial risks, including stress, depression and burnout;
- combatting harassment and violence at work, through a **Commission proposal for a legal act based on the framework agreement on harassment and violence at work**;
- promoting awareness raising and giving greater prominence to prevention and occupational health and safety in school curricula at all levels, including during apprenticeships;
- improving the collection of reliable and comparable data on occupational diseases, exposures and hazards across all sectors, including the public sector;
- strengthening cooperation on OSH with international organisations, including ILO, OECD, G20 and WHO.

EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2014-2020

2015/2107(INI) - 06/06/2014 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to propose an EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020.

BACKGROUND: ensuring a safe and healthy work environment for over 217 million workers in the EU is a strategic goal for the European Commission, working closely with Member States, social partners, and the other EU institutions and bodies.

As risks to workers' health and safety are broadly similar across the EU. EU action on occupational safety and health (OSH) has been pursued over the years within a strategic policy framework that includes two key components:

1. a comprehensive body of EU legislation covering the most significant occupational risks and providing common definitions, structures and rules that are adapted by Member States to their different national circumstances;
2. a series of multiannual action programmes between 1978 and 2002, followed by European strategies (covering 2002-06 and 2007-12), to identify priorities and common objectives, provide a framework for coordinating national policies and promote a holistic culture of prevention.

As a result of the 2007-12 strategy, 27 Member States have put in place national strategies.

The results of the evaluation of the 2007-2012 OSH strategy confirm the value of an EU strategic framework for policy action in the field of OSH and show strong stakeholder support for a continuing EU-level strategic approach. The evaluation highlights the need to review objectives, priorities and working methods to adapt the EU policy framework to changing patterns of work, and new and emerging risks.

In 2013, the Commission launched an online public consultation to seek stakeholder views on the implementation of the previous OSH strategy. A large majority of respondents considered that more should be done to **reduce administrative burden and compliance costs for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)**. The majority of respondents also indicated that these objectives should be pursued while maintaining a high level of compliance with OSH principles, regardless of the size of the company.

In proposing a **strategic framework on health and safety at work for 2014-2020**, the Commission took due account of several contributions, all in favour of launching a strategic policy initiative, in particular those received from the European Parliament.

This framework strategy takes account of these contributions.

CONTENT: this communication sets out key strategic objectives and a range of actions for promoting workers' health and safety, based on an identification of the outstanding problems and major challenges.

Outstanding problems: despite the significant reduction in accidents and better prevention, health and safety at work in the EU still needs further improvement:

- every year more than 4 000 workers die due to accidents at work and more than three million workers are victims of a serious accident at work leading to an absence from work of more than three days;
- the costs due to work-related sick leave are unacceptably high (e.g. in Germany, 460 million days' sick-leave per year resulted in an estimated loss of productivity of 3.1% of GDP;
- costs for social security attributable to sickness or accidents are also unacceptably high (in the 2010/2011 fiscal year, the net cost to government in the UK alone was estimated at £ 2 381 million).

Main challenges: the Commission notes in particular three main challenges:

1. **improving the implementation record of Member States**, in particular by enhancing the capacity of micro and small enterprises to put in place effective and efficient risk prevention measures. Simpler, more efficient solutions need to be put in place to take into account the situation of micro and small enterprises, and therefore ensure effective protection of workers' health and safety in all workplaces regardless of size. This requires simplifying legislation where appropriate, and providing tailored guidance and support to micro and small enterprises to facilitate risk assessment;
2. improving the prevention of work-related diseases by tackling existing, **new and emerging risks.** Specific attention should be given to addressing the impact of changes in work organisation in terms of physical and mental health (notably, women can face specific risks, such as musculoskeletal disorders or specific types of cancer);
3. tackling **demographic change** given that the working population aged between 55 and 64 in the EU-27 is expected to increase by about 16 % between 2010 and 2030. In addition, reintegration and rehabilitation measures allowing for early return to work after an accident or disease are needed to avoid the permanent exclusion of workers from the labour market.

Framework strategy 2014-2020: in order to respond to these three challenges, the Commission proposes a range of actions to be implemented or developed in close collaboration with Member States, social partners and other stakeholders, grouped under seven key strategic objectives:

- **further consolidate national strategies** in light of the new EU strategic framework and in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including social partners and specialised Agencies such as the EU-OSHA;
- **facilitate compliance with OSH legislation**, particularly by micro and small enterprises by promoting the exchange of best practices;
- **better enforcement of OSH legislation** by Member States by mapping the resources of labour inspectorates and evaluate their capacity to carry out their main duties on enforcing OSH legislation;
- **simplify existing legislation** and eliminate unnecessary administrative burden;
- **address the ageing of the workforce**, emerging new risks, prevention of work-related and occupational diseases by disseminating good practice;
- **improve statistical data collection** and develop the information;

- **better coordinate EU and international efforts** to address OSH and engage with international organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The instruments used to implement this framework are EU legislation, EU funds (the European Social Fund (ESF) and other European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) to finance actions relating to OS, social dialogue, communication and information, synergies with other policy areas (research, education, etc).

Next steps: the Commission will therefore hold an open debate with key stakeholders in relevant fora about the views and proposals contained in this communication and will involve them in implementing actions where appropriate.

This strategic framework will be reviewed in 2016 in light of the results of the ex post evaluation of the EU OSH acquis and progress on its implementation.

EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2014-2020

2015/2107(INI) - 25/11/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 536 votes to 95 with 28 abstentions, a resolution on the EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020. Parliament recalled that occupational health and safety is a basic interest for society as well as an investment that has a positive effect on companies' productivity and competitiveness and allows people to work in good health.

It considered that workplace accidents and occupational diseases are a major societal burden and improvements in occupational health and safety across Europe can contribute to the economic recovery and to reaching the Europe 2020 objective.

The EU-OSH strategic framework: Parliament stressed that all employees, including in the public sector, have a right to the highest level of protection regarding health and safety in the workplace. In this regard, it called on the Commission to work out labour specific strategies covering all forms of employment under the EU-OSH regulatory framework. It welcomed the fact that many important fields of action are identified in the EU-OSH strategic framework; regrets, nevertheless, that the Commission has not set out specific targets in the framework.

Members regretted nevertheless:

- that the Commission has not set out specific targets in the framework;
- the delay in drawing up the current EU-OSH strategic framework. Members believed that the many challenges facing European workers, businesses and labour markets, including those identified by the Commission, call for measures to be applied in a timely and effective manner.

As a result, Parliament stressed that **more concrete legislative and/or non-legislative measures as well as implementation and enforcement tools** should be included in the framework, following the 2016 review.

National strategies: Parliament considered it **essential to continue to initiate and coordinate policies at EU level** while applying a stronger focus on **implementation and enforcement of the existing OSH legislation** with a view to ensuring a high level of occupational health and safety for all workers. It called on the Member States and the Commission to ensure that national OSH strategies reflect the EU-OSH strategic framework.

Implementation and compliance: Parliament called on the Commission to continue taking into account the specific nature and situation of SMEs and micro-enterprises when revising the strategic framework **in order to help these companies meet the objectives set as regards health and safety in the workplace.** It recalled that the SME concept covers approximately 99% of all companies in its current form. It urged the Member States to use the European funding for OSH actions in general and the development of e-tools in particular with the aim of supporting SMEs.

In parallel, they called on the Member States to support the active involvement of employees in implementing preventive OSH measures and on the Commission to take all necessary steps to **monitor** the implementation and enforcement of OSH legislation in **Member States**.

Enforcement of the legislation: Parliament encouraged the Member States to follow the ILO standards and guidelines on labour inspection, to ensure that **adequate staffing and resources are available to labour inspectorates and to improve training for labour inspectors**. It also called on the Member States to carry out **stringent inspections and impose appropriate penal**ties on employers using undeclared workers. It urged the Commission and the Member States to take all necessary measures to combat undeclared work and highlighted that a majority of fatal accidents at work occurs in labour intensive sectors, in which undeclared work is more prevalent than in other sectors.

Members stressed that the participation of workers and social partners at all levels is a prerequisite for the effective implementation of OSH legislation.

Prevention of work-related diseases and new and emerging risks: Members firmly reiterated their call on the Commission to present a proposal for a revision of Directive 2004/37/EC on the basis of scientific evidence adding more binding occupational exposure limit values where necessary and to develop an **assessment system in cooperation with the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work that is based on clear and explicit criteria**. They believe that possible regulatory overlaps resulting in unintended non-compliance should be addressed in this context.

Moreover, Members stressed the need to introduce more stringent protection of workers, taking into account not only exposure periods but also the mix of chemical and/or toxic substances to which they are exposed.

Asbestos: Parliament pointed out that many workers are still being exposed to asbestos in their workplaces. It called on the Commission to work closely with social partners and the Member States to promote and coordinate Member States' efforts to develop national action plans, provide

adequate funding and take appropriate action for the management and safe removal of asbestos. Members reiterated their call on the Commission to design and implement a model for asbestos screening and registration in accordance with Article 11 of Directive 2009/148/EC. They also called for a European campaign on asbestos, and **urged the Member States to compensate workers exposed to asbestos.**

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs): Parliament called on the Commission to take action on one of the most prevalent work-related health problems in Europe and submit without delay a proposal for a comprehensive legal instrument on musculoskeletal disorders to improve effective prevention and address the causes of MSDs, taking into account the problem of multicausality and the specific risks faced by women.

Other important measures: Parliament also called for the following:

- a comprehensive strategy on **endocrine disruptors** which could, where necessary, include the implementation of EU legislation on the marketing of pesticides and biocides and tighten up the rules on preventing occupational risks;
- further research on the potential OSH risks associated with new technologies such as potential risks to the health and safety of workers handling **nanotechnology;**
- developing and implementing a programme for systematic monitoring, managing and support for workers affected by psychosocial risks, including stress, depression and burnout;
- combatting harassment and violence at work, through a Commission proposal for a **legal act based on the framework agreement on harassment and violence at work;**
- promoting awareness raising and giving greater prominence to prevention and occupational health and safety in school curricula at all levels, including during apprenticeships;
- improving the collection of reliable and comparable data on occupational diseases, exposures and hazards across all sectors, including the public sector;
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