

Project PSR-BiG

Project title: Good practice and social partnership oriented solutions to reduce psychosocial risks and stress in the healthcare sector

Title in German: Sozialpartnerschaftliche Lösungen und gute Praxismodelle zur Reduzierung von psychosozialen Belastungen im Gesundheitswesen. Ein europäisches Entwicklungs- und Transferprojekt.

Start: March 15th, 2017

End: March 14th, 2019

This project aims at fostering an industrial relations dialogue between employers and employees on the topic of psychosocial stress for employees in the healthcare sector. This is to raise employers' awareness of the importance of healthy working conditions including psychosocial aspects of workplace behaviour.

Project partners are 11 organisations – both trade unions and employers in the healthcare sector in six countries: Germany, France, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Serbia.

In the PSR-BiG project, we analyse and compare the working conditions in our countries' healthcare sectors. We search for models of good practice and for channels to transfer experience with special respect to work-life-learning-balance and health-supporting management interventions.

The core idea is to identify problems and their causes in the participating south-eastern European countries (Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Serbia) and transfer to them good practice models, including from Germany and France.

Activities

Main activities of PSR-BiG are a series of workshops and conferences with experts – representatives of trade unions and employers – from all participating countries.

- 1) Expert meeting in Budapest, Hungary, focusing on the topic of management intervention to support workplace related health (15 participants)
- 2) Expert meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria, focusing on the topic of work-life-learning balance (15 participants)

3) Conference in Hanover, Germany to discuss the results of the expert meetings; to discuss models of good practice and opportunities for transfer of experience (50 participants)

The work includes

- Analysing the healthcare sectors in the participating countries for prevalence of workplace-related stress (statistical and qualitative information)
- Identify the main reasons for workplace-related stress and other psychosocial risks
- Identify good practice to reduce workplace-related stress and other psychosocial risks and transfer this good practice to the other countries

Participants of these events are also acting as multipliers; they transfer the results back to their home organisations.

There is a dissemination plan to make sure that the project results are being popularized in relevant institutions in the participating countries. Means of disseminations are

- Presentations and background talks in the home institutions and their affiliated bodies
- Circular letters to members or member organisations
- Meetings with the national health experts of social partners in the participating countries
- All project results will be made available to the public on the project website.
- Contact to specialised media (of trade unions, of employers), press releases, etc.
- Workshops and conferences to disseminate the results, including on European level
- Publishing of the results in print and on the websites of the participating institutions.

Tangible outputs

The PSR-BiG project will produce the following tangible outputs:

- Two short video documentaries
- Leaflets in the languages of all participating countries, to achieve a high level of dissemination
- Written reports on the project results
- Recommendations for the expert audience

Project background

According to recent studies, 50-60 per cent of the days of temporary work disability in Europe are caused by stress and workplace-related psychosocial risks; this rate is

actually on the rise, as stress on the job is, for various reasons, increasing. The problem is particularly pronounced in the healthcare and nursing sector. Moreover, especially in the nursing sector many employees are women, who still have to cope with the dual burden of work and caring for their family.

Psychosocial risks and work-related stress are some of the most prevalent challenges in the area of occupational health and safety in Europe (Eurofound/EU-OSHA, 2014). In addition to individual hardship experienced by the employees, there are also considerable implications on the macro-economic level.

This problem is visible in the EU countries participating in the PIB-BiG project. Work-related stress is much more prominent in the healthcare sector than in the average work force. (EU-OSHA, 2009)

In Germany, work-related stress has been growing over the past 10 years in general. Employees in the healthcare sector are far more frequently exposed to stress factors (23 %) than average employees from all sectors (16 %).

For the other participating countries – Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Serbia – little data is available. However, experts from these south-east European countries have emphasized the challenge of work-related stress and psychosocial risks. They did so e.g. in the project “*Aging Staff in Hospitals (ABiK)*”, and in other forms of international cooperation.

Higher levels of stress amongst employees in the healthcare sector in South-Eastern European countries are usually seen as being caused by the comparatively lesser density of doctors and nursing staff there. PSR-BiG will provide an analytical report in order to improve the availability of data on this issue.

Predecessor projects

This project builds on the results of a joint project of HOSPEEM (Hospital and Healthcare Employers Association) and EPSU (European Public Service Unions) regarding “*Assessing health and safety risks in the hospital sector and the role of the social partners in addressing them: the case of musculoskeletal disorders and psychosocial risks and stress at work*” where the effect of preventive measures was assessed, and necessary procedures especially for hospitals were discussed. PSR-BiG will continue this approach by extending it on focal topics in the area of psychosocial risks and work-related stress in the entire healthcare sector.

Consortium

The project consortium includes the following organisations:

- *Ver.di* (Public Service Workers Union), region Lower-Saxony and Bremen, Germany (applicant)
- *Bildungsvereinigung Arbeit und Leben Niedersachsen Ost gGmbH*; adult education provider of the trade unions in Lower Saxony, Germany
- *Demographieagentur für die niedersächsische Wirtschaft* (Demographic Agency for the Economy of Lower Saxony), an institution run by trade unions
- *Granski Sindikat Zdravstva i Socialne Zaštite - Nezavisnost* (Union of Employees in the Health and Social Protection of Serbia)
- *Egészségügyben Dolgozók Független Szakszervezete* (EDFSZ), Independent Trade Union of Health Workers, Hungary
- Federation of Trade Unions in Health Services, Bulgaria
- *Federația SANITAS din România*; healthcare trade union in Romania
- *Fédération CFDT Santé Sociaux*; France
- European Hospital and Healthcare Employers' Association (HOSPEEM), Brussels, Belgium
- European Public Service Union (EPSU), Brussels, Belgium

Further information

See the project presentation on the website of *Arbeit und Leben*, Hannover.
www.aul-nds.de/62/index.php?id=306