



Healthy
Workplaces
MANAGE
DANGEROUS
SUBSTANCES



2018-19 Healthy Workplaces Manage Dangerous Substances: Campaign Partnership Meeting – SUMMARY

Brussels, 20 March 2018

Ahead of the official launch of the 2018-19 [Healthy Workplaces Manage Dangerous Substances](#) campaign, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) met with previous and potential official campaign partners and media partners in Brussels to discuss the new campaign and what it means to be a campaign partner.



EU-OSHA's Director Dr Christa Sedlatschek welcomed participants and thanked the many returning campaign partners and media partners for their continuing dedication to EU-OSHA's campaigns. She was clearly delighted to see many new faces in the audience too, and was confident that the morning's packed programme would convince many to pledge their support to the upcoming campaign.

Dr Sedlatschek also acknowledged the ongoing commitment and support of the European Commission, extending her warm thanks to Stefan Olsson, Director of Employment and Social Legislation, Social Dialogue, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, for his participation in the partnership meeting and his continued support of the Agency's work. She emphasised that EU-OSHA's work is fully in line with and supportive of the Commission's [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), particularly its goal to achieve safe and healthy workplaces for all. Dr Sedlatschek went on to stress the relevance of the upcoming campaign. The topic — managing dangerous substances in the workplace — is of the utmost importance and, as such, is high on the European agenda. Unacceptable numbers of people are exposed to dangerous substances at work across Europe, with negative consequences for worker well-being, business productivity and the economy. Dr Sedlatschek highlighted that a lack of awareness of which substances are dangerous, who is at risk and employers' responsibilities when it comes to managing risks is a major problem, particularly among small enterprises and in certain sectors.

The 2018-19 campaign aims to:

- **raise awareness** of dangerous substances in the workplace and the impact they have on workers;
- create a **prevention culture: risk assessment** and the **elimination** or **substitution** of dangerous substances should be standard practices for all organisations;
- focus on **carcinogens** and **vulnerable groups** of workers at particularly high risk;
- raise awareness of existing **legislation** and **policies**, and provide guidance on how to implement them.

The Director underlined that campaign partners are essential to achieving these goals and to the campaign's success: 'you can really make a difference ... you have the power to influence workers and employers, leading by example'. Not only that, but she emphasised that organisations will 'increase their profiles' and 'reap the benefits' by being part of the campaign — a win-win situation for all.

The campaign and the EU policy framework: the European Commission perspective

As touched upon by Dr Sedlatschek, the topic of this campaign is a timely one in terms of wider European policy developments. Stefan Olsson provided the audience with his take on the campaign in the context of [European occupational safety and health \(OSH\) policy](#) and the Social Pillar.

In recent years, the European Commission has been working towards establishing a comprehensive policy framework that is based on the needs of the people, businesses, trade unions and governments. The special mention of OSH in the Social Pillar, and the high-level political backing adds new momentum to tackling OSH issues at the policy level. Marianne Thyssen, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, has been instrumental in moving OSH up the policy agenda. In the context of the upcoming campaign, her initiative to revise the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive is particularly relevant.



However, Mr Olsson stressed that such political support for OSH and the provision of legislation and regulations can only be effective if they are applied at the workplace level. This is where EU-OSHA comes in. EU-OSHA is specialised and has been successful in reaching out to workplaces, and facilitating dialogue between companies, governments and social partners. As such, the Commission considers EU-OSHA's awareness-raising campaigns 'absolutely essential' for translating policy into practice.

Mr Olsson assured potential partners that working with EU-OSHA and the wider OSH community is worthwhile: 'their commitment and knowledge is impressive, making it a very positive and rewarding area to work in'. He

concluded by echoing the words of Christa Sedlatschek, reiterating the important role played by official campaign partners and media partners in making sure that the campaign's tools and resources reach those that need them most, and highlighting the importance of working together to achieve a common goal: 'together, we can make a real difference'.

Question and answer session

The first part of the morning concluded with a question and answer session, giving the audience the opportunity to clarify any points and offer their thoughts on the issues. The interest among participants was evident from the lively discussion that ensued. A range of topics relevant to the campaign was covered, for instance:

- **[The Roadmap on Carcinogens](#)**: how the new campaign will support the objectives of this initiative.
- **The recent review of [REACH legislation](#) and its limitations**: in many workplaces, workers are exposed to dangerous substances not covered by REACH, for instance process-generated substances or naturally occurring substances such as flour dust.
- **The importance of cooperation among all relevant stakeholders**: political backing and legislation are important steps towards instilling a culture of prevention, but, to be effective, any OSH initiatives must be based on a dialogue with everyone involved, including employers, workers, governments and social partners.

The 2018-19 Healthy Workplaces Manage Dangerous Substances campaign

Lothar Lieck, Project Manager at EU-OSHA, introduced the new campaign in more detail, explaining the issues, outlining the campaign's objectives and describing the campaign materials, products and activities that will be used to achieve these objectives.

He began by emphasising that the campaign aims to target, in particular, those workplaces that are not typically associated with the use of dangerous substances, such as hairdressing salons, bakeries, cleaning companies and car

repair workshops, in which dangerous substances are often generated by work processes or are derived from naturally occurring substances. In such businesses, which are often small or medium sized, awareness of dangerous substances is generally low and few resources are devoted to managing the associated risks.

He noted that EU-OSHA's network — national focal points, official campaign partners and media partners, the Enterprise Europe Network, European social partners and European institutions — is key to the success of the Healthy Workplaces Campaigns. As such, to fulfil the objectives of the upcoming campaign, EU-OSHA plans to further develop and strengthen this network and communicate nine key messages:



1. everyone must work together to establish a prevention culture;
2. dangerous substances affect your workplace;
3. managing dangerous substances is as important and relevant as ever;
4. a prevention approach should be adopted whenever possible;
5. eliminate the risk if possible by considering practical solutions for substitution;
6. guidance and support are available;
7. carcinogens require special attention;
8. certain groups of workers are more at risk;
9. EU and national legislation are in place.

As for all the Healthy Workplaces Campaigns, a range of information materials, tools and resources have been developed or are being developed for the 2018-19 campaign, all of which will be accessible from the dedicated [campaign website](#).

Key dates

Official launch of campaign and Good Practice Awards competition: 24 April 2018

European Weeks for Safety and Health at Work: October 2018 and 2019

Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Exchange event: first quarter of 2019

Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards Ceremony and Summit: November 2019



A database of resources will provide information on how dangerous substances are managed effectively at the Member State and international levels, and will also contain a collection of good practice examples as well as several case studies. Facts and figures on workplace exposure to dangerous substances are being collated as part of an ongoing research study, and seven campaign info sheets will provide user-friendly guidance on different aspects of managing dangerous substances. In April 2018, the first version of an interactive dangerous substances e-tool will be launched. This tool will provide workplaces with a risk assessment guide and tailored advice on practical measures to improve the management of dangerous substances based on their particular needs.

Question and answer session

The floor was opened once again for participants' questions, who were keen to find out more about the specifics of the campaign and the accompanying materials. For instance, participants asked how the resources might be used to support the management of nanomaterials, which are increasingly being recognised as potentially hazardous in Europe's workplaces. Mr Lieck explained that a campaign info sheet specifically on nanomaterials is expected before

the end of 2018, and that the campaign's database of resources also contains some guidance relevant to nanomaterials.

The discussion also touched upon the availability of resources in different languages and tailored to country-specific legislation. National focal points play an important role in this regard, as they can request translations of certain materials into relevant languages and can also add information specific to their national contexts.

The 2018-19 partnership offers

EU-OSHA runs the largest occupational safety and health campaigns in the world, but their success is very much dependent on the efforts of the official campaign partners and media partners. The interest from potential campaign partners in the *Healthy Workplaces Manage Dangerous Substances* campaign has been unprecedented, and expectations of quickly reaching the maximum number of 100 official campaign partners are high.



The official campaign partnership offer

Before presenting the 2018-19 official campaign partnership offer to participants, Heike Klempa, EU-OSHA's Campaigns Manager, outlined some of the achievements of the *Healthy Workplaces for All Ages* official campaign partners: almost 200 campaign-related activities were carried out during the 2016-17 campaign, from hosting conferences and meetings and providing training sessions, to publishing guidance materials and attending good practice exchange events; and 944 online promotion activities were implemented.

Good practice exchange, an initiative of the campaign partners themselves, has added value for both the partners and the Agency: it allows partners to improve their own OSH practices and network with like-minded organisations, and reinforces the messages of EU-OSHA's campaigns to a wider audience. The Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards recognise examples of good OSH practice from across Europe and, in 2017, multinational software company SAP won the official campaign partner category of these awards.

The upcoming campaign will mark 10 years of official campaign partnership. Ms Klempa took the opportunity to thank all involved in official campaign partnership to date and looks forward to working with many of these partners during the new campaign. The campaign partnership model has proved highly successful during this time, with the underlying principle being that, by getting involved in the campaign, official partners are rewarded with a wealth of benefits:

- **Increased visibility and recognition:** partners have a dedicated section on the campaign website, and details of their activities are also published in the monthly newsletter OSHmail (more than 76,000 subscribers) and promoted through EU-OSHA's website and its Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter channels (more than 50,000 followers).
- **Networking and good practice exchange:** partners can participate in good practice exchange events, network with like-minded organisations, EU-OSHA's national focal points and other EU OSH experts.
- **Invitations to EU-OSHA's flagship events:** partners are invited to attend events and are given the opportunity to present at workshops, meetings and conferences.
- **Access to campaign material:** each partner will receive campaign publications and promotional material, and a subscription to EU-OSHA's bi-monthly campaign newsletter.

In return, EU-OSHA expects all official campaign partners to be actively involved in the campaign, for instance by disseminating campaign materials among their networks, sharing campaign messages through social media, participating in the good practice exchange initiative or organising campaign-related activities. To find out more, including how to apply, Ms Klempa invited participants to check out the [2018-19 campaign partnership offer](#) online.

The campaign media partnership offer

Campaign media partners are another crucial asset of EU-OSHA's Healthy Workplaces Campaigns, ensuring wide media coverage across Europe. For the 2016-17 campaign, the 34 media partners, from 14 different countries, were responsible for 50% of the total number of campaign-related online articles, and also 1,361 social media posts and 62 print articles. The 2016-17 campaign media partners also organised various activities and events, including a live question and answer Twitter chat to promote the Healthy Workplaces for All Ages e-guide and a conference on health and work in a changing world. In addition, they visited companies and actively collaborated with national focal points.

Birgit Müller, Communications Officer at EU-OSHA, outlined the 2018-19 campaign's media partnership offer. As in previous campaigns, any European or national media outlet with an interest in OSH, or, for instance, human resources, business or management, is eligible to apply. Media partners benefit from increased visibility, improving their reputation among the European OSH community, and opportunities to network with and interview influential players in the OSH field. From the results of a 2017 survey, it is clear that previous media partners have appreciated these benefits: over 90% of the respondents said that they would be re-applying for media partnership for the 2018-19 campaign.

Media partners, like official campaign partners, must commit to an active involvement in the campaign, by, for instance, promoting the campaign's aims and objectives through social media, publishing at least five campaign-related articles a year or displaying the campaign logo on their websites. A good working knowledge of English and reporting to EU-OSHA on campaign-related activities each year are also requirements. Those interested can find out more about the [2018-19 campaign media partnership offer](#) online.

Question and answer session

Participants were interested in the selection criteria for campaign partners and why the decision had been taken to limit the number of official campaign partners to 100. Heike Klempa emphasised that, by restricting the numbers in this way, EU-OSHA would be able to guarantee meaningful levels of engagement with all its partner organisations, ensuring maximum benefit for both partners and the Agency. Some further examples of how campaign partners could get involved in the campaign, for instance by sharing experiences of using new technologies or including sessions that promote campaign-related topics at industry events, were also discussed.



Experiences and expectations of previous partners

Compelling insights into what is involved in being an official campaign or media partner were provided by some representatives of previous campaign partners.

Siemens AG

Lars Hoffmann, Vice President for Safety, Environmental Protection, Health Management and Safety, explained why Siemens values campaign partnership and the many benefits it brings. At Siemens, there is a firm belief that 'every employee has the right to remain safe and healthy', so OSH management is a top priority. In 2012, the company launched its 'Zero Harm Culture', which applies not only to Siemens employees, but also to employees of its partner organisations, suppliers and contractors throughout the world.



Mr Hoffmann outlined how campaign partnership has contributed to these global efforts to ensure high standards of safety and health, and urged everyone in the room to support the new campaign. First and foremost, the wealth of tools and resources produced by EU-OSHA for each campaign are free and easily adaptable to a company's needs. In addition, of particular importance to Siemens as a global organisation, the materials are translated into many different languages. Siemens uses these materials in many countries within Europe, but also outside Europe, for instance in Africa and Asia, where the challenges are often far greater.

Siemens distributes materials related to safety and health via its internal social network, and EU-OSHA's campaign materials have been particularly well received and effective among employees, sparking fruitful good practice exchange. Siemens also distributes EU-OSHA's resources externally, among partner organisations.

Siemens is looking forward to continuing its collaboration with EU-OSHA in the upcoming campaign on dangerous substances, a topic that is high on the company's agenda. Managing dangerous substances at Siemens is very complex. The company operates in 200 countries worldwide and one of its main challenges is dealing with the differing standards and legislation in these countries, while still ensuring that all workers, at all stages of the supply chain, are protected from dangerous substances. The company also handles and ships many different types of dangerous substance, from nanoparticles to radioactive sources and asbestos.

By partnering once again with EU-OSHA, Mr Hoffmann is confident that, with the help of the campaign's tools and resources, Siemens will continue to lead the way in prioritising employee safety and health, sharing good practices with other campaign partners.

Gesunde Arbeit magazine

Otmar Pichler, Editor in Chief of *Gesunde Arbeit* magazine, campaign media partner since 2014, was next up. The mission of *Gesunde Arbeit*, which is supported by the Austrian Chamber of Labour and the Austrian Trade Union Federation, is to raise awareness of OSH and related issues. It reaches a large audience: four issues of the magazine are printed each year, amounting to more than 244,000 copies, and the website receives more than 12,000 page views per month.

Mr Pichler began by outlining the activities undertaken by *Gesunde Arbeit* in its role as media partner during the 2014-15 campaign on managing stress and the 2016-17 campaign on healthy ageing in the workplace. *Gesunde Arbeit* actively contributed to both campaigns by sharing campaign news and information, promoting, attending and reporting on campaign events, including the campaign summits, and covering topics related to each campaign in its print magazine and newsletter and on its website. It has published more than 70 campaign-related articles, disseminated campaign materials and worked closely with EU-OSHA and its national focal points.

Gesunde Arbeit has already started to promote the new campaign: it has launched a dedicated page on the magazine's website and the May 2018 issue of *Gesunde Arbeit* will focus on the topic of dangerous substances.

Mr Pichler concluded by appealing to the audience to get involved: 'We all care about safety and health at work Let's work together and make the new campaign a success!'



UNI Europa

Barbara Binder, Director of UNI Europa Commerce, explained why she thinks partnership with EU-OSHA is important for her organisation and those it represents. UNI Europa is the European trade union federation for service workers, and its members are national trade unions that represent many different sectors. As Director of UNI Europa Commerce, Ms Binder is particularly concerned with the needs of workers in retail and wholesale. Although commerce workers are regularly exposed to dangerous substances through the products they handle or ship, for instance clothing, leather goods and hairdressing products, the level of knowledge and awareness among these workers is low, and many businesses lack the expertise to deal with dangerous substances.



Ms Binder emphasised the complexity inherent in managing dangerous substances in commerce: this topic is relatively new to the commerce sector, many of the relevant substances, such as nanomaterials, are poorly understood and often complex mixtures of substances are used. She hopes that, by working with EU-OSHA during this campaign to disseminate information and share good practice among its members, UNI Europa will raise awareness of dangerous substances and increase the ability of businesses in the commerce sector to identify risks and take appropriate measures and preventive actions. In fact, UNI Europa Commerce is particularly looking forward to working with EU-OSHA and social partners to develop risk assessment tools specifically adapted to the needs of commerce.

Ms Binder concluded by expressing how pleased she is that UNI Europa Commerce is embarking on this campaign partnership, which she hopes will achieve consistency in the management of dangerous substances at all stages of the supply chain in Europe and beyond.

Conclusions and next steps

To close, Dr Sedlatschek reiterated that it is the campaign partners that allow EU-OSHA to reach out to enterprises of all sizes and in all sectors, and that the success of the *Healthy Workplaces Manage Dangerous Substances* campaign is dependent on this partnership. Potential new campaign partners should apply by 20 May and Dr Sedlatschek once again reminded participants of the benefits of being recognised as a partner of a campaign that is supported, at the highest European levels, by the European Commission, the European Parliament, EU social partners and national governments. In addition to the campaign's wealth of resources and promotional materials, partners will have access to a large network of organisations that lead the way in OSH, and will have many opportunities to exchange knowledge and good practice.



Dr Sedlatschek also paid tribute to Commissioner Thyssen and Stefan Olsson for their commitment to and enthusiasm for EU-OSHA's campaigns. As the full implications of the UK's withdrawal from the EU have yet to be realised, EU agencies face many unknown challenges, and, therefore, now more than ever, EU-OSHA greatly appreciates the support and positive feedback it receives from the European Commission.

In 2019, a special event will be held to mark 10 years of campaign partnership and Dr Sedlatschek looks forward to seeing many of the 'partnership pioneers' at this event. In her final remarks, she once again thanked all previous campaign partners for their contributions to past campaigns and for being 'ambassadors of OSH, not just in Europe, but throughout the world'.