

Workshop 13

Stress

Facilitators: Brian Robinson, UK, Brian.robinson@nasuwt.net, Ian Draper, UK, iandraper@nausuwt.net (both from UK National Work Stress Network)

Report

Ian Draper and Brian Robinson

There were 13 participants in the workshop. The group consisted of representatives from Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Norway and the UK. Unfortunately it was not possible for translators to support Italian colleagues, but separate contact was made with them outside the workshop, and a valuable Italian paper prepared in English, was circulated to all participants, and formed the basis of a discussion period.

The group considered how they might work together to revive the European Stress Network, and it was agreed to keep in touch, and perhaps to consider meeting again at a future UK National Work Stress Network event.

The workshop considered the causes and effects of stress in the workplace, discussed audits and risk assessment, defined terms common to the subject of stress and bullying and examined how employees and employers should seek to work together to eradicate the causes of workplace stress-factors.

Charter

The group examined the European Hazards Charter and in lights of local experiences and workshop discussions made the following suggestions as proposed amendments:

Stress

There is a need for a European Directive on workplace stress to be translated into member state law and regulation. (This was stated in the final plenary session).

Such a directive and associated laws to reflect all aspects of the work environment, the impact of shifting worker populations, multinational demands made on Europe and world-wide worker groups and the essential involvement of Safety Representatives in progressing improvements in individual and company-wide workstations.

General issues

It was felt that the charter as a whole was dated, and needs a full update, perhaps with:-
Executive Summary or synoptic front page, with bullet points backed up by more detailed demands of a generic nature.

Format perhaps could lead to the development of a booklet or handouts, with single pages/handouts covering specific topics, and including practical advice

A Web-based information platform

Demands within the changing political contexts and management strategies

Greater emphasis of the role of the worker and TU safety representative roles, and the benefits of organizing

Requirements that all new work processes are risk assessed prior to implementation

Clear direct references to the politico-economic context presented by the Norwegian speaker in the opening Plenum

Reference to John Ruskin's statement of 1871 - In order that people may be happy in their work these three things are needed:

- they must be fit for it
- they must not do too much of it
- they must have a sense of success in it.