

The Commission's Initiative on MSDs

Recent Developments in Social Partner Consultation at the European Level

**MSDs – A challenge for the Telecommunication Industry
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The Strategic Framework of the EC's initiative on MSDs

- **Commission Communication COM(2002) 118 final – "Adapting to change in work and society: a new Community strategy on health and safety at work 2002-2006"**
 - **As a general task:** Adapting the existing legal framework to changes in scientific knowledge, technical progress and the world of work
 - **In particular:** Taking account of the emerging problem of MSDs in the light of the existing Community legislation / Proposing, if necessary, amendments or new legal provisions in fields in which coverage is still incomplete

The Strategic Framework of the EC's initiative on MSDs

■ First phase consultation of the social partners on work-related MSDs

- Launched by the Commission in November 2004, in compliance with article 138(2) of the Treaty establishing the European Community.
- European Social Partners have been asked to express their views on:
 - The appropriateness of the existing Community legal framework to prevent MSDs
 - The nature and scope of a possible new initiative at Community level
 - The favoured approach (binding / non-binding instrument / a combination of them)
- About 10 European social partner organisations have transmitted their views

BACKGROUND

MSDs: one of the major OSH problems in Europe

- **MSDs account for between 40% and 50% of all work-related diseases and affect over 40 million workers in the EU**
- **Some reference data (EU-15) – Perceived Health Risk**

(source: Third European Survey on Working Conditions, 2000, European Foundation Dublin)

- About one third of European employees (33%) complaining of backache in 2000
- About one fourth of European employees (23%) affected by neck and shoulder pains
- Lower and upper limb disorders estimated at 13% and 12% respectively
- **Percentages in the new 10 MSDs** are the same as EU-15, except for lower (22%) and upper limbs (20%) disorders

(source: Working Conditions in the Acceding Countries, 2003, European Foundation Dublin)

BACKGROUND

MSDs: a major cost burden for industry and society

- Available cost estimates of MSDs put the cost at between 0.5% and 2% of GDP
- MSD responsible for 43% of the cost of work-related health issues

The EU Legal Framework

- **At present, no specific legal provision aiming at work-related MSDs**
- **However several European directives apply, either directly or indirectly, to MSDs and their prevention, in particular:**
 - Council Directive 89/391/EEC (Framework Directive)
 - Council Directive 90/270/EEC (work with display screen equipment)
 - Council Directive 90/269/EEC (manual handling of loads)
 - Council Directive 2002/44/EC (vibration)

The EU Legal Framework

■ Some problems with the current legislation

Lack of specificity in relation to:

- Types of diseases
- Types of activities
- Risk factors

The EU Legal Framework

- Impact assessment of the current legislation
 - Commission Communication COM(2004) 62 (framework directive and first five individual directives)
 - Great variety of protection levels within the EU

Next steps

- **Second phase consultation of the social partners on work-related MSDs**
 - To be launched later this year pursuant to Article 138(3) of the Treaty establishing the European Community

Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for your kind
attention