



IMPROVING METHODS OF PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS ANTICIPATION IN EUROPE

LEARNING FROM CASES: DRIVERS, BARRIERS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARTICIPATIVE PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS PREVENTION PROCESSES.

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Drivers/Recommendations

- ☺ Regulatory framework including compulsory address of psychosocial risks on the basis of risk assessment and improvement of working conditions; including compulsory workers' reps participation
- ☺ Enforcement of this regulation by authorities (i.e. specific labor inspectorate agenda, mainstream approaches by OHS public institutions, corresponding awareness campaigns and tools, development of tools)
- ☺ Approach to psychosocial risk prevention on the basis of adequate and standardized measurement instruments that foster participative processes
- ☺ Conducting prevention processes based on step by step procedured (formal, written) protocol
- ☺ Designating a joint (bipartite: workers' reps + management reps with the support of professionals) working team to lead the whole prevention process



Drivers/Recommendations

- ☺ Such a working team members must have decision and execution power; be propositive/active much more than controller or follower of OH&S professionals
- ☺ The role of health and safety professionals should be to generate such cooperation: prevention experts could become facilitators if they are able to find common spaces for dialogue
- ☺ Agreement on calendar (deadlines for each phase) is required
- ☺ Risk assessment results need to be easy to understand, reports have to present exposure problems as clearly identified and localized as possible
- ☺ Strengthened communication is required to inform continuously all company members about each decision of the working team on the prevention process



Drivers/Recommendations

- ☺ Workers/middle management direct participation needs to be: 1. Compulsory for the assessment phase and developed through individually standardized, anonymous questionnaires, 2. Optional, only when necessary and decided by the joint working team for preventive measures design and implementation using group approach
- ☺ Small/simple changes helps with more “revolutionary” working conditions changes
- ☺ Implementing changes in working conditions facilitates further changes since it builds trust and credibility
- ☺ Formulate preventive measures and changes of working conditions in specific terms and include follow-up measures
- ☺ If key players in the change of working conditions participate in the decision-making that leads to such changes, implementation will be easier, and this will facilitate the breaking of resistance to change



Facilitators/Recommendations

- 😊 Visualising and taking advantage of the economical impact of psychosocial risk prevention and improvement of working conditions and health
- 😊 Firm competitiveness orientation should be based on quality, innovation, development, cooperation and trust.



Barriers

- ⊖ High unemployment / Existence of informal (unregulated) employment
- ⊖ Absence of regulatory framework (especially in Turkey)
- ⊖ Imbalance of power between workers' reps and employers (no rights or no possibilities to exercise them, low unionisation, low union coverage, authoritarian labour relations tradition)
- ⊖ Mainstream approaches to psychosocial risks based on injury (medicalization of psychosocial risks) or on individual features (i.e. personality issues) instead of primary prevention, changing working conditions
- ⊖ Contradictory mainstream approaches either at institutional or company level regarding psychosocial risks: risk prevention vs. risk management
- ⊖ Possibility to use psychosocial risk assessment tools that do not comply with scientific or legal standards



Barriers

- ☹️ Poor financial situation of a company
- ☹️ Excessive competition (national and international) for suppliers and pressure from multinational corporations to reduce costs and especially labour costs
- ☹️ Labour management practices leading to precarious working conditions (turnover, low wages, availability demands on schedules, work posts, work centres, individualisation, outsourcing) and to workers' inequalities
- ☹️ Firm competitiveness based on labour costs reduction through worsening of working conditions and /or leading to individualisation and competition between workers
- ☹️ Management reluctance to share power on work organisation issues
- ☹️ Authoritative labour management practices



Barriers

- ⊖ Technocratic approach by OH&S services (prevention without social agents' participation) and/or bureaucratic style (based on documents and formalities without factual changes of working conditions); commercial exploitation of psychosocial risk prevention
- ⊖ Lack of cooperation between OH&S workers' reps and occupational health professionals (except in France where workers reps can choose them)
- ⊖ Unpredictability of labour inspectorate (ideology, lack of training concerning psychosocial risks, differences due to regional institutional settings)
- ⊖ Absence of independent unionised OH&S workers' reps / "yellow" trade unionism
- ⊖ Lack of union coordination (workers' reps working on different committees from same trade union)
- ⊖ Lack of unity of action by different trade unions at national and company level



Barriers

- ⊖ Middle management resistance since working conditions changes involving participation makes them feel questioned or losing power; middle managers unprepared for new management style (need for new skills and knowledge)
- ⊖ Workers' fear of retaliation
- ⊖ Workers' incredulity about working conditions changes
- ⊖ Obstructive attitudes against participative process leading to long-lasting processes without working conditions changes