



Malta-EU Steering
& Action Committee

Consultation Session on Safer and Healthier Work for All

MEUSAC, together with the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties and the Occupational Health and Safety Authority, is organising a consultation session in relation to the European Commission Communication on [Safer and Healthier Work for All - Modernisation of the EU Occupational Safety and Health Legislation and Policy](#).

The dossier states that, over the last 25 years, the European Union (EU) has been a front-runner in setting high standards of worker protection against health and safety risks at work on its territory, and has promoted high levels of protection also in third countries. Occupational safety and health policy is contributing to the objective of improving the safety and health of workers in the EU.

According to the most recent available data the incidence rate of deaths in accidents at work dropped by almost 1/4 as compared with the situation in 2008, however, with different trends in individual Member States.

The percentage of EU workers reporting at least one health problem caused or made worse by work decreased by nearly 10%. Investment in occupational safety and health makes a lot of sense. It improves people's lives by preventing work-related illness and accidents and also has a tangible positive effect on EU economies. It leads to improved business productivity and performance. At macroeconomic level, it contributes to national competitiveness. Different studies prove that the employer will have a return in double for every euro spent on occupational safety and health.

Modern occupational safety and health policy must consist of clear, up-to-date rules at EU and national level. Businesses must be helped in complying with the rules and in drawing maximum benefits from their occupational safety and health efforts in the form of healthier, happier and more productive workforces. This is particularly true for micro- and small enterprises, where the potential positive impact of better occupational safety and health is the greatest but which at the same time face constraints in understanding and applying the existing rules. Whilst binding rules enforced on the ground are crucial, a culture of compliance in businesses of all sizes and amongst workers is what truly makes the difference on the ground. Such a culture of compliance must be forged from early days of education onwards, be it in professional education or management training.

It must be nourished through permanent awareness raising efforts and exchanges of best practices, and kept on alert through inspections which ideally go beyond mere checking and sanctioning and help identify better ways of compliance. Social dialogue has made a huge contribution to improving health and safety, at EU, national, sectoral and company level. It has not lost any of its relevance in today's context. On the contrary, social dialogue will be crucial in implementing the actions contained in this Communication.

Modern occupational safety and health policy relies on many actors working together with common sense and a common conviction that high standards of protection of people's health and safety at work are everybody's business.