



**Doc. 013-25**

**The Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work**

**Opinion**

**State of Play and Future Impulses regarding the  
EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work**

Adopted on 10/12/2025

The Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work (ACSH)

**HAVING REGARD TO:**

- The EU occupational safety and health (OSH) legal acquis, including the Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work (Framework Directive 89/391/EEC<sup>1</sup>);
- the Council Decision of 22 July 2003 setting up an Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work<sup>2</sup>;
- the Interinstitutional Proclamation on the European Pillar of Social Rights proclaimed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission<sup>3</sup>;
- the Communication from the European Commission (COM) “EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027 – Occupational safety and health in a changing world of work” issued on 28 June 2021<sup>4</sup> (EU OSH Strategic Framework);
- the mandate of the ACSH Working Party “EU Strategic Framework, National Strategies and ACSH Work Programme” (WP Strategy) adopted on 18 May 2022<sup>5</sup>;
- the “Occupational safety and health (OSH) stocktaking summit conclusions” published by

<sup>1</sup> OJ L 183, 29.6.1989, p. 1-8

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 218, 13.9.2003, p. 1-4

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 428, 13.12.2017, p. 10-15

<sup>4</sup> COM(2021) 323

<sup>5</sup> <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/cb9293be-4563-4f19-89cf-4c4588bd6541/library/505ea91a-f537-4718-a6d2-861249869218/details>

the COM on 17 May 2023<sup>6</sup> (Stocktaking Summit Conclusions);

- the “ACSH Work Programme 2025” adopted on 27 November 2024<sup>7</sup>; and
- the “Summary document supporting discussions of the ACSH WP Strategy members on a possible opinion/statement on the state of play of the implementation of the EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027 and reflections on a future EU OSH Strategic Framework” provided by the ACSH Secretariat<sup>8</sup> to the WP Strategy as a final version on 22 October 2025 (Summary Document).

## **ADOPTS THE FOLLOWING OPINION:**

### **1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

The current EU OSH Strategic Framework, like the COM’s preceding strategies and frameworks over more than two decades, is committed to the key value of protecting the safety and health of workers in the EU. At the European level, this creed is fundamentally enshrined in the Treaties as well as in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and in the European Pillar of Social Rights.

While the current EU OSH Strategic Framework does recognise significant progress over the last decades, it is nonetheless driven by the human suffering due to the persisting numbers of accidents at work and workers dying each year from work-related illnesses. Besides health and wellbeing, the current EU OSH Strategic Framework emphasises the strong economic case for a high level of safety and health at work, pointing to the significant costs of work-related accidents and illnesses for the EU economy. Notably, the current EU OSH Strategic Framework showcases estimates that for every Euro invested in OSH, the return for the employer is around twice as much, leading to the conclusion that good practice in OSH helps make businesses more productive, sustainable and competitive.

Structurally, the current EU OSH Strategic Framework relates to three crosscutting key objectives, which are (i) anticipating and managing change in the new world of work brought about by the green, digital and demographic transitions; (ii) improving prevention of workplace accidents and illnesses and, finally, (iii) increasing preparedness for any potential future health crises. Under these headings, numerous measures and actions are specified which relate to the COM, the EU Member States (MS) and the social partners. The current EU OSH Strategic Framework was adopted in 2021 and covers the period until 2027.

### **2. INTRODUCTION**

The ACSH Work Programme 2025 entrusted the WP Strategy to discuss and possibly draft an opinion or statement on the state of play of the implementation of the EU OSH Strategic Framework. However, the WP Strategy was not supposed to conduct a “mid-term review” of the current EU OSH Strategic Framework as such endeavour would be within the remit of the COM. The COM has stated that the “mid-term review” has already been carried out by the COM through the 2023 Stocktaking Summit, and the conclusions from the Summit have been made publicly available. In order to implement its assignment, the WP Strategy held four meetings in 2025, which were complemented by a further four meetings of its drafting subgroup.

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<sup>6</sup> [https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/occupational-safety-and-health-osh-stocktaking-summit-conclusions-2023-05-17\\_en](https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/occupational-safety-and-health-osh-stocktaking-summit-conclusions-2023-05-17_en)

<sup>7</sup> <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/cb9293be-4563-4f19-89cf-4c4588bd6541/library/cf3e982f-027b-4a6c-b78c-e4d37e1ebbf8/details>

<sup>8</sup> As provided by the Council Decision setting up an Advisory Committee in Safety and Health at Work, secretarial services are provided by the Commission.

As a first step, the WP Strategy assessed the available sources of information on the implementation of the current EU OSH Strategic Framework, which included the Stocktaking Summit Conclusions as well as a presentation by EU-OSHA to the WP Strategy. As a result, the WP Strategy concluded that additional information is required in order to be able to draft an opinion on the EU OSH Strategic Framework and asked the ACSH Secretariat to prepare, with the involvement of the WP Strategy, specific questionnaires to be distributed to the government representatives in the ACSH, as well as to the coordinators of the workers and employers in the ACSH (so they gather views from relevant social partners at the EU level).

On the basis of the received replies to the questionnaire, the ACSH Secretariat – which is provided by the COM – prepared the so-called “Summary Document” for the WP Strategy in order to highlight the key elements. The Summary Document was discussed with the WP Strategy and finalised by the ACSH Secretariat. Since this Summary Document is the key factual basis for this opinion, and in order to provide transparency within and beyond the ACSH, the Summary Document is attached to this opinion as an annex. The Summary Document was only intended to highlight the key elements from the participant responses to the questionnaires by the ACSH Secretariat and was not intended to state a position of the COM.

In the WP Strategy, the representatives of the ACSH Interest Groups proceeded to analyse and discuss the Summary Document in order to identify those points which can be supported by the ACSH collectively. As a result, tripartite consensus was reached in the ACSH on this opinion which covers recommendations on both the state of play of the current EU OSH Strategic Framework as well as some first impulses regarding a next EU OSH Strategic Framework.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SAFETY AND HEALTH**

#### **3.1 Current state of play**

With regard to the current state of play of the implementation of the current EU OSH Strategic Framework, the following aspects can be deduced from the Summary Document:

- In relation to the three crosscutting key objectives of the current EU OSH Strategic Framework, numerous activities are visible on MS level which are described in more detail in the Summary Document. Measures undertaken by the respective MS cover a wide range of actions including legal initiatives, campaigns and training as well as research, monitoring and inspection activities.
- Further, the COM has initiated all measures in relation to the implementation of the EU OSH Strategic Framework. As described in more detail in the Summary Document, numerous activities have been completed while others are still ongoing.
- The social partners have made a number of contributions at the EU level, notably within the ACSH and by the European social partners’ organisations. Beyond that, the social partners have each taken a wide range of further specific actions at sectoral level, all of which is described in more detail in the Summary Document.
- However, it is not possible to deduce from the Summary Document any assessment on the precise state of implementation for each individual action identified in the current EU OSH Strategic Framework. Consequently, there might still be potential gaps as regards implementation. Therefore, the ACSH encourages further efforts in order to finalise the implementation of the activities and measures until the expiry of the current EU OSH Strategic Framework.

During the implementation of the current EU OSH Strategic Framework, some first lessons learned can be deduced from the Summary Document:

- Coordination between the various levels of governmental institutions can be identified as an important element during the implementation at MS level but sometimes appears to be challenging. In addition, collaboration between the national governmental institutions and the social partners as well as further stakeholders can lead to further improvements in the practical implementation. In any case, effective enforcement is essential for ensuring that OSH provisions are implemented in practice.
- High-quality and comprehensive data facilitate successful implementation measures while allowing to identify trends and assess the effectiveness of safety measures. However, obtaining data of the required quality – notably ensuring full comparability among all MS – has been a long-persisting challenge.
- SMEs continue to face difficulties to comply with all OSH obligations, despite concrete support initiatives (e.g., through OiRA, enhanced inspection policies and guidelines). This might be attributed to resource constraints and limited access to expertise.

Meanwhile, the ACSH emphasises that this opinion does not constitute a formal or informal “mid-term review” of the current EU OSH Strategic Framework. Rather, in accordance with past procedure<sup>9</sup>, such endeavor was within the remit of the COM, who has carried out the 2023 Stocktaking Summit.

### **3.2 Future impulses**

#### **3.2.1 Necessity of a new EU OSH Strategic Framework**

The ACSH strongly emphasises the necessity that the COM will develop and adopt a new EU OSH Strategic Framework for the period after the current cycle’s expiry in 2027. In order to further enhance safety and health at work in the EU, it is paramount that the COM will continue to provide strategic orientation beyond the current EU OSH Strategic Framework. As a general compass, the ACSH underlines the importance of principle 10 of the European Pillar of Social Rights which notably declares that workers have the right to a high level of protection of their health and safety at work.

Further, the ACSH unanimously points out that it is pivotal for the COM to ensure the involvement of the ACSH in the process of preparing the next EU OSH Strategic Framework. The ACSH makes clear that this opinion is only supposed to provide some first impulses for the next EU OSH Strategic Framework at this early stage. Consequently, this opinion shall not be deemed as any substitute for the appreciable future involvement of the ACSH by the COM when it comes to the design of the next EU OSH Strategic Framework.

In addition, the ACSH recommends to the COM to prepare a comprehensive analysis of the implementation and results of the current EU OSH Strategic Framework as part of the preparations of the next EU OSH Strategic Framework.

With growing urgency, the ACSH draws the COM’s attention to the fact that the cycle of the current EU OSH Strategic Framework will expire in 2027. As this date is approaching rapidly, the ACSH invites the COM to prepare the next EU OSH Strategic Framework in a timely manner and start preparations as early as possible.

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<sup>9</sup> cf. COM Staff Working Paper “Mid-term review of the European strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work” issued on 27 April 2011, SEC(2011) 547

### 3.2.2 First ideas for potential areas of activity

Finally, the ACSH has discussed potential additional or revised objectives for the next EU OSH Strategic Framework with the aim of further strengthening OSH in the EU. Based on these tripartite discussions, on the Stocktaking Summit Conclusions as well as on the Summary Document, the ACSH has identified some first ideas for future areas of activity which the COM is invited to bear in mind while beginning to develop the next EU OSH Strategic Framework:

- The objective of improving the prevention of accidents at work and work-related illnesses will remain at the heart of OSH activities. This is also a key prerequisite of achieving the vital objective of enhancing the competitiveness of the EU economy amid persisting concerns about growing shortages of skilled labour within the EU. Hence, it is important to strive for the goals of improving prevention and bolstering competitiveness in the EU.
- Concurrently, the objective of anticipating and managing change in the new world of work including the technological and digital as well as the green and the demographic (notably the ageing workforce) transitions will remain highly relevant in the future. In order to cover emerging and new risks, some aspects might even demand closer attention, such as the impact of AI use at work, psychosocial risks and mental health at work or climate-related effects on safety and health at work. Further, the next EU OSH Strategic Framework should, where relevant, be responsive to gender aspects.
- Naturally, it is important to keep the existing EU legislation up to date in order to take account of the current state of art and ensure it is fit for purpose. This process should always be done taking into account the objective of reducing administrative burden and ensuring user-friendly legislation to all those who have to comply with it, while ensuring the highest level of workers' protection<sup>10</sup>. Reconfirming the Stocktaking Summit Conclusions, the Framework Directive 89/391/EEC with its prevention approach is a golden standard to workers' protection.
- In relation to chemical safety, it is essential to continue the successful work against occupational cancer by setting occupational exposure limit values. In addition, it is crucial to broaden the focus beyond carcinogens, mutagens and reprotoxic substances in the workplace in order to also address other hazardous chemicals under the scope of the Chemical Agents Directive which have a large impact on workers' health and safety. Further, the capabilities on EU level to establish limit values need to be reinforced significantly<sup>11</sup>.
- Mainstreaming and cooperation among different DGs of the COM is paramount in order to achieve the best way to protect workers safety and health. Notably, coordination among product, environment and public health strategies, policies, regulations and actions and those developed and applied by OSH authorities, facilitates the implementation by the companies and at workplace level. As an example, this applies to the interface between OSH and REACH.
- Further, it will be important to undertake special efforts in supporting micro and SMEs in order to facilitate compliance. Hence, the next EU OSH Strategic Framework should place special emphasis on tailored tools while aiming at guidelines and regulations that are easily understandable and implementable.
- With respect to occupational diseases, it will be significant to further strengthen the exchange at EU level for the study and categorisation of occupational diseases, also with a view towards standardising and integrating data collection on occupational diseases in accordance with the laws of the MS. Moreover, additional resources are needed at EU

<sup>10</sup> In the context of President von der Leyen's Mission Letter to Executive Vice-President-designate for People, Skills and Preparedness Roxana Mînzatu.

<sup>11</sup> cf. section 4 of the "Opinion on the need to set limit values under both the Carcinogens, Mutagens or Reprotoxic Substances Directive (2004/37/EC) or the Chemical Agents Directive (98/24/EC)", adopted by the ACSH on 29/05/2024 (available under <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/cb9293be-4563-4f19-89cf-4c4588bd6541/library/fd57b48c-880f-444f-8c8e-e873423711ec/details>)

level for research on occupational diseases as well as enhanced involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

- Finally, it should be ensured that in future the EU OSH Strategic Framework becomes agile and flexible enough to adapt and stay relevant over the full cycle. To this end, it might be contemplated to include mechanisms for regular mid-term updates in view of evolving conditions, latest research and data as well as lessons learned during the implementation.

Apart from that, it became obvious during the debate in the ACSH that there might be some areas in the Summary Document which will require further protracted discussions. These areas include, among others, the question of how to approach the issue of psychosocial risks and mental health at work (taking into consideration the currently ongoing ACSH Working Party “Mental Health and Psychosocial Risks at Work”), the question of how to approach the improvement of the safety and health of some migrant workers, domestic workers and self-employed persons. This observation exemplifies and reiterates how important it will be that the COM starts preparations for the next EU OSH Strategic Framework as early as possible.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The ACSH strongly invites the COM to follow the recommendations stated in this opinion.

## **ANNEX**

***to the ACSH Draft Opinion on the State of Play and Future Impulses regarding the EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work***

**Summary document supporting discussions of the ACSH WP Strategy members on a possible opinion/statement on the state of play of the implementation of the EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027 and reflections on a future EU OSH strategic framework**

## Introductory remarks

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As part of its Work Programme for 2025, the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work (ACSH) committed to discuss the state of play of the implementation of the “*EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027 – Occupational safety and health in a changing world of work*” and share reflections on a future EU OSH strategic framework. This action will be carried out by the Working Party “EU Strategic Framework, National Strategies and ACSH Work Programme” (WP “Strategy”).

During its meeting on 13 February 2025, the WP “Strategy” decided that the ACSH Secretariat would distribute a questionnaire to GIG members, as well as specific questionnaires to WIG and EIG coordinators, to gather views from relevant social partners at the EU level. The questionnaires were sent to the target groups on 11 March 2025 with the deadline for replies by 9 April 2025. This aimed to gather data to support discussions on the current status of implementing the EU Strategic Framework and to facilitate the potential development of an opinion or statement by the ACSH.

This document aims at summarising the responses received from GIG members and WIG and EIG. A total of 26 Member States, along with EIG and WIG, submitted their contributions. However, two submissions from Member States were excluded due to their failure to adhere to the questionnaire's structure, making it impossible to exploit the responses.

This summary document is intended to highlight key elements gathered from participant responses. While we strive to present the most relevant information, please note that this document may not capture all contributions exhaustively.

Furthermore, the WP Strategy asked the ACSH Secretariat to incorporate into this Summary Document an update on the progress of actions within the EU strategic framework that have been assigned to the Commission. This update can be found at the end of the document.

## **GIG members' responses**

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### **Summary of measures/initiatives contributing to the three crosscutting key objectives identified in the EU strategic framework on health and safety 2021-2027**

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#### **1. Cross-cutting objective 1 – Anticipating and managing change**

All Member States that responded to the questionnaire have implemented or are in the process of implementing legislative or non-legislative measures aimed at anticipating and managing change in a new world of work. These initiatives aim at fostering a safer, healthier, and more productive work environment with the EU Strategic Framework.

The focus on digital transition is widespread due to the prevalent impact of technology on all aspects of work. Many Member States have prioritised initiatives related to **digital transition**. This includes (by order of prevalence):

- Awareness-raising activities: many Member States are conducting workshops and campaigns to raise awareness about the impact of digital technologies in the workplace. Based on the information provided by Member States, awareness-raising campaigns seem to be the most commonly implemented measures.
- Digital tools: there has been a significant focus on developing and utilising digital tools for risk assessment, including Online interactive Risk Assessment (OiRA). The development and implementation of digital tools, such as OiRAs, are widespread.
- Legal initiatives: several Member States have carried out legislative initiatives to address the challenges of remote work and digital platforms. These are less common compared to awareness-raising activities.
- Inspection and monitoring activities: some countries are conducting activities with specific emphasis on digitalisation.

These initiatives reflect a balanced approach across legal, educational and technological fronts to facilitate and frame a smooth digital transition at work across the EU.

The **green transition** is also a significant focus, with measures addressing the impact of climate change on occupational safety and health, such as (by order of prevalence):

- Awareness-raising campaigns: awareness campaigns about the impact of environmental changes on occupational safety and health are widely used to inform and educate workers and employers.
- Regulatory developments/legal initiatives: legal initiatives to address climate-related risks at work are increasingly common as Member States adapt to environmental changes, such as extreme weather conditions.
- Studies and research initiatives: Many Member States are engaging in research to understand the implications of ecological transitions and identify priorities for future action.

- Development of online tools: the development of online platforms, such as OiRAs specifically addressing green transition challenges, seems to occur less frequently than traditional awareness methods, while continues to increase.

While all types of initiatives are present, awareness-raising campaigns and, to a lesser extent, regulatory developments are the most prevalent.

Although not as emphasized as the digital and green transitions, there is a notable focus on **demographic changes**, especially relating to the aging workforce, such as (by order of prevalence):

- Awareness-raising campaigns and training initiatives, including aging workforces.
- Development and implementation of Age Management Strategies: Efforts to integrate age management into occupational safety and health risk strategies are increasingly common. These aim to create inclusive work environments that accommodate diverse age demographics.
- Research and studies: Conducting research to understand demographic trends and their impact on the workforce is used for supporting the shaping of policies.

In their responses, some Member States have also identified additional changes/challenges requiring attention and actions, such as psychosocial risks, economic and labour market changes, and safety and health preparedness.

Some measures and initiatives identified by Member States in their replies to the questionnaire align with the actions identified in the EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027, while no or limited initiatives were identified for other actions:

- **Updating national legal frameworks:** some Member States are updating legal frameworks to account for the digital transition, particularly with regards to remote work and digital platform jobs. Some Member States have also taken legislative actions to address climate-related risks at work, such as adapting to extreme heat.
- **Use of digital tools for labour inspection:** in their answers, some Member States mention the development of digital tools, but they do not cover the use of these tools specifically for enhancing labour inspection efficiency.
- **Hosting ‘Peer Reviews’ on psychosocial and ergonomic issues:** in their answers Member States do not explicitly mention initiatives involving peer reviews dedicated to psychosocial and ergonomic issues. However, some Member States organised awareness-raising campaigns and developed assessment tools covering these issues.
- **Strengthening monitoring and data collection on mental and psychosocial risks at work:** Member States mention initiatives aimed at addressing psychosocial risks, such as awareness campaigns and some tool developments. However, systematic strengthening of data collection and monitoring across sectors for mental and psychosocial risks is not extensively covered.

## 2. Cross-cutting objective 2 – Improving prevention of work-related diseases and accidents

All Member States that responded to the questionnaire have implemented or are in the process of implementing legislative or non-legislative measures aimed at improving prevention of workplace accidents and illnesses. These initiatives aim at fostering a safer, healthier, and more productive work environment in line with the EU Strategic Framework.

Based on Member States' responses, the most common method to improve prevention of workplace accidents and illnesses appears to be the **development and use of digital tools**. These tools, which complement legislative frameworks, contribute to streamlining and enhance risk assessment processes, making it easier for organisations, in particular SMEs, to identify and mitigate potential hazards in the workplace. The development of OiRA tools is a notable initiative across Member States.

A high number of Member States have also organised **awareness-raising campaigns and training programs** with the aim to educate and inform both employers and workers about potential risks at work, the risks associated with carcinogenic substances and effective preventive measures. These initiatives include campaigns on emerging risks, such as extreme weather conditions, to prepare businesses for environmental changes that could impact health and safety at work. Some initiatives also allowed for equipping participants with good practices and skills to handle occupational safety and health challenges. In addition, some initiatives related to ergonomic and musculoskeletal health were initiated, including through the implementation of guidelines aimed at redesigning workstations to prevent MSDs.

Some Member States have also updated their **OSH Regulations** to align national OSH policies with the evolving nature of work, including digital and environmental transitions, and toon top of improve workers' protection from the exposure to hazardous chemicals by transposing EU Directives.

**Inspection and monitoring** were also strengthened in several Member States to ensure compliance with health and safety rules. For instance, some countries enhanced inspections, particularly in workplaces heavily influenced by digitalisation, ensuring they meet updated health and safety criteria.

Some **research and studies on emerging risks** are conducted to identify and understand new risks that might affect occupational safety and health due to societal changes, technological advancements, or environmental shifts. Other studies relate to health impacts of occupational exposure to carcinogens.

These initiatives reflect a diverse approach to improving safety and health at work, emphasizing legal reform, education, technology adoption, and thorough inspection regimes.

Some measures and initiatives identified by Member States in their replies to the questionnaire align with the actions identified in the EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027, while limited initiatives were mentioned for other actions:

- **Work towards fulfilling the ‘vision zero’ approach to work-related deaths:** some Member States mentioned initiatives aimed at reducing work-related accidents and illnesses, such as the development of digital tools for risk assessments and awareness campaigns. These contribute to the broader goal of preventing fatalities, consistent with the 'vision zero' approach.

Furthermore, some Member States developed or are developing legislative initiatives to achieve the objective of reducing work-related fatalities to zero. These initiatives include amendments to existing legislations aiming at improving the protection of workers from exposure to hazardous substances (in particular through the transposition of Directive (EU) 2022/431).

In addition, some Member States referred to initiatives aiming at improving inspections and enforcement, including through staff recruitment and increased inspection, particularly in high-risk industries sectors such as construction.

- **Addressing occupational risks related to circulatory diseases:** initiatives specifically addressing circulatory diseases are not prominently mentioned.
- **Promoting the European Code against cancer among workers:** Awareness campaigns related to carcinogens can contribute indirectly to promoting cancer prevention strategies, but the explicit promotion of the European Code against Cancer is not detailed in the answers provided by Member States.

It might also be worth mentioning the initiative highlighted by one Member State related to a National Agenda for the Prevention of Occupational Cancer, which includes measures to improve the prevention of occupational cancer acting specifically in five areas (regulations, advice, surveillance and control; improvement of preventive action; early diagnosis and early intervention; research and epidemiology; information and awareness-raising).

- **Assessing and addressing risks with a particular focus on groups most affected by the pandemic such as persons with disabilities:** some initiatives highlighted by Member States (e.g. updating OSH regulations, focus on high-risks sectors such as healthcare) as part of question 1.2 could implicitly support vulnerable groups, but specific focus on pandemic-affected groups, such as persons with disabilities, is not evident.
- **Actively supporting reintegration, non-discrimination and adaptation of working conditions for cancer patients/survivors:** several Member States highlighted cancer awareness and prevention initiatives. However, it was not mentioned if those initiatives (partly) focused on reintegration and adaptation for cancer patients and survivors.
- **Promoting gender considerations in design, implementation and reporting:** the initiatives put forward by Member States do not explicitly mention measures aimed at promoting gender considerations.
- **Actively addressing risks in the healthcare sector by putting in place and implementing safe working procedures and providing appropriate training:** no specific measures targeting safe working procedures for healthcare workers, particularly through training on handling hazardous materials, were explicitly mentioned. However, some Member States referred to measures and initiatives that contribute to addressing risks in the healthcare sector (e.g. targeted inspections across high-risk sectors such as health

and social care, development and strengthening of systems for collecting and analysing data on accidents and occupational diseases, with specific guidelines for high-risk sectors like healthcare, and promoting the use of innovative technologies to improve health and safety at work in sectors like healthcare, including remote risk monitoring systems and advanced personal protective equipment.

- **Providing improved guidance and training for the risk-assessment and prevention measures, particularly to micro-enterprises and SMEs:** Some initiatives mentioned by Member States focused on providing training and guidance to micro-enterprises and SMEs, enhancing occupational safety and health awareness and practices, along with educational efforts tailored to these groups. This includes risk assessment tools that are user-friendly, especially for SMEs

### **3. Cross-cutting objective 3 – Increasing preparedness – responding rapidly to threats**

All Member States that responded to the questionnaire have implemented or are in the process of implementing legislative or non-legislative measures aimed at increasing preparedness for potential future health crises. These initiatives aim at fostering a safer, healthier, and more productive work environment in line with the EU Strategic Framework.

**Awareness-raising campaigns** were organised or are being organised by several Member States to disseminate recommendations aimed at optimising the organisation of work for various professional groups, including healthcare. These campaigns focus among other on enhancing preparedness and protection during pandemics.

Several Member States are also currently developing **national plans** to improve preparedness for potential future health crises. These plans aim at better anticipating crises to manage them more effectively. One national plan also focuses on migrants and seasonal workers, who are considered as a vulnerable group in the event of future health crises.

Several Member States have also pointed out ongoing or planned **legislative initiatives**, including providing for special preventive measures to ensure a safe and healthy work environment during epidemics or pandemics. One Member State has also established a legislative framework for remote work with the aim to protect workers from pandemics and other potential future health crises.

Some Member States have also conducted **research and studies** to evaluate the lessons learned from COVID-19 by analysing responses to the crisis. These studies focus on identifying effective practices and improving future readiness. They are expected to contribute drawing conclusions on good practices, understanding systemic shortcomings (areas where responses were lacking or could be improved), and evaluating economic and social impact (secondary impacts of the pandemic). Based on the outcome of these research and studies, Member States might develop improved response frameworks, inform policy decisions, improve coordination mechanisms, or promote stakeholder engagement (through dissemination of findings).

Several Member States have also developed **guidelines and training**. For instance, guidelines and other informative materials were drafted to help employers and workers operate safely during epidemics. Some guidance also focused on how to ensure safe and healthy working at home. In addition, some targeted training programmes were also implemented for labour inspectors and OSH professionals to enhance their ability to respond effectively to emerging risks.

Some measures and initiatives identified by Member States in their replies to the questionnaire align with the actions identified in the EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027:

- **Drawing up preparedness plans for future crises in the national OSH strategies, including implementation of EU guidelines and tools:** as mentioned above, several Member States have established national plans to improve preparedness for potential future health crises. These plans appear to be varied, with some focusing on vulnerable groups, some outlining strategies and measures to address future pandemics and health crises, some focusing on unified risk assessment, coordinated risk management and strengthened intersectoral collaboration, etc. Several initiatives also concern the production of tools and materials aiming at supporting employers, workers and other relevant stakeholders in the event of a new health crises.
- **Drawing up coordination mechanisms between public health and OSH authorities by 2023:** some initiatives were conducted by OSH and other Ministries, including health Ministries, which requires good coordination between services. Some Member States have also mentioned new mechanisms aiming at establishing a continuous collaboration and coordination between different services in view of possible new crises.
- **Increasing monitoring and effective inspections of OSH obligations towards seasonal workers in high-risk professions:** limited actions focusing on seasonal workers were mentioned by Member States, including to increase monitoring and effective supervision of their working environment, and to improve their protection against the exposure to biological agents. One Member State has also mentioned the development of a reception plan specifically dedicated to migrant and seasonal workers.
- **Strengthening cooperation and exchange of information between labour inspectorates and other relevant national authorities to improve health and safety standards in all employment sectors:** a limited number of initiatives aiming at strengthening cooperation and exchange of information between labour inspectorates and other relevant national authorities were pointed out. For instance, one Member State organises an annual meeting between its different authorities dealing with OSH (in case of further needs, additional meetings might be considered). Another Member State created a national network of safety and health institutions to facilitate exchange of information

**Summary - What are the key lessons learned so far in the implementation of the EU strategic framework and how can they inform the design of the next EU strategic framework? What aspects of the strategy are more difficult to implement and why?**

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**Coordination and collaboration:** coordination across various Ministries and levels of government (i.e. diverse governmental and institutional structures across Member States) is essential to implement effectively strategies. However, several Members States emphasized that ensuring such a coordination is a real challenge in the implementation of the strategic framework.

The collaboration with social partners and other stakeholders was also pointed out by some Member States as essential to ensure practical and relevant implementation. This inclusion of diverse perspectives leads to more comprehensive policies, and widely accepted safety measures.

One Member State mentioned the added value of setting up a centralised EU emergency response network for workplace health crises to ensure faster implementation of protective measures. Another Member State pointed out the need to focus on occupational risk specifically, and getting clearer guidance on building resilience at work. Breaking down barriers and creating an integrated, proactive system has also been mentioned as indispensable steps towards improving our preparedness for future health threats.

**Flexibility and adaptability:** a high number of Member States pointed out the need for frameworks that are agile enough to adapt and stay relevant over time. According to one Member State, the current 7-years duration is too long, given the rapid pace of social, technological, and legislative changes. This Member State proposed to include mechanisms for regular mid-term updates allowing for a quicker adjustment of OSH policy priorities to evolving conditions and the introduction of necessary changes based on the latest research, data, and the experiences of EU Member States.

Some Member States also insisted for flexible approach to policy implementation at national level. While maintaining EU-level objectives, frameworks should be flexible enough to allow Member States to implement policies according to their specific socio-economic contexts.

**Emerging risks integration:** Digitalisation trends and modern work models should be included into regulatory frameworks. As digitalisation (including artificial intelligence) and automation grow, traditional OSH regulations struggle to keep up, leading to gaps in protections.

Furthermore, frameworks must evolve to accommodate non-traditional work arrangements such as gig<sup>12</sup>, platform work, and remote work which were not foreseen in original regulations.

Some Member States also pointed out that self-employed workers are not fully covered by the existing OSH legal frameworks.

**Prevention as a cornerstone:** a high number of Member States enhanced the importance of prevention. According to Member States, prevention should play a central role in a next EU strategic framework.

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<sup>12</sup> The gig economy is characterised by short-term, project-based work often through digital platforms.

**Need for quality data:** successful OSH strategic framework implementation and informed decision-making rely on high-quality data collection and consistent measurement to assess impacts and adapt policies accordingly. High-quality data also helps to set priorities. However, some Member States raised that obtaining high-quality data may still be challenging, including on occupational diseases.

Member States stressed the importance of having robust reporting and monitoring systems allowing to identify trends, assess the effectiveness of safety measures, and make necessary adjustments. Another insisted on the need for Member States to invest in research to get data.

**Clarity and simplicity:** Future frameworks need to focus on reducing bureaucratic complexities while ensuring that guidelines and regulations are easily understandable and implementable at all levels.

**Enhanced enforcement:** several Member States emphasized the need for effective enforcement. A lack of control mechanisms might hinder consistent implementation across Member States. For that reason, one Member State stressed on the need to develop more stringent control and enforcement mechanisms to ensure consistent implementation and adherence to OSH guidelines across all Member States.

**SMEs challenges:** several Member States emphasized the difficulties for SMEs to comply with all OSH obligations, despite concrete support initiatives (e.g. OiRAs, enhanced inspection policies, guidelines). These difficulties might be due to resource constraints and limited access to expertise. One Member State recommended to provide SMEs with tailored support, including simplified compliance tools and targeted financial or advisory assistance. Another highlighted the need for up-skilling and re-skilling of workers, taking into account OSH aspects.

**Summary - In light of the ongoing implementation of the EU strategic framework, what additional or revised objectives do you think should be considered for a possible next EU strategic framework to further address emerging challenges and further strengthen the effectiveness of occupational safety and health in the EU?**

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**Enforcement and control measures:** several Member States emphasized the need for improving OSH legislation enforcement, including related to occupational carcinogens and psychosocial risks, and simplified compliance measures to support SMEs. Effective enforcement is essential for ensuring that OSH provisions are implemented in practice. In this context, one Member State stressed that the next framework supports the development of national inspection systems and promote cross-border cooperation in enforcement. Another Member State suggested to prioritise the development of legally binding requirements for psychosocial risk assessments and prevention strategies.

**Modernisation and simplification of legislation:** legislation in the area of OSH should be kept updated in order to cover occupational risks relating to activities arising out of the digital transition, the green transition and the demographic transition, and to take account of the current state of art.

Furthermore, some Member States mentioned the need for simplifying the legislation to avoid unnecessary bureaucratic burdens (while maintaining the highest level of workers' protection). The usefulness of guidance (e.g. guidance for the safe management of hazardous medicinal products), developed in collaboration with stakeholders, was also highlighted to translate regulatory requirements into actionable measures, including for SMEs.

**Chemical safety:** broaden focus beyond carcinogens, mutagens, and reprotoxic substances, to include endocrine-disrupting chemicals and addressing substances falling under the scope of the Chemical Agents Directive. A particular focus should also be brought to substances for which the use will increase due to the green transition and new technologies. The capabilities at EU level to establish limit values should also be reinforced. Finally, and as explained above, enhancing compliance with existing rules related to hazardous chemicals should also be prioritised.

**Occupational diseases and biological agents:** One Member State emphasized the need to address the gaps in understanding occupational exposure to biological agents, highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some Member States also referred to occupational diseases as a priority: managing occupational diseases in a consistent way throughout the EU; development of harmonised criteria at EU level for the study and categorisation of occupational diseases; standardise and integrate data collection on occupational diseases; additional resources at EU level to research on occupational diseases.

**New and emerging risks:** some Member States highlighted new and emerging risks arising from the rapid development and adoption of new work forms, digital technologies, artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, collaborative robotics, etc. This is expected to result in new risks (i.e. psychosocial risks, human-machine interaction hazards, digital stress, etc.) requiring appropriate measures.

**Climate change and environmental risks:** climate change is expected to result in occupational risks (e.g. extreme temperatures, exposure to new biological risks), requiring strengthened measures to protect workers (i.e. from heat stress, natural UV radiations, and extreme weather events, risks from biological hazards exacerbated by climate change). One Member State also stressed the need for OSH rules for green jobs, ensuring safe conditions in renewable energy, waste management, and in circular economy sectors.

**Demographic changes and inclusive policies:** Europe's workforce is aging, which might require adaptive OSH approaches in a possible next EU OSH strategic framework, such as flexible work arrangements and ergonomic adaptations.

**Mental health and psychosocial risks at work:** preventing and managing psychosocial risks at work was pointed out as a priority for several Member States. For instance, the changing nature of work (including from digitalisation and increased work intensity) might result in mental health issues. Some Member States would like a possible future strategic framework to provide concrete measures and guidelines to address these challenges.

**Research, data and innovation:** several Member States emphasised the need to promote data-driven policy and research for real-time monitoring and forecasting. Promoting the use of standardised indicators and reporting systems was mentioned.

**SMEs:** supporting SMEs in improving safety and health at work management appears to be key, including through the development of tools and policies. The next strategic framework should place greater emphasis on tailored tools, incentives, and simplified compliance measures to support small and medium-sized enterprises.

## EIG and WIG responses

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### **Summary of measures/initiatives contributing to the three crosscutting key objectives identified in the EU strategic framework on health and safety 2021-2027**

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#### **1. Cross-cutting objective 1 – Anticipating and managing change**

Based on data collected from relevant **employers' organisations at EU level**, the EIG identified the following measures/initiatives which contributes to anticipating and managing changes:

- **ACSH opinions** with a view to update the **Display Screen Equipment and Workplace Directives**, with a focus on risks arising from new forms of work (i.e. digitalisation, ergonomic risks and cognitive stress).
- **Awareness-raising activities** and **joint actions with national actors** on the importance of the **digitalisation of the labour market**. This includes among other a joint project bringing together social partners from 16 different Member States promoting and supporting the implementation of the 2020 European Social Partners Framework Agreement on Digitalisation<sup>13</sup>, and a digital tool<sup>14</sup> promoting examples of activities at national level.

The EIG also pointed out:

- 2022-2023 negotiations for an updated social partners' agreement on telework and the right to disconnect, which failed to produce a new agreement.
- Existing **Framework Agreements on Telework**<sup>15</sup> (dated 2002), **work-related stress at work**<sup>16</sup> (dated 2004), **harassment and violence at work**<sup>17</sup> (dated 2007), and on **Active Ageing and an Inter-Generational Approach**<sup>18</sup> (dated 2017).

Based on data collected from relevant **workers' organisations at EU level**, the WIG identified the following measures/initiatives which contributes to anticipating and managing changes:

- **2020 Framework Agreement on Digitalisation**, outlining the direction and principles for introducing AI in the workplace. This agreement emphasizes that human control over machines and artificial intelligence must be guaranteed and should underpin the use of robotics and AI applications, while adhering to safety and security controls.

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<sup>13</sup> More information available at: [Framework agreement on digitalisation | Safety and health at work EU-OSHA](#)

<sup>14</sup> Available at : [European Social Partners Framework Agreement on Digitalisation – European Social Partners Framework Agreement on Digitalisation](#)

<sup>15</sup> More information available at: [Framework agreement on telework | Safety and health at work EU-OSHA](#)

<sup>16</sup> More information available at : [Framework agreement on work-related stress | Safety and health at work EU-OSHA](#)

<sup>17</sup> More information available at : [Framework agreement on harassment and violence at work | Safety and health at work EU-OSHA](#)

<sup>18</sup> More information available at: [Framework Agreement on Active Ageing and an Inter-generational approach | Safety and health at work EU-OSHA](#)

The WIG has also identified measures at **sectoral level**:

- **Climate change:** Establishment by the European Federation of Building and Wood-workers (EFBWW) of climate change and outdoor work as a topic for Sectorial Social Dialogue in the construction sector. In addition, social partners in the agricultural sector have addressed this issue in their joint statement on the effects of severe meteorological conditions on agriculture. The ICT sector's social partners are engaged in the "Accelerating Sustainability in Telecoms" project, focusing on the twin transition and sustainability.
- **Digitalisation:** sectorial social partners in the education sector are working on a Social Dialogue Programme of Actions on Digital Transition in Higher Education (ongoing, to be finalized by September 2025). Uni Europa and its corresponding employers' organizations in the banking and insurance sectors have issued a joint declaration on AI, addressing psychosocial risks. In the Metal, Engineering, and Technology-based industries, social partners signed a joint statement on digitalisation in 2020 and another on AI in 2023, which includes a chapter on occupational safety and health.

The WIG also pointed out:

- 2022-2023 negotiations for an updated social partners' agreement on telework and the right to disconnect, which failed to produce a new agreement.

## 2. Cross-cutting objective 2 – Improving prevention of work-related diseases and accidents

Based on data collected from relevant **employers' organisations at EU level**, the EIG identified the following measures/initiatives which contributes to improving prevention of work-related diseases and accidents:

- **ACSH opinion** on the publication of an indicative **list of hazardous medicinal products**, contributing to the publication by the Commission of an indicative list<sup>19</sup> of HMPs in February 2025.
- **ACSH opinions** to update the Commission Recommendation concerning the European schedule of **occupational diseases**<sup>20</sup>:
  - On 17 May 2022, to include COVID-19 in certain sectors; and
  - On 29 May 2024, to include asbestos-related occupational diseases.

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<sup>19</sup> Communication from the Commission – Indicative list of hazardous medicinal products according to Article 18a of Directive 2004/37/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens, mutagens or reprotoxic substances at work, OJ C, C/2025/1150, 20.2.2025. Available at : [EUR-Lex - 52025XC01150 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

<sup>20</sup> Commission Recommendation of 19 September 2003 concerning the European schedule of occupational diseases, OJ L 238, 25.9.2003, p. 28–34. Available at: [EUR-Lex - 32003H0670 - EN - EUR-Lex](#) (no longer into force)

Commission Recommendation (EU) 2022/2337 of 28 November 2022 concerning the European schedule of occupational diseases, OJ L 309, 30/11/2022, p. 12–21. Available at: [EUR-Lex - 32022H2337 - EN - EUR-Lex](#).

- **ACSH opinions** on the relevant items of the mandate of the Working Party on Chemicals, **including new occupational limit values (OELs), HMPs list and guidance, criteria for the adoption of OELs, etc.**

Based on data collected from relevant **workers' organisations at EU level**, the WIG identified the following measures/initiatives which contributes to anticipating and managing changes:

- European Trade Union Institute's (ETUI) work contributing to list of HMPs published by the Commission.
- ACSH opinion from May 2024 recommending the Commission to consider various lists for developing new or revised limit values under CAD and CMRD, identifying priority substances for immediate action. ETUC notes that the legislative process for setting these limits could be faster, with a key bottleneck being ECHA's limited research capacity.

The WIG has also identified measures at **sectoral level**:

- EFBWW reports social partner actions on comparable statistical data in the EU and guidance on minimizing respirable crystalline silica exposure. They are considering a European agreement to further support companies in reducing emissions and exposure.
- Sectorial social partners in the education sector are negotiating an Autonomous Sectoral Agreement on Telework and the right to disconnect (negotiations expected to end in September 2025). They have also organized a new OiRA tool for the Higher Education and Research Sector.
- Sectorial social partners in the transport sector have signed the recent river cruise framework agreement, which includes an article on the right to basic safety training and harassment procedures. In civil aviation, the Compendium on Preventing and Managing Disruptive Incidents in Civil Aviation compiles best practices for dealing with unruly passengers, a broader problem of third-party violence. The Women in Rail agreement includes provisions on flexible working time, sexual harassment, and OSH provisions specific to female railway workers.
- Social partners in the agricultural sector have issued a joint call urging Member States to ratify ILO Convention C184 on OSH in the agriculture sector and Convention C189 on domestic workers. They have also negotiated a new OiRA tool for the agricultural sector.
- Social partners in the public sector reached a European social partner agreement on digitalization for central government administrations includes detailed provisions on OSH, such as PSR, the right to disconnect, ergonomic equipment for telework, a human-centric approach to AI, and a brief reference to domestic violence in the context of telework. In 2024, they updated the 2010 multisectoral guidelines on third-party violence and harassment at work with five sectoral social dialogue committees – hospitals, central government, local and regional government, hospitality, and education. The new guidelines consider developments in digitalization, gender-based violence (ILO C190 and related recommendations), and emphasize the importance of health risk assessment, including understaffing and workload as risk factors.
- In the Post & Logistics sector, Uni Europa is addressing psychosocial risks and ergonomics amid digitalization and operational transformation.

- In the Hair & Beauty sector, OSH projects focus on chemical risks and ergonomics.
- Although the Domestic Work sector lacks a dedicated sectorial social partner's committee, social partners in the Personal and Household Services sector have addressed OSH issues. A significant EU-level survey highlighted OSH challenges faced by domestic workers.
- In the Metal, Engineering, and Technology-based industries, the NEPSI network promotes the safe handling and use of crystalline silica through social dialogue.
- In the audiovisual and live performance sectors, European social partners have developed three OiRA tools for risk assessments and issued recommendations for preventing harassment and violence.

### 3. Cross-cutting objective 3 – Increasing preparedness – responding rapidly to threats

Based on data collected from relevant **workers' organisations at EU level**, the WIG identified the following measures/initiatives which contributes to increasing preparedness – responding rapidly to threats:

- Numerous campaigns and preventive actions have been launched to protect against biological and chemical agents.
- Biological vectors are now being incorporated into the action plans deployed by trade unions to ensure comprehensive protection for workers (due to new diseases arising from climate change).
- Promotion by ETUC of EU-OSHA guidelines on the prevention of occupational heat stress (ETUC advocates that these guidelines be supported by robust European legislation).

The WIG has also identified measures at **sectoral level**:

- In the construction sector, joint social partners' actions have been developed on state-of-the-art prevention when dealing with asbestos-containing materials and initiating a review of the Construction Site Directive to consider climate change.
- Sectorial social partners in the education sector are revising the Joint Education Social Partners Guidelines on Psychosocial Risks (2016). This revision is ongoing, with the final outcome to be presented in June 2026. It is part of a broader initiative within the APRES COVID project (co-funded by DG EMPL), which also assesses how the COVID crisis has triggered new occupational changes impacting PSR in the long term.
- Sectorial social partners in the agricultural sector have addressed climate change in their joint statement on the effects of severe meteorological conditions on agriculture.
- EPSU and its social partner counterpart are negotiating policies to make the health sector more resilient post-COVID-19, with a focus on mental health.

**Summary - What are the key lessons learned so far in the implementation of the EU strategic framework, and how can they inform the design of the next EU strategic framework? What aspects of the strategy are more difficult to implement and why?**

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Based on data collected from relevant **employers' organisations at EU level**, the EIG pointed out the following elements:

- **Implementing European OSH legislation** remains a **complex** and **burdensome** exercise for many companies, particularly for **SMEs**. Despite the “Better regulation” provisions, many new initiatives tend to be too prescriptive.
- Reliable, timely and comparable statistical **data** is still lacking, resulting in difficulties to compare OSH performance across Member States and draw evidence-based conclusions from such comparisons. For employers’ representatives, statistics and data analysis represent the first principle of prevention and are the precondition for defining policies and strategies in the field of health and safety, including when dealing with complex issues such as telework, right to disconnect and psychosocial risks.
- Sharing **good practices** and providing good **technical guidelines** is very helpful for the implantation of Directives at workplace level. The EIG emphasized the need for the Commission to continue developing such guidelines, in collaboration with EU-OSHA.
- **Campaigns and tools developed by EU-OSHA** are very helpful, friendly designed and focus on relevant items. The role and involvement of the social partners is particularly important in the definition of these documents.

Based on data collected from relevant **workers' organisations at EU level**, the WIG pointed out the following elements:

- The **Artificial Intelligence** Act introduced by the European Commission is a positive step, putting the EU at the forefront of regulating this technology. However, ETUC is also in favour of an EU Directive dedicated to **Algorithmic Systems at Work**, ensuring a gender-sensitive approach to worker protection.
- The approach in the EU OSH strategic framework on **Psychosocial Risks and Musculoskeletal Disorders** is not ambitious enough. Guidance on psychosocial risks, as proposed in the strategic framework, is unlikely to protect workers against such risks. The Strategic Framework tackles mental health from an individual approach and fails to address the implications of work organisation. ETUC is in favour of an EU Directive to tackle this issue.

**Summary - In light of the ongoing implementation of the EU strategic framework, what additional or revised objectives do you think should be considered for a possible next EU Strategic Framework to further address emerging challenges and further strengthen the effectiveness of occupational safety and health in EU?**

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Based on data collected from relevant **employers' organisations at EU level**, the EIG point out the following elements:

- The Employers' organisations welcome the Commission commitment to focus on bolstering the EU's **competitiveness** and promoting an **innovation and business-friendly environment** in the current political cycle.
- Reducing the **administrative burden** for companies by at least 25%, and at least 35% for SMEs is a necessity. It can result in cost saving for businesses (estimated at around €37.5 billion according to the communication "a simpler and faster Europe"<sup>21</sup>).
- Identifying **simplification and burden reduction** in consultation with stakeholders should be a new **cross-cutting objective** of a possible next EU OSH strategic framework, with focus in particular on reducing unnecessary complexity and outdated rules, double-regulation, unnecessary reporting and control as well as systematic use of the better regulation tools in assessing the current *acquis* as well as when adopting new initiatives.
- Improving **statistical data collection on occupational exposures and work-related ill-health** should also be an important objective.

Based on data collected from relevant **workers' organisations at EU level**, the WIG point out the following elements:

- Member States must provide adequate support to **labour inspectorates** and aim at having 1 labour inspector per 10 000 workers. There is also a need to strengthen the **sanctioning mechanisms**. It is also key that data and knowledge on what the labour inspectorates are enforcing, are gathered and disseminated. Also, the role of trade union workplace health and safety representatives should be strengthened.
- Ensuring decent living and working conditions for **domestic workers** at EU level. The WIG points out that the OSH *acquis* of the EU excludes domestic servants from its scope, leaving them without adequate protections. Given the high number of women with migrant backgrounds in this sector, European action is also necessary to **combat discrimination**.
- Protecting workers from risks related to **climate change** – including extreme temperatures, growing exposure to UV-radiation and weather events – which represent increasing risks for workers, affecting their physical and mental health, and sometimes causing their death. Whereas the EU-OSHA guidelines on the prevention of occupational heat presented in May 2023 are a step in the good direction, the EU should move towards

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<sup>21</sup> COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS  
A simpler and faster Europe: Communication on implementation and simplification, COM/2025/47 final.  
Available at: [EUR-Lex - 52025DC0047 - EN - EUR-Lex](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/communication/2025/47/oj)

European legislation establishing temperature limits for people to work outdoors in order to prevent injuries and accidents at work.

## Update on the progress of actions within the EU strategic framework that have been assigned to the Commission

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The table below provides an update on the implementation status of actions within the EU OSH strategic framework that are assigned to the Commission. All 22 actions have been initiated, with the support of pertinent EU agencies, and 12 have been successfully completed. This progress has contributed towards achieving the three cross-cutting objectives of the EU OSH strategic framework. The Commission, in collaboration with relevant EU agencies, remains committed to fully implementing the ongoing actions.

Actions	Status	Additional remarks
<b><i>Anticipating and managing change in the new world of work brought about by the green, digital and demographic transitions</i></b>		
Modernise the OSH legislative framework related to digitalisation by reviewing the Workplace and Display Screen Equipment Directives	Ongoing	The complementary study aiming to support the impact assessment is ongoing.
Propose protective limit values on asbestos in the Asbestos at Work Directive	Completed	The amending Directive was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in 2023.
Propose protective limit values on lead and diisocyanates in the Chemical Agents Directive	Completed	The amending Directive was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in 2024.
Propose protective limit values on cobalt in the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive	Completed	The Commission has adopted its legislative proposal to set among others limit values to cobalt (and its inorganic compounds) in July 2025.

<p>Launch an "EU-OSHA healthy workplaces campaign" 2023-2025 on creating a safe and healthy digital future covering psychosocial and ergonomic risks in particular</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The EU-OSHA 2023-2025 Healthy Workplaces campaign is currently ongoing and will end with a final Summit in Bilbao in December 2025. It raises awareness about the impact of new digital technologies on work and workplaces and the associated occupational safety and health (OSH) challenges and opportunities. It also provides a platform for the exchange of good practice solutions.</p>
<p>In cooperation with Member States and social partners, prepare a non-legislative EU-level initiative related to mental health at work that assesses emerging issues related to workers' mental health and puts forward guidance for action</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>Furthermore, on 15 and 16 May 2023, an OSH Summit took place in Stockholm to take stock of the EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027. The OSH Summit has confirmed the effectiveness of the strategic framework in identifying the key objectives and actions for the period to make the workplace fit for the increasingly rapid changes in the world of work due to, among others digital, and green transitions and the impact of the pandemic crisis. The OSH Summit has also identified ongoing growing OSH issues that need intensified further consideration, such as psychosocial risks and mental health at work.</p> <p>On 7 June 2023, the European Commission adopted a Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health. The Communication included, as one of the flagships, a Peer Review on legislative and enforcement approaches for addressing psychosocial risks at work in Member States of the EU.</p> <p>The Peer Review, held on 26 and 27 June 2024 in Brussels, allowed to share experiences and information on the different legislative and enforcement approaches to address psychosocial risks at work implemented by Member States. The event was hosted by the Belgian Federal Public Service Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and organised by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL). Government representatives from legislative and enforcement authorities, along with experts from the host country (Belgium) and nine peer countries (Finland, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden) convened to discuss approaches to address psychosocial risks at work, contributing to a broader reflection on addressing these risks at the national and EU level. Representatives from the European Commission, EU-OSHA and European social partners were also present. The different reports have been made publicly available.</p>

<p>Develop the analytical basis, e-tools and guidance for risk assessments related to green and digital jobs and processes, including in particular psychosocial and ergonomic risks</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>EU-OSHA launched the "Safe and Healthy Work in the Digital Age 2023-2025" campaign in October 2023. It promotes good practices to make sure that the digital transition is safe and healthy. Psychosocial risks and ergonomics are key topics addressed through this campaign.</p> <p>In parallel, EU-OSHA is running a research project (2022-2025) to provide reliable in-depth information on work-related psychosocial risks and mental health at work for policy, prevention, awareness-raising and practice. This research will feed into EU-OSHA's Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2026-2028, Working Together for Mental Health, which will focus on mental health and psychosocial risks at work.</p> <p>Finally, EU-OSHA developed OiRA - Online interactive Risk Assessment - which enables the creation of sectoral risk assessment tools. It is developed and maintained by EU-OSHA. It supports businesses, in particular micro and SMEs to carry out risk assessments.</p>
<p>Ask the expert panel on effective ways of investing in health, to deliver an opinion on supporting the mental health of healthcare workers and other essential workers</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>On 14 October 2021, the expert panel issued its opinion on "Supporting mental health of health workforce and other essential workers".</p>
<p>Ensure appropriate follow-up to the European Parliament Resolution on the right to disconnect</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>On 25 July 2025, the Commission launched the second-stage consultation of social partners on right to disconnect and fair telework. This consultation will enable to gather EU social partner's views on a potential EU-level initiative to reduce the risks of the 'always-on' work and to ensure fair and quality telework for workers.</p>
<p><b><i>Improving prevention of workplace accidents and illnesses</i></b></p>		

<p>Promoting a "Vision Zero" approach to work-related deaths by improving data collection on accidents at work and occupational diseases, and analysing the root causes for each work-related death or injury</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The Commission (Eurostat) continuously aims to improve its data collections "European Statistics on Accidents at Work (ESAW)", "European Occupational Diseases Statistics (EODS)" (pilot data collection), and the EU Labour Force Survey module "Accidents at work and work-related health problems" in order to enable the analysis of root causes of fatal work accidents. For EODS the Commission tries to achieve participation of countries which do not yet participate in EODS, to increase the coverage of individual disease cases by all countries and currently makes a final assessment of the pilot data collection. In ESAW, there are 9 variables on "causes and circumstances" of work accidents, which allow to analyse the root causes of work accidents. Among others, Eurostat tries to harmonise and increase the reporting levels of the 9 causes and circumstances variables and explores the coverage of potential new policy areas and causes such as heat at work. In addition, efforts are underway to enhance the statistical methodology and improve the quality of workplace accident statistics, with a particular focus on the comparability. In the area of mining and other extractive industries, the ACSH Standing Working Party on Mining and other Extractive Industries continuously discusses non-confidential information about individual fatal work accident cases in Member States and their causes as well as how to prevent them. The EU LFS module is revised for each module year in terms of variables and answer categories (8-yearly module).</p>
<p>Promoting a "Vision Zero" approach to work-related deaths by setting up a dedicated Vision Zero ACSH tripartite working group, and developing targeted information actions and tools to increase awareness</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>On 30 November 2022, the ACSH adopted its Opinion on "Actions to improve prevention of work-related accidents and illnesses in line with a vision zero approach. The recommendations outlined in this Opinion are currently ongoing.</p>

Promoting a "Vision Zero" approach to work-related deaths by strengthening enforcement by supporting the SLIC in increasing awareness on reducing work-related deaths at company level, sharing good practices, and supporting increased training for labour inspectorates	Ongoing	The working group of SLIC on General Enforcement Activities has been mandated to review the guide for labour inspectors 'Fostering an OSH culture in small businesses' to emphasize the need of a prevention culture and provide a Vision Zero approach focus. The timeline is 2025-2027.
Update the EU rules on hazardous substances to combat cancer, reproductive, and respiratory diseases by launching a social partner consultation on reduced limit values for welding fumes, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, isoprene, and 1,4-dioxane under CMD in 2023	Completed	This two-stage social partners consultation was performed in 2023. The first phase consultation was launched on 16 February and ended on 31 March 2023. The second phase consultation closed on 21 November.
Update the EU rules on hazardous substances to combat cancer, reproductive, and respiratory diseases by identifying a priority list of reprotoxicants to be addressed through the relevant directives by the end of 2021	Completed	In 2022, the European Parliament and the Council adopted a fourth revision of the Carcinogens, Mutagens and Reprotoxic substances, in which they enlarged the scope to the reprotoxic substances.

Provide updated guidelines, including on training, protocols, surveillance and monitoring, for protecting workers against exposure to hazardous medicinal products by 2022	Completed	In 2023, the Commission published a guidance providing an overview of existing good practices and advice on reducing workers' exposure to hazardous medicinal products (HMPs). The aim of the guide is to increase awareness of the risks of HMPs and increase the uptake of good practices for the handling of these products across the EU. It also serves as a useful reference point and support for training activities.
Produce an OSH overview of the health and care sector, in co-operation with the EU-OSHA	Ongoing	EU-OSHA is conducting a research project titled 'Health and social care sector and occupational safety and health (OSH)' from 2022 to 2026. The project seeks to deliver evidence-based knowledge on the diverse challenges faced by the sector when it comes to the safety and health of its workers in order to increase awareness and guide the policy-making process.
Support awareness raising on musculoskeletal disorders, cancer and mental health as well as workplace harassment and gender bias	Ongoing	From 2018 to 2019 and 2020 to 2022, EU-OSHA led the Healthy Workplaces Campaigns 'Dangerous Substances' and 'Lighten the Load' to prevent occupational cancer and musculoskeletal disorders respectively. In collaboration with the European Commission, EU Member States, EU social partners, and ECHA, EU-OSHA supports the Roadmap on Carcinogens to prevent work-related cancer by raising awareness, sharing good practices, and promoting cooperation. The "Safe and Healthy Work in the Digital Age 2023-2025" campaign addresses digital transition safety, taking into account psychosocial risks and ergonomics. EU-OSHA's 2022-2025 research project provides insights into psychosocial risks and mental health at work, informing the 2026-2028 Healthy Workplaces Campaign on these topics.
Provide sector-specific information to SMEs in cooperation with the EU-OSHA	Completed	From 2014 to 2018, EU-OSHA conducted a wide-ranging project titled 'Improving OSH in micro and small enterprises' aimed to identify key success factors, in relation to policies, strategies and practical solutions, for improving OSH in those enterprises in the EU. Based on the findings of the research, which indicate that carrying out risk assessments can be quite challenging, particularly for Micro and Small Enterprises, EU-OSHA developed OiRA (see above).

Propose a legislative initiative on preventing and combatting gender-based violence against women and domestic violence	Completed	Based on the Commission proposal adopted on 8 March 2022, the European Parliament and the Council adopted the EU Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence in 2024. Member States will have until 14 June 2027 to transpose the Directive into their national law and policy.
<b><i>Improving prevention of workplace accidents and illnesses</i></b>		
launch an in-depth assessment of the effects of the pandemic and the efficiency of the EU and national OSH frameworks to develop emergency procedures and guidance for the rapid deployment, implementation and monitoring of measures in potential future health crises, in close co-operation with public-health actors	Ongoing	On 30 November 2022, the ACSH adopted the opinion "Pandemic OSH related issues in relation to emergency procedures and guidance for the rapid deployment, implementation and monitoring of measures in potential future health crises". The opinion includes, among others, a recommendation that "relevant Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) aspects should be integrated into the assessment and management of pandemics and other public health crises in the EU". In this area, the Commission (DG SANTE) is currently working on a potential revision of the "Early Warning and Response System (EWRS)" online platform managed by the Commission (DG SANTE) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), taking also into account relevant OSH information.
Update of the Commission Recommendation on occupational diseases to include COVID-19 by 2022	Completed	In 2022, the Commission adopted an updated Recommendation on occupational diseases, in which it recommends that Member States recognise Covid-19 as an occupational disease if contracted by workers in disease prevention, in health and social care, in domiciliary assistance or (during the pandemic) in other sectors where there is an outbreak and where a risk of infection has been proven.
Develop guidance for labour inspectors on assessing the quality of risk assessments and risk-management measures under the Biological Agents Directive by 2022	Completed	In 2022, the SLIC issued a guide to support labour inspectors in assessing the quality of risk assessments and risk management measures with regard to prevention of exposure to SARS-CoV-2. Although all the examples in the guide are for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the concepts can also be applied to other airborne agents with pandemic potential. In May 2025 there has been another SLIC guide adopted for labour inspectors on biological agents. It is available on the SLIC website in English and will be translated in all EU languages in the near future.