

Healthy Workplaces Summit highlights best practice and policy solutions for managing an ageing workforce

Leading European occupational safety and health (OSH) experts gather today in Bilbao, Spain, for the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work's (EU-OSHA's) Healthy Workplaces Summit. This summit marks the end of the highly successful Healthy Workplaces for All Ages campaign, aimed at promoting a sustainable working life in the context of an ageing European workforce.

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More than 350 delegates, including political decision makers, social partners, campaign partners, representatives from the European Commission, OSH experts and other key stakeholders, reflect on the achievements of the 2-year campaign and the lessons learned, and exchange good practice for sustainable working. Participants also celebrate the success of this campaign's partnership scheme, which has attracted record numbers of official campaign partners and media partners, and the 20th anniversary of the much-loved cartoon OSH hero, Napo. The summit is [streamed live online](#), and all sessions will be recorded and made available on the [EU-OSHA YouTube channel](#).

The European workforce is ageing and official retirement ages are increasing across Europe. The changing demographic of the workforce presents numerous challenges for organisations, not least because 27 % of workers believe that they will not be able to continue their current job aged 60.^[1] These issues are reinforced by the results of the European Parliament project [Safer and healthier work at any age](#). The key findings can be viewed online with the [interactive multilingual visualisation tool](#). In addition to raising awareness of the challenges facing the ageing European workforce, the campaign has also succeeded in giving access to practical, legal and policy solutions for tackling them.

Marianne Thyssen, the European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, highlights the importance of EU-OSHA's work and its contribution to achieving the goals of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the [European Commission's Strategic OSH Framework](#): *'A safe and healthy workplace is one of the cornerstones of the European Pillar of Social Rights. EU-OSHA has taken a leading role to promote sustainable ageing of the workforce and prevent early exit from the labour market over the course of the Healthy Workplaces for All Ages campaign. We gratefully acknowledge their efforts to further our goal of a fairer and more equal Europe for our citizens.'*

The importance of the tripartite support network to EU-OSHA's work, and

particularly to the campaign, is also underlined by Károly György, chair of EU-OSHA's Governing Board: *'We cannot over state how important cooperation from all sides is. It is only by working together that government agencies, workers' representatives, employers and campaign partners can safeguard the future of Europe's workforce. By targeting our interventions early in the working life, aiming at effective prevention, we can ensure that sustainability is at the centre of decision-making and that the well-being of employees is prioritised.'*

The opening plenary sessions include a key note speech on health inequalities in the context of an ageing workforce, and a panel discussion on successful policies and strategies to promote healthy ageing. Other sessions focus on measures that can be taken to promote sustainable working, good practice in rehabilitation and return to work and the power of non-verbal communication and humour for reaching a wider audience. Attendees also have the opportunity to network, exchange good practice and share campaign experiences.

In the final plenary session, summit delegates hear more about the upcoming 2018-19 campaign [Healthy Workplaces Manage Dangerous Substances](#). This campaign aims to raise awareness of occupational exposure to dangerous substances and highlight the importance of the prevention hierarchy known as STOP principle: Substitution, Technical controls, Organisational measures and Personal protective equipment.

Links:

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Full details of the [Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2016-17](#) can be found online