

Press Information



Berlin, 7th October 2009

More than a quarter of European employees suffer from mental stress –A campaign, “Work. In tune with life. Move Europe” begins on 8th October in Berlin

While working life is becoming physically less demanding, mental stress and work intensification are on the increase. 28 percent of workers in the European Union suffer from work-related mental health problems – i.e. 56 million people. According to a European Union survey, 14 percent of workers suffer from stress, depression or anxiety.

Many companies are already taking preventative action and analyse the mental stress factors as part of their workplace health promotion programme. The initiative “Work. In tune with life. Move Europe” will draw attention to the significance of stress factors at work and identify examples of good practice to be made available to other companies. With the participation of 20 member countries in the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion, the campaign will be opened officially by the EU Commission at an international conference in Berlin on 8th October.

Working conditions are not always the sole cause of mental illnesses. Nevertheless, an illness can be aggravated or intensified by stress that occurs when workers lack control over their own work, by time pressure, bad management, low or excessive job demands, job insecurity or noise.

Not only do the stressed workers suffer, but so do the companies. Fatigue, difficulties in concentrating and inconsistent performance affect both the quality of work and the working climate. About 50% of absenteeism is caused by work-related stress.

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Early intervention often helps to prevent a personal crisis. It can reduce the length of absenteeism due to sickness and the affected workers' skills are not lost to the company. Autonomy, further training, communication and social support can have a positive influence on the employees' well-being and can alleviate the effects of stress.

The objective of the 8th Initiative of the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP), "Work. In tune with Life. Move Europe", is to underline the importance of promoting mental health throughout Europe. The initiative aims to make Europe a place where healthy employees create healthy companies. Leading European companies in 20 countries will undergo a neutral evaluation of their health promotion activities and present their own good practice as a model for the whole of Europe. In 2009 and 2010 the focus will be on promoting mental health. The campaign is coordinated by the ENWHP Secretariat at the BKK Bundesverband in Essen.