

baa:

Aktuell 1²¹



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The European dimension of occupational safety and health

■ **baua Aktuell:** Why is this edition of baua:Aktuell focussing on Europe?

Beermann: Even if we are often not aware of it, European agreements are the central foundations of occupational safety and health in Germany. This is why Europe is always a central point of reference for BAuA. While national law is usually drawn up in a national dialogue, it often builds on the legal framework established in the European context. Currently, we can observe a number of developments in European politics and the EU institutions that directly or indirectly affect BAuA's core activities: a new EU Commission is setting new political priorities and placing new topics on the agenda. For example, the Porto Social Summit in May presented an Action Plan for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights with its 20 principles on equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions, and social protection and inclusion.

The new EU occupational health and safety strategy for 2021–2027, which the EU Commission will launch at the end of June, is of particular importance for OSH. The aim is to safeguard the high health and safety standards enjoyed by workers in the EU, while taking greater account of new risks posed by digitalisation and new technologies in the workplace. Against this backdrop, we would like to inform readers about the European dimension of occupational health and safety, and BAuA's role in Europe.

baua: Aktuell: What does BAuA's European engagement look like in concrete terms?

Windel: Three different areas are worth mentioning. First, the area of regulation and standardisation. Here, BAuA participates in central committees and takes on important tasks. For example, it has been doing this on the Risk Assessment Committee of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), where experts prepare opinions on the risks of substances to human health and the environment. Another example is the Roadmap on Carcinogens, a cross-border action programme initiated by various partners to reduce the rates of occupational cancers. A third example is the European Machinery Directive. As it prepares a proposal for its revision, the Commission is focusing on the risks of innovative technologies. BAuA's experts are involved in developing national positions together with the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, BMAS), and representing them on European committees.

In the second area, BAuA supports the BMAS in its work at European level. One example is BAuA's membership of the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work, the European Commission's central body concerned with all issues related to occupational safety and health. Another example is the seat BAuA holds on the Management Board of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) and its contribu-



Dr Armin Windel is the head of BAuA's International Affairs, Scientific Cooperation Staff Unit.

tions to the Agency's expert groups. Furthermore, BAuA runs the German „Focal Point“, a kind of national contact point for EU-OSHA.

The third area is research and development with a European background or European relevance. Since 2003, we have been involved in the Partnership for European Research in Occupational Safety and Health (PEROSH), together with thirteen other occupational safety and health institutes from thirteen European countries. Through its activities, we help, for example, to determine the objectives of the major, multi-year EU research programmes, such as Horizon Europe. At the same time, we also apply regularly and successfully for funding from European programmes.

baua Aktuell: What connects these very different activities?

Beermann: As a governmental research institution anchored in the national OSH framework, we operate at the interface between science and policymaking. Our aim is to develop evidence-based policy options and contribute to implementation strategies for political decision makers on the basis of our scientifically proven findings. We would like to achieve the same goals at the European level. To do this, we need to acquire scientific knowledge, translate scientific findings into policy advice, and then

introduce it into the discussions of the European advisory bodies. In this respect, our commitment in and to Europe follows the same principles and the same logic that we also stand for in the national context.

baua:Aktuell: Given the institutional and political complexity at EU level, what are the challenges and opportunities of BAuA's European engagement in occupational health and safety?

Windel: It is true that European coordination can be complex and requires staying power. However, there is no doubt that it is necessary and ultimately worthwhile. Because of the single market, the EU Member States are closely intertwined economically. This also throws up common challenges with regard to the social rights of EU citizens, including occupational health and safety. The aim is to ensure that working conditions for all workers in the EU are humane. To achieve this, it is necessary to reach agreement at EU level and establish a framework. With twenty-seven Member States, this is not easy in view of the sometimes large differences between their economic structures and national legal systems. However, if we do not want fundamental principles of the EU, such as the free movement of workers, to be called into question by differences in occupational health and safety, the development of a common framework is the only right, albeit sometimes arduous, way forward.

baua:Aktuell: Do companies also profit from European processes?

Windel: For sure, yes! Even if companies are not always aware of it. In a transnational economic area, fair competitive conditions need comparable rules applied to all companies, also and above all when it comes to protecting workers. Another point is that EU-OSHA can reach and inform a large number of companies with coordinated, Europe-wide campaigns on occupational health and safety, such as the current campaign to combat musculoskeletal stress. That in



Dr Beate Beermann has been vice president of BAuA since the beginning of 2021.

itself is a real benefit. On top of that, something else comes into play: the opportunity to learn from each other by identifying good solutions for company practice and disseminating them across national borders.

baua:Aktuell: Dr Beermann, as the new vice president of BAuA, you will be focussing on Europe in the future. What European goals will BAuA be pursuing in the coming years?

Beermann: In the coming years, European OSH stakeholders will have to implement the new EU occupational health and safety strategy for 2021–2027, which will have to be backed up with concrete measures. We will support this implementation process as far as our mandate allows us to do so and introduce the topics that are important to us, such as the discussion about the opportunities and risks for safety and health in the digital world of work. They also include the opportunities digitalisation is opening up for smart inspection by OSH authorities, of which there are already successful examples in Europe. At the same time, we will consolidate our existing commitments, both in research and in regulation. This will involve further strengthening the PEROSH network, and continuing to establish and drive forward the Roadmap on Carcinogens.

Interview by Jörg Michel

Common challenges, common action

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PEROSH

The Partnership for European Research in Occupational Safety and Health (PEROSH) was founded in 2003. It currently comprises fourteen leading occupational safety and health institutes from thirteen European countries. The aims of the partnership are to exchange information, to cooperate jointly on research and development projects, and to represent the perspective of occupational safety and health research to the European institutions. More information is available at www.perosh.eu.

The EU's occupational safety and health strategy

■ The EU's occupational health and safety strategy, the EU Strategic Framework for Health and Safety at Work 2014–2020, expired at the end of last year. The EU Commission will launch a new strategy at the end of June 2021 – an evaluation and consultation process ran for this purpose at the beginning of the year.

BAuA expressly welcomes the development of a new strategy. Working conditions and work-related health risks still vary widely in Europe, both between Member States, and within sectors and occupational groups. For this reason, BAuA has actively participated in the consultation process: together with its partner institutes in the Partnership for European Research in Occupational Safety and Health (PEROSH), it has drafted a position

paper that puts forward proposals to the EU Commission about objectives and activities for the new European OSH strategy for 2021–2027.

Why does the EU need an OSH strategy?

Occupational safety and health has not been a purely national matter for decades. The EU repeatedly launches important initiatives, puts in place common legal foundations, and promotes exchange between its Member States. The EU's overarching goal is to improve "in particular the working environment to protect workers' health and safety", as stated in Article 153 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. This involves designing humane working conditions for all workers, regardless of

age, origin, or gender. The joint commitment of the Member States, social partners, companies, and workers is required to achieve this aim. The EU Treaties equip the EU institutions with important competencies and instruments. First and foremost, these include the ability to legislate in the form of directives, which have to be transposed into national law by the Member States.

While the adoption or revision of directives is subject to an elaborate legislative process, the EU Treaties also provide „softer“ instruments that are less legally binding but, at the same time, more flexible. One of these softer instruments is the occupational safety and health strategy. By adopting an EU OSH strategy in consultation with the

Member States and social partners, the EU Commission aims to create a basis for joint European action on occupational health and safety. These efforts include identifying common challenges, coordinating national occupational safety and health systems, developing and exchanging possible solutions, and promoting mutual learning. In this context, the EU also has the situation of European companies in mind, as the priorities of the previous 2014–2020 strategy period show: the EU Commission placed great emphasis on supporting small and medium-sized enterprises in the implementation of occupational safety and health regulations, for example with EU-OSHA's Online interactive Risk Assessment (OiRA) tools. Helping companies ensure working conditions are safe and healthy, and creating a level legal playing field will remain important goals of the EU's OSH strategy in the future.

Integrating research more strongly

The benefits of European coordination also form the starting point for the PEROSH position paper. BAuA and its partner institutes have identified a total of nine challenges for occupational safety and health in the coming years – from the effects and opportunities of digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI) to the prevention of work-related diseases and the improvement of OSH in global supply chains. PEROSH recommends specific actions to address these challenges from the perspective of European OSH research. At the same time, there is one overarching objective that stands above the specific recommendations on particular issues: PEROSH emphasises the contribution made by research to European OSH activities and recommends that the perspective of OSH research be made an integral part of the new OSH strategy.

With regard to new challenges, PEROSH suggests concentrating on digitalisation and the increasing application of AI-based systems. For example, the expected legislation

on artificial intelligence at EU level must also include principles for human-centred work design. PEROSH sees research making special contributions with regard to digitalisation, as there are still many open questions in this area. Among the challenges of the coming years, there will also be more traditional OSH issues such as the prevention of work-related diseases, especially musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) and mental ill health. As far as these familiar health risks are concerned, PEROSH recommends that the Commission build on past activities and continue to develop them in meaningful ways while taking new research findings into account. Especially when it comes to the prevention of MSDs, it is important to maintain a high level of commitment, since MSDs are among the most frequent causes of work-related diseases throughout Europe.

The example of the use of hazardous substances in the workplace demonstrates that this European commitment is not only worthwhile but also imperative if progress is to be achieved in occupational safety and health. It is thus absolutely essential to clarify and improve how EU legislation on OSH and chemicals legislation (REACH) interact when limit values are set in order to avoid overlaps or even contradictory requirements. This is also another key recommendation of the PEROSH position paper. A new strategic framework should not least take into account lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic. Like BAuA, other PEROSH institutes were also intensively involved in the development of workplace-specific health and safety measures. Particularly at the beginning of the pandemic, PEROSH was an important forum for European exchange, on questions concerning the properties and use of personal protective equipment for example. It turned out that, on the one hand, European OSH systems proved to be sufficiently flexible to respond to workplace infection control requirements. On the other hand, however, the pandemic also shed light

on problems that had been known about for some time. These included improving the working conditions of vulnerable groups such as seasonal workers, but also the design of location- and time-flexible work. PEROSH therefore recommends that the EU Commission should address these challenges as a matter of priority, for example by improving the data available on the occupational safety and health of specific groups of workers.

The European dimension of OSH

BAuA was able to contribute its expertise in these different areas of OSH to the PEROSH paper. This illustrates the extent to which BAuA's activities in both research and policy advice are oriented towards the European level. Its European commitment is driven by the ambition to design work humanely in an increasingly networked, digital, flexible world of work so as to ensure that, despite an increasingly complex, dynamic situation, workers' safety and health is of paramount importance.



Dr Sebastian Haus-Rybicki, International Affairs, Scientific Cooperation Staff Unit



Dr Armin Windel, Head of the International Affairs, Scientific Cooperation Staff Unit

European initiatives' impact on the German occupational safety and health system

The future of smart inspection

Over the past fifteen years, European requirements and initiatives have contributed significantly to the further development of the German occupational safety and health system. Those involved in this process have included the Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC), an advisory body of labour inspectors from all the European countries that supports the EU Commission. Its 2004 evaluation of the German OSH system, for example, resulted in the Joint German Occupational Safety and Health Strategy (Gemeinsame Deutsche Arbeitsschutzstrategie, GDA) being anchored in the Safety and Health at Work Act (Arbeitsschutzgesetz, ArbSchG) four years later. The minimum quota for inspections by the federal state authorities set in the Occupational Safety and Health Inspection Act (Arbeitsschutzkontrollgesetz, ArbSchKonG), which the Bundestag passed at the end of last year in response to the Covid-19 outbreaks in the meat industry, also has its roots in an SLIC evaluation.

BAuA supported the discussion and coordination process surrounding the Occupational Safety and Health Inspection Act with findings from its research projects on “working conditions monitoring and the systematic monitoring of data on work and employees”, as well as the “effects of OSH instruments and measures”. It especially gave advice on quantitative and qualitative standards for the federal states' inspection activities. In its research into the effects of OSH instruments and measures, BAuA is focused on the functional contribution made by OSH institutions to their operational implementation in companies. How do supervisory authorities contribute to the efficient, effective implementation of requirements for the safe, healthy, humane design of work? What role do increas-

ingly digitalised and flexible forms of work play in this context?

In addition to empirical studies of the specific situation in Germany, examples from other European countries also provide important insights. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) systematically analyses information about the status and development of occupational safety and health in EU Member States. With regard to digitalisation, the Agency's initiatives have included a foresight project in which it investigated the potential digital technologies offer for the design of safe, healthy working conditions and how these technologies might support OSH professionals. Big data and machine learning, for example, could open up new opportunities for labour inspection activities.

Workshop on international labour inspection

In November 2020, BAuA and the State Institute for Work Design in North Rhine-Westphalia organised a workshop entitled The Future of Smart and Effective Labour Inspections, which was supported by the EU-OSHA Foresight Digitalisation project.

The aim was to introduce an international perspective into the current activities surrounding occupational health and safety inspection. Two main findings can be drawn from the discussion of the examples from Austria, France, and Denmark that were presented:

- Introducing digital technologies to support inspection services requires a well-thought-through, participatory-oriented process: inspection staff should be involved so that they do not feel controlled by information and communication technology.



Big data could be used for AI-supported workplace inspections.

- A well-coordinated, accessible information and data basis is required for big data/AI-supported inspections. Solutions such as those used in Denmark or Norway can currently only be transferred to Germany to a very limited extent, since far more comprehensive, more systematic networking of company data on safety and health is possible in these countries.

BAuA is continuing its research on „smart supervision“ in the context of its priority programme Safety and Health in the Digital World of Work. BAuA also plans to continue the international dialogue at another workshop in 2021. In addition, further research and policy advice on smart inspection will be required in connection with the inspection quota that is now anchored in law. Similarly, BAuA's new expert group in charge of monitoring occupational health and safety inspection in the federal states will also generate new research questions.



Sabine Sommer,
Head of the OSH
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General Office of the
National OSH
Conference Unit

Learning from European exchange

Working together against psychosocial risks

■ Psychosocial risks in the workplace have become an important OSH issue at European level because they can adversely affect workers' performance and health, and they impose a significant financial burden on organisations and societies. It is therefore useful to familiarise ourselves with the experiences of our European neighbours in dealing with these challenges.

European research

BAuA has been involved in European research projects for many years. For example, the Psychosocial Risk Management – European Framework (PRIMA-EF) project developed guidelines for psychosocial risk management in the EU from 2006 to 2009. The first European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER) in 2007–2010 provided an EU-wide comparison of enterprises' occupational safety and health practice, especially their handling of psychosocial risks. Finally, BAuA conducted in-depth company case studies

on the management of psychosocial risks in four EU countries between 2013 and 2016. The results were published in 2017.

European similarities and differences

Cross-country comparative studies allow far-reaching insights to be gained into the OSH practices of other national work cultures. There are many similarities: cuts to the resources for OSH inspection have a negative impact on the quantity and quality of inspection activities everywhere – especially in the case of psychosocial risks, which are so time-consuming to deal with. In addition, a lack of willingness to openly address problems in the workplace makes it more difficult to manage psychosocial risks. At the same time, an OSH culture is gradually emerging in which excessive workload is addressed, taken up, and thus seen as changeable. A classic example is the healthcare sector with its high work intensity and excessive demands due to staff shortages. Taking a qualitative research approach, the 2017 BAuA study was able to demonstrate this transition to a more open OSH culture was happening. Studies at European level have also provided useful information on how psychosocial risks can be successfully tackled when risk assessments are carried out. According to these studies, methodological and procedural standards that ensure clarity about the action to be taken and reduce the potential for conflict between the actors in a company, a mature culture of participation, the use of the experience available within the company, and the selective involvement of external expertise are helpful in addressing psychosocial risks.

The common, comparative European perspective also draws attention

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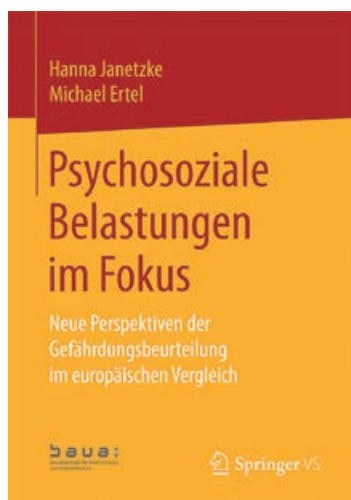
Definition of psychosocial risks

Psychosocial risks arise from poor work design, organisation and management, as well as a poor social context of work, and they may result in negative psychological, physical and social outcomes such as work-related stress, burnout or depression (<https://osha.europa.eu/en/themes/psychosocial-risks-and-stress>).

to differences and similarities in the use of terminology, the term „psychosocial risks“ for instance, as well as the different levels of development of national OSH systems.

Future European research topics

At EU level and within BAuA, the question of managing psychosocial risks in small companies is gaining in importance, as they have fewer resources and less formalised structures than larger organisations. In addition, there is the epochal challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is associated with increased psychosocial risks, especially for workers with contact to patients, customers, or clients. However, the pandemic's long-term effects are not yet foreseeable. It is therefore all the more important to analyse how companies in the EU are dealing with this problem and exchange experiences between Member States.



BAuA's 2017 study offers insights into different EU states' OSH practice.



Michael Ertel,
Work and Health
Division

Stronger focus on innovative technologies

Machinery Directive under revision

■ The European Machinery Directive (2006/42/EC) defines central safety objectives and requirements for machines and production lines. It has been transposed into German law by the Product Safety Act (Produktsicherheitsgesetz, ProdSG) and the Ninth Ordinance to the Product Safety Act (Neunte Verordnung zum Produktsicherheitsgesetz, 9th ProdSV). Furthermore, the fundamental health and safety requirements of the European Machinery Directive are specified in harmonised standards for specific hazards and machine groups.

The European Commission has initiated a revision of the Machinery Directive, which will be implemented as a regulation in the future. Currently, the Commission is preparing a proposal. In addition to adjustments to the New Legislative Framework (NLF), the Commission is also discussing numerous other topics with the EU Member States and interested parties.

Risk assessment

One key issue is how the existing health and safety requirements can

address the risks posed by innovative technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, autonomous machines, or collaborative robots and how these technologies can be integrated into the technology-neutral safety objectives of the Machinery Directive.

When placing machines on the market, manufacturers are obliged to demonstrate compliance with the essential health and safety requirements of Annex I of the Machinery Directive. For this purpose, manufacturers need to follow a conformity assessment procedure. They are obliged to carry out a risk assessment for the specified intended use, which must also consider foreseeable misuses. Subsequently, manufacturers can design and build a machine based on the risk assessment. They must take into account any of a machine's functions that are influenced, modified, or generated by AI in the risk assessment. Furthermore, manufacturers need to clarify whether they can apply self-learning systems when the risks of complex cyber-physical systems (CPSs) are assessed. Besides the actual definition of AI, the determination of the system boundary plays a decisive role. From BAuA's point of view, manufacturers can only carry out a proper risk assessment if they adhere to previously defined system limits, and thus the functional and application limits of a machine or production system. Training data is also a central component when it comes to the integration of learning machine systems. It is necessary to examine how the data has to be integrated.

Safety and security

In addition to functional safety, industrial security requirements are also becoming increasingly important for machines and production systems

characterised by a high degree of networking. The relationship between OSH requirements and IT security is becoming more significant. European stakeholders are currently discussing horizontal European legislation on cyber security based on the New Legislative Framework (NLF). The intention is to supplement the existing EU Cybersecurity Regulation (2019/881) with voluntary certification procedures for certain networkable products.

BAuA's commitment

BAuA is active in providing advice to policymakers in the area of machinery and industrial safety. It advises the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, BMAS) and prepares national positions together with the Ministry. BAuA experts sit on European committees and also play an active role as national representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany. They support the standardisation work of the German Institute for Standardization (Deutsches Institut für Normung, DIN), particularly its Standards Committee Safety Design Principles (NASG). However, new challenges are being faced in this field because of increasing internationalisation. As a departmental research institution, BAuA also supports policymaking with its research and development activities, for example its new project „Safety-related risk analysis of a cyber-physical model system for Industry 4.0 applications“. This project will apply risk assessment methods to systematically analyse and further develop complex cyber-physical model systems (CPSs), including self-learning algorithms.



Work with collaborative robots also needs to be risk assessed properly.



Dr Stefan Voß,
Head of the Workplaces,
Safety of Machinery,
Operational Safety Unit

BAuA coordinates restriction proposal Minimising the use of PFASs in Europe

■ Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs) are chemical compounds found in various technical applications and consumer products. For example, you can find PFASs in fire-fighting foams, textiles, food contact materials and other packaging, building materials, cosmetics, and surface coatings and they are used in automotive and aircraft manufacturing. A total of around 4,700 PFASs have been identified to date.

Hazards from PFASs

PFASs are exceptionally stable or have the ability to degrade to very stable PFASs. This extreme persistence means that they remain in the environment for a very long time and increasingly accumulate there. PFASs can contaminate groundwater, surface water, and drinking water. Some of these substances accumulate in plants, as well as living organisms along the food chain. PFASs, once released into the environment, are difficult to remove from it. In addition to persistence and environmental hazards, including their ecotoxicity, some PFASs are also of concern with respect to human health, being implicated in problems such as thyroid disorders, elevated cholesterol levels, impacts on reproduction and fertility, immunotoxicity, liver damage, and kidney and testicular cancer. In this context, endocrine disruption, i.e. adverse effects on the human endocrine system, has also been reported. A recent opinion from the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) concluded that parts of the European population exceed the permitted weekly dietary intake of four substances from this group.

Severe restrictions planned

In order to minimise future emissions of PFASs into the environment,



PFASs are highly persistent and are increasingly accumulating in the environment.

the national authorities of Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark are jointly preparing a comprehensive dossier for a REACH restriction proposal. Their aim is to ban the production, marketing, and use of all PFASs in the European Union. As the Federal Office for Chemicals, BAuA is taking the lead in this restriction project – together with the German Environment Agency and their Dutch colleagues. BAuA's Hazardous Substances and Biological Agents Division is working on the occupational safety aspects of the proposal. PFASs should only be used where they are essential for society. BAuA and its European partners therefore chose to look initially at all the substances and applications to be restricted. The range of substances can then be narrowed down as the procedure continues based on further information that is gathered from industry in particular, for example during consultation procedures.

Many opinions integrated

The five EU Member States conducted a joint public consultation via the BAuA website to obtain further information about the properties and uses of PFASs, as well as alternatives to them. Around 560 contributions have been received. BAuA and its partners will use this information to identify and evaluate the most appropriate restriction measures.

Based on all the available information, the five Member States will draw up a specific restriction proposal. Small teams under the leadership of individual Member States will carry out the extensive work required on substance identity, hazard properties, PFASs' numerous uses, analytics, possible alternatives, and socio-economic impacts.

Other EU Member States and interested parties will then have the opportunity to comment on this proposal. Having examined it thoroughly, the Committees of the European Chemicals Agency will also draw up an opinion. Based on this opinion, the EU Commission will then draft a restriction proposal on which the Member States will decide. With the publication of the entry in Annex XVII (list of restricted substances) of the REACH Regulation, the restriction will finally come into force after a transitional period to be set by the EU Commission.



Dr. Kerstin Heesche-Wagner,
Head of the Evaluation
of Chemicals and Risk
Management Unit

Better networking in the fight against cancer

Roadmap on Carcinogens 2.0

■ Cancer is the number one cause of work-related deaths in the EU, accounting for 52% of all annual deaths. Depending on the data source, this means 80,000 to 100,000 cases, which are always associated with great suffering for the affected families on the one hand, and high costs for society on the other. Early on, legislators therefore sought to reduce cancer risks in the workplace through regulations designed to protect workers. Examples include the EU Asbestos Directive and the EU Cancer Directive. More recently, the EU has adopted modern regulations on the classification, labelling, and packaging (CLP Regulation) and marketing of industrial chemicals (REACH Regulation). Obviously, however, such regulations alone are not sufficient to achieve significant progress in the fight against occupational cancer at the level of company practice.

This is where the Roadmap on Carcinogens comes in. In its first phase from Amsterdam to Helsinki in the years 2016 to 2019, representatives

of workers' and employers' organisations, EU-OSHA, the Member States, and the European Commission (EU-COM) came together on the initiative of the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment to engage in the EU-wide Roadmap on Carcinogens. The Roadmap is a voluntary, cross-border action programme: examples of good practice are used to demonstrate how the risks from occupational exposure to carcinogens can be reduced. Companies share their solutions and experiences with others. Guidance documents developed by Member States or organisations are available to all interested parties. The initiative provides information and solutions on a platform for the entire OSH community. The first Roadmap also focused on the continuous addition of limit values for carcinogens agreed by the partners, including the EU Commission. Limit values facilitate the assessment of working conditions when particularly important carcinogens are present. Other topics have included fact

sheets and practical solutions developed by Member States and organisations for a wide range of activities involving carcinogens.

Broader approach, more projects

Originally, the Roadmap was scheduled to end in 2019, but was extended when Germany joined the initiative and took on responsibility for it in November 2019. Other partners such as Portugal, Slovenia, France, Belgium, and the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) have also joined in the meantime and jointly launched a second project phase of the Roadmap on Carcinogens (RoC 2.0). Despite the difficult circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the partners were able to develop a new strategy within a few months in a process of constructive discussion and adopted it in mid-2020. The second phase of the Roadmap was launched officially at the STOP Cancer at Work conference held in Dortmund in mid-November 2020 as part of the German EU Council Presidency.

The new strategy takes a broader approach, strengthening the project nature of the initiative and setting priorities for the next four years until 2024. It consists of four pillars: „Creating Awareness“, „Providing Help“, „Mobilising Stakeholders“, and „Targeting Innovation“. Individual projects carried out by the European partners in pairs or threes are going to bring these four pillars to life. Twelve projects have progressed so far that they can start in the course of 2021. The projects have a fixed structure that makes it easier to set them up and draw comparisons between them. This includes a brief profile of the project, milestones, activities, results monitoring, the stakeholders involved, and a timetable. In addition to those already defined, more projects are possible, as RoC 2.0 is going to run for four years, ending with a closing event in Brussels in 2024. During this period, the partners will implement the Roadmap projects and the practical tools that are developed will arrive in workplaces.

Roadmap on Carcinogens 2.0 2020–2024

		Empowering Workers	
	Finding funds for Businesses	Cooperation with SLIC	Safe Working Procedures
Education is Key	General Guidance	Involve Social Insurance Networks	Process-generated Carcinogens
Providing Better Data	Substitution Strategies	Activate Sector Organisations	Bridging the Gap
Creating Awareness	Providing Help	Mobilising Stakeholders	Targeting Innovation

Example: CarcCheck

One example of the projects conducted under the new initiative is Integrating Social Accident Insurance Institutions. The core element of this project is an online tool called „CarcCheck“. It enables employers to check the procedures for handling carcinogens in their companies. This tool is being developed in Germany by the accident insurance institutions during the current Joint German Occupational Safety and Health Strategy (Gemeinsame Deutsche Arbeitsschutzstrategie, GDA) period and will be made available to the Roadmap on Carcinogens after it has been rolled out successfully in Germany. In order to establish this tool in the EU, the Roadmap will involve the various national insurance organisations, taking account of their national requirements, and use these channels to introduce it to companies throughout the EU.

New overview study

One of the main goals of RoC 2.0 is to network with OSH stakeholders who are committed to reducing occupational cancer rates. At European level, a major EU-OSHA survey on exposure to carcinogens (Worker Survey on Exposure to Cancer Risk Factors) is running in parallel to RoC 2.0. After a successful feasibility study based on experience from Australia, the preparations for the survey began in 2020. The next step will be to adapt survey instruments to the conditions in Finland, France, Ireland, Spain, Hungary, and Germany. The survey will then be developed and carried out this year and next. First results will be published in 2023. After an evaluation in 2024, EU-OSHA will decide whether to extend the survey to other countries or additional risk factors, and how to use the knowledge that is gained for the fight against cancer at the workplace.

GDA on board

At national level, links also exist with the Joint German Occupational Safety and Health Strategy (GDA). On the initiative of BAuA, the GDA has



The winners of the 13th German Hazardous Substances Protection Award offer examples of good practice for RoC 2.0.

established a work programme for carcinogenic hazardous substances. In essence, the inspection authorities of Germany's federal states and the accident insurance institutions will focus on monitoring the handling of carcinogenic substances and the implementation of legal requirements in companies over a period of about four years. There will therefore be overlaps with the objectives of RoC 2.0, both in terms of timing and content. BAuA will incorporate the findings arrived at and auxiliary tools developed in the context of the GDA work programme on carcinogens into the Roadmap projects, just as the Roadmap will feed back results and findings reached at EU level to the GDA.

The 13th German Hazardous Substances Protection Award has also contributed to RoC 2.0. In 2020, the prize, which the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs awards every two years, had the motto „STOP cancer in the workplace“. The award winners included, for example, a system for the contact-free opening, emptying, and cleaning of drums containing chromic acid, a forklift truck with a gas-tight driver's cab and ventilation to protect against carcinogenic ethylene oxide, and a training programme to reduce cancer risks from fumes among firefighters. The

winning ideas are presented as examples of good practice on the RoC 2.0 platform.

In summary, the launch of the Roadmap on Carcinogens 2.0 has been a success. The management of the initiative, including its organisation, administration, and funding, has been secured until 2024. The new strategy has been adopted and twelve projects are at the planning or implementation stage. I would like to praise the Roadmap's old and new partners for their great commitment to achieving sustainable progress in the fight against occupational cancer in the workplace.



Dr Rüdiger Pipke,
Head of the Hazardous
Substances and
Biological Agents Division

Kick-off event at DASA on 2 March

Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load! campaign launched

„Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load!“ is the slogan of the European campaign that is being run by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) from 2020 to 2022 with the aim of preventing musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). The campaign was launched in Germany on 2 March 2021 with a virtual kick-off event at the DASA Working World Exhibition. Nathalie Henke (BAuA), the Head of the German EU-OSHA National Focal Point (FoP), welcomed about 220 attendees who were interested in learning more about the content, measures, and goals of this European campaign. The kick-off event was supported by the Musculoskeletal Strain (MSS) programme of the Joint German Occupational Safety and Health Strategy (Gemeinsame Deutsche Arbeitsschutzstrategie, GDA). Hosted professionally by Dr Armin Windel (BAuA), the participants travelled virtually to speakers in a variety of locations, including Berlin, Vienna, Hamburg, and Bilbao.

Three-year campaign

EU-OSHA's executive director, Dr Christa Sedlatschek, provided insights into the campaign. She pointed out that MSDs were a problem in all sectors and for all workers across Europe, but could often be prevented by simple, cost-effective measures. The campaign was taking a holistic approach that was not limited to physical stress, but also included psychosocial risks, Sedlatschek continued. The aim of the three years of activities was to raise awareness of MSDs among companies, especially small and micro-enterprises, by highlighting the problem's relevance. EU-OSHA aimed to provide support for risk-assessments that would enable companies to identify incorrect loads and

avoid risks through ergonomic measures, and work design and organisation. In doing so, the Agency would also take new risks into account. Christa Sedlatschek also highlighted the fact that the campaign was focussed on younger people and reintegration into the workplace following illness. The networking of the stakeholders in occupational safety and health helped to disseminate examples of good practice throughout Europe. In this context, EU-OSHA's executive director referred to the European Good Practice Awards, which are tied in with the campaign. Interested organisations or individuals can submit contributions to their national Focal Points. In Germany, the deadline for applications is 15 October 2021.

GDA work programme

The GDA's Musculoskeletal Strain work programme, which starts at the end of May 2021, offered a look into the future. It is primarily preventive in nature, and also focuses in particular on small and micro-enterprises, which will be provided with a toolbox of methods. Precisely tailored instruments will support companies and inspectorates in implementing risk assessments. In addition, around 6,700 company inspections are to be carried out as part of the work programme. The results of the advice and monitoring provided to companies will be fed back to the inspection authorities. For more information, visit www.gda-portal.de.

MEGAPHYS project

Other presentations dealt with individual prevention, young people, and methods of risk assessment. Researchers also presented MEGAPHYS, a project that was conducted

jointly by BAuA and the German Social Accident Insurance (Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung, DGUV). The methods developed and evaluated by this project can be used to assess loads on the musculoskeletal system.

The questions and comments in the accompanying chat reflected the great interest of the audience, who paid high praise to the organisers and the host. Further information about the campaign, details of the European Good Practice Awards, and documentation on the event can be found at www.osha.de.

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