

28.04.2010

Safe maintenance in focus with the launch of the new Healthy Workplaces Campaign

To mark the World Day for Safety and Health at Work on 28 April, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) has launched its new Healthy Workplaces Campaign for 2010/11, promoting safe maintenance across Europe. In some European countries as much as 20% of all workplace accidents are connected with maintenance and in a number of sectors over half of all accidents are maintenance-related.

Maintenance is essential to prevent workplace risks, but it is itself a high risk activity for the workers that carry it out. It is estimated that in Europe 10-15% of fatal accidents at work can be attributed to maintenance operations. It is vital, therefore, that maintenance is carried out properly, taking into consideration workers' safety and health.

Launching the Campaign at the European Commission's headquarters in Brussels, Dr Jukka Takala, Director of EU-OSHA, alongside the EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Mr László Andor, outlined the campaign's objectives and the basic rules for safe maintenance as a key contribution to healthy workplaces.

Mr Andor giving his backing to the Campaign, said: *"Maintenance is a daily part of every workplace and sector. The 20% of accidents currently linked to maintenance is too high and shows it's an area where we have to raise awareness and step up our efforts"*. He added: *"Our overall strategy is to cut all work-related accidents in the EU by 25% over the coming years. This campaign will help to raise awareness about maintenance-related risks, saving lives across Europe and bringing us closer to our overall goal for safer and healthier workplaces"*.

Poorly managed maintenance activities and procedures raise the risks of workplace accidents, including fatal accidents, involving workers at all levels across a wide range of industries. In one of the worst incidents of its kind in Europe, the Piper Alpha disaster of 1988 saw the North Sea oil and gas platform turned into a blazing inferno within seconds, killing 167 workers – a tragic example of the potential consequences of inadequate maintenance procedures.

You can download the official campaign guide and other campaign materials (presentations, publications and promotional material in 22 languages) and find campaign events that will be happening near you, on the Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2010/11 website:

<http://hw.osha.europa.eu>

[Safe Maintenance campaign website](#)

[Maintenance at a glance](#)

Notes to editors:

1. The mission of the **European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)** is to make Europe a safer, healthier and more productive place to work. EU-OSHA was set up by the European Union to help meet the information needs in the field of occupational safety and health. Based in

Bilbao, Spain, the EU-OSHA aims to improve the lives of people at work by stimulating the flow of technical, scientific and economic information between all those involved in occupational safety and health issues. <http://osha.europa.eu>

2. The **Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2010-2011**, which is co-ordinated by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work and its partners in the 27 EU Member States and beyond, supports a wide range of activities at the national and European level that promote safe maintenance. It is backed by the EU Presidencies of Spain and Belgium in 2010 and of Hungary and Poland in 2011, by the European Parliament and the European Commission, and by the European Social Partners.

Over the two years of the campaign, many events and activities will be organised within the Member States. One of the principal activities to support the campaign is the **European Good Practice Awards** that is organised specifically to identify examples of good practice related to safe maintenance.

Other campaign highlights include **two European Weeks for Safety and Health at Work**, in October 2010 and October 2011. The European Weeks, which have been running since 2000, are annual events that promote improved safety and health in the workplace.

Individuals and organisations of all sizes can take part in these events, or organise their own. For instance, they can get involved in safety demonstrations, training events, seminars and workshops. For those pan-European or international organisations that want to be more substantially involved in the campaign and are able to multiply their efforts through their network members, there is also the opportunity to become an **official EU Campaign partner**. The previous Healthy Workplaces campaign attracted 43 multinationals, EU social partners, NGOs and others and EU-OSHA aims for a considerable increase in this figure for the current Safe Maintenance Campaign.

The Campaign focuses on **raising awareness of the risks associated with maintenance activities**, promoting good practice and supporting EU and Member State policies, activities and initiatives in this area. The campaign also **highlights the importance of maintenance (of plants, equipment, machines and workplaces) to eliminate workplace hazards**, and to provide safer and healthier working conditions in workplaces throughout Europe. The ultimate aim, of course, is to help to reduce the number of people who are being hurt or are experiencing ill health as a result of inadequate maintenance or lack of maintenance, now and in the future.

<http://hw.osha.europa.eu>

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