

THE STRATEGY OF CYPRUS ON SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK FOR THE PERIOD 2007 – 2012

The Strategy of Cyprus on safety and health at work, which was designed on the basis of the European Union Strategy 2007 – 2012, has as a target the reduction of the Frequency of Work Accidents by 25% and the control and reduction of occupational diseases.

The fundamental pillars of this Strategy are the following:

- The existence of a suitable Institutional Framework.
- The existence of a suitable Legislative Framework fully harmonized with the European Acquis.
- Operation of a suitable and adequate Labour Inspection System.
- Operation of suitable Supporting Institutions.
- Operation of a suitable Health Surveillance System of the workers.
- Promotion of accidents prevention through awareness raising, information and training.
- Incorporation of Safety and Health at Work issues into other Policy Areas such as Education, Employment, Agriculture, Environment, Transportation, etc.
- Encouragement of the scientific progress and research.
- Close cooperation with the Social Partners and other stakeholders.
- Active participation at the Bodies and activities of the European Union.
- Implementation of targeted Awareness Campaigns.

1. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The existing institutional framework responds to the needs of this six year period. This framework is based on:

- The operation of the Labour Advisory Board, which provides advice to the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance on all labour policy matters and submits recommendations and suggestions on labour legislation.
- The operation of the Pancyprian Safety and Health Council which provides advice to the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance on the measures that need to be taken to prevent work accidents, on the

improvement of occupational safety and health and on the review or introduction of new legislation.

2. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The legislative framework is fully harmonised with the corresponding Acquis Communautaire, but will be updated whenever and where gaps or and particularities are identified with respect to the situation in Cyprus.

Moreover, the simplification of the national legislative framework which was in effect before the harmonisation with the Acquis Communautaire, will be promoted.

3. SUITABLE AND ADEQUATE LABOUR INSPECTION SYSTEM

The Labour Inspection System must be comparable with the corresponding systems of the rest of the member states and especially those of EU15. This will be accomplished by the following:

- Implementation of an inspection programme based on accurate and true data from inspections, accidents, as well as surveys among the workers.
- Realisation of regular as well as specialised inspections in the context of short campaigns.
- Arrangements for the provision of suitable and systematic training of the Inspectors.
- Exchange visits of Inspectors from Cyprus with Inspectors from other member states of the European Union aiming at acquiring knowledge and experience.
- Further promotion of the cooperation with other Services, such as the Police, the Cyprus Fire Service, the Department of Labour, etc, as well as Semi-Governmental Organizations and other Bodies / Institutions.
- Provision to the Inspectors of suitable technological equipment and supporting them with computerised systems.
- Improvement of the structure and staffing of the Department of Labour Inspection.

4. SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

- Provision of support to the Safety Officers as well as to the Approved Persons who provide Services for the Protection and Prevention on safety and health at work issues, continuous provision of information and regular communication with them.
- Improvement of the institution of the Safety Committees, aiming at a more active attendance of the representatives of the workers for the promotion of safety and health at work and their utilization within the framework of operation of each enterprise.

5. SUITABLE HEALTH SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM FOR THE WORKERS

The Health Surveillance System for the Workers will be operable through the implementation of an Action Plan which was prepared after the completion of a relative study and through the introduction of new legislation.

6. PROMOTION OF PREVENTION

The promotion of prevention of work accidents and occupational diseases will be materialised:

- By means of regular and targeted inspections.
- By means of campaigns which will be organized on the basis of decisions of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work and of the Senior Labour Inspectors Committee.
- By means of the collaboration for the establishment and effective operation of the Safety Committees.
- With publications and articles in the newspapers/magazines of the Social Partners and other organisations / institutions with particular interest in issues of safety and health at work.
- With the preparation and distribution of simple, comprehensive and understandable informative / training material.
- With the distribution of material which is prepared by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.
- With the publication, at the web page of the Department of Labour Inspection of the legislation, informative / enlightening material and other information that concern activities which contribute to the

promotion of occupational safety and health.

- With the organisation, or the co-organisation with other institutions, including the Social Partners, of seminars and meetings and other awareness raising / informational / training activities.
- By means of other forms of collaboration with the institutions /organisations that have a particular interest on issues of safety and health at work.
- By means of education and training programmes.
- With the use of economic incentives and disincentives.
- With the use of voluntary tools, such as Competitions, etc.
- With the implementation of Plans and Programmes for the promotion of health at the workplace and the collaboration with the medical world for the reduction of smoking at the workplaces.
- With the development of cooperation with the institutions that represent Consultants and Designers.
- With the collaboration with the Mass Media.
- With the encouragement of the workers but also the members of the public to communicate with the Department of Labour Inspection.

7. INCORPORATION INTO OTHER POLICY SECTORS

The mainstreaming of Safety and Health at Work issues into other policy sectors includes:

7.1 Education

The integration of issues of safety and health in the analytical programme of study of:

- Public schools in all the stages of education, i.e. the Pre-elementary, Elementary, Gymnasium, Secondary and Technical Education,
- Training Institutions of Cyprus, and
- Training Schools of Public Organisations,

so that the pupils and students of today, as tomorrow's employers and workers, will develop through the years a safety culture.

7.2 Employment

The inspection of the undertakings of the interested employer and the imposition of

terms for the improvement of the working conditions and the environment of work within the framework of the examination procedure to grant a «foreign worker employment permit» by the Department of Labour.

7.3 Development

The imposition of terms, after relative proposal of the Department of Labour Inspection, within the framework of a procedure for issuing an Urban and Building Permit License for industrial buildings.

8. ENCOURAGEMENT OF SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS AND RESEARCH

In collaboration with Academic Institutions, Research Institutes and Services in Cyprus and abroad, research on gaps of knowledge will be sought in order to face existing or emerging risks.

Also, the assignment of studies and research to suitable organisations / institutions will be sought for the improvement of knowledge on issues of occupational safety and health.

Through the monitoring of the results of research of the European Organisation of Dublin for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions as well as research which will be undertaken by the Department of Labour Inspection and / or other organisations as well as the Risk Observatory of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, the developments will be monitored with regard to the known and emerging risks at work, so that corrective measures will be promoted.

9. COLLABORATION WITH THE SOCIAL PARTNERS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

The collaboration with the Social Partners constitutes the cornerstone of the whole policy of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance.

The high level of collaboration that exists between the Social Partners will be fully utilized and the provision of technical assistance to the Organisations of Social Partners aiming at the upgrading of their capacity to promote training and guidance to their members will be strengthened.

Also, the collaboration with the local authorities as well as with other institutions and specifically those that deal with market

surveillance and the protection of environment will be promoted.

10. ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AT THE BODIES OF EUROPEAN UNION AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

10.1 Advisory Committee for Safety and Health at Work

Regular follow-up of the work and active participation in the Working Groups of the Advisory Committee for Safety and Health at Work that deal with issues which Cyprus has an interest in, so that there is an immediate knowledge of the development and the positions of the European Commission and the other member states.

The uninterrupted attendance of the representatives of the Social Partners in this Committee will also be sought.

10.2 Senior Labour Inspectors Committee

Active participation at the Senior Labour Inspectors Committee as well as the corresponding Working Groups so that there is an immediate information on the current situation and the procedures which are followed by the Labour Inspection Services of the other member states aiming at the exchange of Good Practices and the improvement of our own Labour Inspection Services, where it is considered necessary.

10.3 European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Active participation at the Governing Board of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work so that Cyprus will benefit from this participation.

Effective operation of the Department of Labour Inspection as the Focal Point of the European Agency for the Safety and Health at Work so that there is the capability to exploit the funds that Cyprus is entitled of as well as the informative or other material that the Agency prepares, in the highest possible degree.

The uninterrupted participation of the representatives of the Social Partners in the Agency will also be sought.

10.4 European Statistical Service

Participation at the proceedings of the European Statistical Service so that there is immediate information on the developments and the requirements for new statistical data in order to timely promote the required actions.

10.5 International Labour Organisation

When and whenever is required, there will be active participation at the proceedings of the Annual Conference of the International Labour Organisation of the United Nations as well as in each of the Adhoc Technical Committees that are occasionally established to examine special subjects with regard to the Occupational Safety and Health.

Effective utilization of the Conventions and Recommendations as well as other informative documents / guides of the Organisation in the maximum possible degree.

The continuous attendance of the representatives of the Social Partners is recommended.

10.6 International Association of Labour Inspection

Active participation of the Department of Labour Inspection at the activities of the

International Association of Labour Inspection for those issues of Safety and Health at Work that have particular interest for application in Cyprus.

11. AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

The information and awareness raising of employers, workers and the public in general on issues related to the safety and health at work will be achieved through the implementation of the following Awareness Raising Campaigns:

- The annual Campaign for the Prevention of Work Accidents and Occupational diseases,
- The Campaign of the Senior Labour Inspectors Committee of the European Union, which includes the awareness campaign and the inspection campaign,
- The Safety and Health at Work Week within the framework of the European Week which is organised by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work,
- Campaigns that are focused on specialised subjects, e.g. promotion of the institution of Safety Committees.