



THE NORDIC FUTURE GROUP

FUTURE FORMS OF WORK FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF OSH

Workshop on protecting workers in the online platform economy; Brussels 24 May 2018

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THE NORDIC FUTURE GROUP

- The aim of the group has been to identify challenges of future work, and working life, and ideas on how to tackle these challenges, especially related to OSH and the operations of OSH authorities and especially labour inspection.
- We started in 2016 and the work continues as decided by the Nordic Directors General of OSH.
- Participating countries: Finland, Sweden Norway, Iceland, Denmark.
- We produce reports and recommendations; we participate in seminars, workshops and discussions; we give presentations and advice.
- We work closely with EU-OSHA, ILO, EUROFOUND etc.
- The work has given important insight into how each country looks at specific national challenges and what measures have been taken to deal with them.



ONGOING TRENDS

- The speed of change is increasing all the time (newness) and it brings with itself high degree of complexity.
 - Constant learning needed, upgrading of skills, diverse and shifting qualifications and new skills, flexibility in relation to working hours and days.
 - Work tasks tend to change to “piece” work, zero-hour contracts.
 - Group of atypical work has become very heterogeneous.
- Transactions between countries are increasing → labour force is also moving → more competitive labour markets, wide global labour market (intensifies competition)
- Polarization of work and work tasks → linked to many other polarization developments in the societies.
- Emerging organizational forms and new forms of work.
 - Basic work environment concepts are being turned up side down.





- The role and responsibilities of the employer in relation to the employee is blurring.
 - Higher level of own initiative and self-management is needed from the part of an employee.
 - Change of risk assessment to the employee → individualizing the risks.
 - Does legislation keep up with these changes?
 - All and all, the traditional forms and ways of work will prevail together with completely new forms and ways of work.
 - But also “new” questions and limitation:
 - How to include people with disabilities in the labour market?
 - How to protect environment; how to combine environment and OSH?
 - Challenges connected to work-life related criminality and undeclared work.
- All this brings along enormous challenges to the management of OSH and labour inspection.



THE OSH RISKS

- The physical and psychological well-being of the employees is challenged.
- Work anytime anywhere + new places to work; we do not know what risks workers are facing.
- Stress related to unpredictability of work and work intensity and work relations even low wages (precariousness, have to work more and more to make living).
- Demand for high intensity of work.
- Unpredictable health effects increased strain.
- Does the employee have enough information and skills to manage and organize their work and assess all the risks? Who makes sure that they have needed information?
- No security provided by an employment contract and relationship, no occupational health care.
- Question of legal and professional liability → unpredictability → stress.



CHALLENGES FOR LABOUR INSPECTION

- Fast shifting and altering work relationships and platforms → how does labour inspection keep up with the changes?
- Who and what to inspect and where? To whom should demands be addressed?
- Unclear what characterises an employer, employee and a workplace.
- In a platform economy; who is the worker; a freelancer, gig-worker, part-time consultant etc. The mixing of roles of employer and employee. Is there an employer-employee relationship at all?
- How is the safe work and working environment guaranteed?

→ who is responsible of OSH





CONSEQUENCES TO LABOUR INSPECTION

- The basics of OSH must be in order at all workplaces. The place of work must be safe, working must not endanger the mental or physical health of employees, and the terms and conditions of the employment relationship must be in compliance with the law.
- The labour inspection must make sure that employers have submitted appropriate guidelines (noise, exposure, hazards, training).





- The modes of operation of the labour inspection must become more diversified and more flexible.
 - change is fast → flexibility and alternative inspection methodologies are needed and new (plus old) range of tools
 - Targeted work place inspections supplemented by promotional and information-sharing actions.
 - the importance of data is emphasized (sick leaves, work ability, occupational diseases).
- Risk assessment must be targeted more precisely. Increased focus on accident and work-related disease prevention is required.
- Increased focus on safety culture – also for work done outside managerial reach.
- More attention to conditions of employment.



A HOLISTIC APPROACH

- The huge percentage of lost working days due to psychosocial issues, mental health problems, MSD and chronic diseases as well as increased chemical exposure, raises the eventual need to broaden the scope on a holistic worker well-being.
- As an example, the costs of lost labour input in Finland are around EUR 24.45–24.95 billion.
- Varying workability needs to be taken into consideration in every workplace and also in inspections → how to maintain and improve the workability.
- Public awareness raising on the benefit of good working conditions for all should be emphasized.
- It is by seeing to that all interested parties (including social partners) work together that we can really make a difference to all workers and in fact society as a whole.
- More collaboration within larger geographical areas - expansion of inspection collaboration. And expansion of inspection mandate over borders – Nordic inspection – global inspection



**The Nordic Future Group:
Future forms of work
from the point of view of OSH**

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