



European Agency for Safety and Health at Work



# Summary Annual Report **2018**

The year 2018 saw a great deal of activity at the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), and in its network of partners across Europe, with several major projects reaching completion. These included the [foresight project on new and emerging occupational safety and health \(OSH\) risks associated with digitalisation](#). The findings prompted discussion among policy-makers at EU and Member State levels. The project [‘Improving OSH in micro and small enterprises \(MSEs\)’](#) (2014-18) also resulted in the publication of some significant reports in 2018. Most of the EU’s workers are employed in MSEs, so practical insights into how OSH can best be managed in them are of great value, and the project attracted significant interest. EU-OSHA will follow up on both these projects in the years to come.

The [2018-19 Healthy Workplaces Campaign on dangerous substances](#) was launched in April. The Agency, its [focal points](#) and the [campaign partners](#) collaborated on raising awareness and disseminating practical tools and good practices throughout the year. EU-OSHA also began preparations for a major milestone and cause for celebration in 2019: its [25th anniversary](#).

## 1 Anticipating change

The 2-year [foresight study on OSH risks associated with digitalisation](#) was finalised in 2018, with the publication of a series of reports and supporting materials. The project explored the potential impact of digitalisation — for example artificial intelligence, robotics and employee monitoring — on OSH by 2025. This new research into a fast-changing area was promoted at a series of workshops and attracted interest from across Europe.

The foresight study identified work intermediated by online platforms as an area of rapidly growing importance for OSH. The summary of EU-OSHA’s resulting report on [protecting workers in the online platform economy](#) was translated into 18 languages in 2018.

Two expert discussion papers concerning the [e-retail sector](#) and [performance-enhancing drugs in the workplace](#) were discussed at a seminar in February and published later in the year. EU-OSHA commissioned another four papers on topics including artificial intelligence and big data for publication in 2019.



## 2 Facts and figures

### 2.1 ESENER

EU-OSHA’s [European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks \(ESENER\)](#) looks at how OSH risks are managed in practice in workplaces across Europe. Preparations for ESENER-3 began in 2018, with the fieldwork set to be carried out in 2019. Meanwhile, the Agency published and promoted two reports based on ESENER-2, [Management of occupational health and safety in European workplaces](#) and [Management of psychosocial](#)



[risks in European workplaces](#). Findings from ESENER-2 were also discussed throughout the year at various international events.

## 2.2 OSH overviews

It was a busy year for the [OSH overview on micro and small enterprises \(MSEs\)](#). The project was aimed at supporting evidence-based policy-making and the development of practical tools by identifying good practices for managing OSH in MSEs. MSEs are the main driver of Europe's economy and one of EU-OSHA's key target audiences.

Publications in 2018 included the final report and executive summary [Safety and health in micro and small enterprises in the EU: final report from the 3-year SESAME project](#) and a report entitled [Safety and health in micro and small enterprises: the view from the workplace](#), looking at attitudes to and experiences of OSH in more than 160 European MSEs. In addition, 18 country reports examined current OSH practices in participating Member States. The findings were presented at a high-level conference in Brussels. They were well received and have stimulated much debate among policy-makers and OSH experts.

A new web page was also created for the Agency's [OSH overview on work-related diseases](#); this is a vital area, as 100,000 deaths are caused in Europe each year by these diseases. In 2018, EU-OSHA published [the final report on its major project 'Alert and sentinel approaches for the identification of work-related diseases in the EU'](#). It discusses the drivers for and obstacles to adopting such systems and makes recommendations for improving alert and sentinel surveillance in the EU. In addition, work continued on a major project to raise awareness of workers' exposure to biological agents and the serious health effects that they can cause. The preliminary findings were presented at [a workshop in Amsterdam](#).

In response to concerns at workplace level, the Agency published a report on [fumigation risks to workers](#), which received positive feedback.

Also in 2018, work was completed on the 3-year ['Rehabilitation and return to work after cancer'](#) project, with the [final report](#) published in May to coincide with the European Week Against Cancer. It was accompanied by [a leaflet providing guidance for employers](#). A feasibility study on a survey to assess workers' exposures to carcinogens will be implemented in 2019.



Work was ongoing on the OSH overview project ['Costs and benefits of occupational safety and health'](#), intended to highlight the value of effective OSH. EU-OSHA disseminated key findings at several international conferences. The final report is due to be published in 2019.

Finally, the Agency launched a new 3-year OSH overview in 2018, aimed at identifying effective ways of preventing musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), which are the most common work-related health issue in the EU. At the request of the European Commission, EU-OSHA published a guide for small businesses on [preventing and managing work-related MSDs and psychosocial risks](#).

### 3 Tools for OSH management

The [OiRA](#) web platform offers free online interactive tools for carrying out workplace risk assessments; the software was updated in 2018, leading to improved functionality and some new features. The OiRA community, key to the project's success, was very active in 2018: more than 20 new OiRA tools were published, bringing the total to 160, and over 85,000 risk assessments were carried out using the platform. EU-OSHA published two case studies to support the collaborative work of the OiRA community and the Interactive Risk Assessment Tool (IRAT) network. The Agency also started supporting pilot projects aimed at promoting the tools in the Member States. Furthermore, EU-OSHA also promoted OiRA through several new networking initiatives, working with Enterprise Europe Network and with stakeholders in vocational education and training.

### 4 Raising awareness

#### 4.1 Campaigns

The evaluation of the [2016-17 Healthy Workplaces for All Ages](#) campaign was very positive, with many key strengths identified; EU-OSHA is following up on the recommendations from the evaluation to make future campaigns even better.

EU-OSHA's [2018-19 Healthy Workplaces Campaign](#), which officially launched in Brussels on 24 April 2018, aims to raise awareness of the risks that dangerous substances pose to workers. Resources were disseminated to generate support for the campaign, with many, such as the [campaign guide](#), available in 25 languages. Key products included a [database of over 700 tools](#) for managing dangerous substances and a [new e-tool](#) targeting MSEs. By the end of the year, an impressive 620,000 campaign materials had been distributed to stakeholders, and a [revamped campaign toolkit](#) had been introduced.

The success of each campaign is dependent on EU-OSHA's [national focal points](#), which coordinate activities at the national level. In 2018, the focal points implemented more than 220 activities, including 141 campaign events. The campaign also benefited hugely from the



active involvement of 90 [official campaign partners](#), who carried out 101 activities and 35 [campaign media partners](#), who promoted the campaign through their channels. The official campaign partners were also busy engaging with EU-OSHA's good practice exchange initiative throughout 2018, organising events and sharing experiences. The Good Practice Awards competition was launched in April, to encourage the sharing of innovative approaches to managing dangerous substances.

EU-OSHA created special video clips for the campaign, [one for the launch of the campaign](#), [one to encourage participation in the European Week for Safety and Health at Work](#) — a highlight of the campaign — and [one to acknowledge and promote the work of its network](#). The Agency also set up a dedicated [Facebook page](#) for the European Week. Indeed, the campaign was promoted throughout the year on social media (using the hashtag [#EUhealthyworkplaces](#)), through [news articles](#) and in a series of web highlights.

Furthermore, EU-OSHA continued to support the [Roadmap on Carcinogens](#), making carcinogens a particular focus of the Healthy Workplaces Manage Dangerous Substances campaign. To raise awareness of the Roadmap, EU-OSHA joined forces with the Netherlands Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment to run a session at the 32nd International Congress on Occupational Health, and chaired a workshop at a conference hosted by the Austrian EU Presidency.

## 4.2 Awareness-raising activities

In November 2018, the [Healthy Workplaces Film Award](#) was presented to *Marina*, a film about a Romanian nurse in Germany by Julia Roesler, with a special mention given to *Open to the Public* by Silvia Belloti.

A new [Napò film on dust at work](#) was released online in April to coincide with the launch of the 2018-19 campaign. The Napò website started a revamp process to host training resources on musculoskeletal disorders in a new section 'Napò in the workplace', to be published in 2019.



In total, the Agency published 41 reports and summaries, 4 info sheets, 18 case studies and 8 discussion papers in 2018. EU-OSHA participated in over 100 events in 2018, including a celebration of Europe Day in May, and kick-started the preparations for the Agency's 25th anniversary ceremony and communication actions in 2019.

The [EU-OSHA press office](#) published 16 multilingual news releases, each distributed across 2,900 media contacts, answered 24 media requests and wrote 26 articles. In terms of social media activity, EU-OSHA's strong presence on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#) continued, with over 300 social media posts.

[EU-OSHA's corporate website](#) was also active throughout 2018; 60 multilingual highlights and over 110 news items were published. Overall, the Agency's suite of websites received over 2.4 million visits during the year. Significant work went into updating existing sections



and creating new ones to introduce products such as EU-OSHA's [data visualisation tools](#) and [e-guides](#).

The Agency launched its focal point assistance tool (FAST), designed to support the focal points in organising and promoting awareness raising activities. As a result, more than 100 activities were successfully implemented.

The Agency provided translations of its 2018 products on request to the focal points and launched its translation portfolio offer for 2019. Multilingual versions of the core campaign materials were finalised. To enable the creation of highly accurate translations, work continued on a major update to the multilingual OSH thesaurus used by translators.

## 5 Networking knowledge

Several new articles were added to EU-OSHA's online encyclopaedia of OSH knowledge, [OSHwiki](#), and many existing ones edited; in addition, a process of systemically updating the articles got under way.

EU-OSHA continued to collaborate with the European Commission on the development of the EU OSH Information System, an authoritative user-friendly system providing information on key OSH indicators through data visualisation. It created two indicators, on national OSH strategies and work-related accidents, and subsequently produced a pilot version.

This pilot was informed by the Agency's ongoing work on national OSH strategies; in 2018, the Agency compiled a [report on strategies in 25 Member States](#). The findings were presented at the [Advisory Committee on Safety and Health's workshop](#) in Luxembourg in October.

The [annual e-tools seminar, held in Bilbao in September](#), tackled the topic of OSH in relation to driving and road transport. Also with regard to road safety, EU-OSHA continued its collaboration with the European Commission Directorate-General for Employment on the [VeSafe e-guide](#), offering user-friendly guidance on vehicle-related OSH risks.

## 6 Networking and corporate communication

An evaluation of EU-OSHA's communication, networking and stakeholder engagement activities was carried out. The outcome was very positive — EU-OSHA's efforts to engage with its partners and intermediaries and respond to their needs were highlighted among its strengths — and there were recommendations about how the Agency could build on its good performance.

The [Governing Board](#) met twice in 2018, to consider the draft programming document for 2019-21 and review the Agency's activities in 2017, and the [Bureau](#) convened in November to discuss the Agency's future direction. EU-OSHA also met with the Tools and Awareness Raising Advisory Group and the OSH Knowledge Advisory Group to discuss campaign-related issues and other projects.

EU-OSHA continued its close relationships with European institutions and stakeholders in 2018, collaborating with the Senior Labour



Inspectors Committee and working with the Austrian Presidency on its conference ‘Fight against occupational cancer’, to give just two examples. EU-OSHA’s Director met the newly appointed Director-General for Employment to discuss the establishment of a new European Labour Authority. Furthermore, in January, Commissioner Marianne Thyssen made her first visit to EU-OSHA’s offices in Bilbao.

The working relationship between EU-OSHA and its partners, such as its national focal points, is key to the Agency’s success. EU-OSHA staff visited various focal points throughout 2018, including visits by the Director to Bulgaria and Romania, to encourage national efforts to promote OSH. EU-OSHA also worked closely with the [Enterprise Europe Network \(EEN\)](#) and EEN OSH ambassadors — who work collaboratively with the focal points to coordinate awareness-raising activities in their own countries — to launch and promote the 2018-19 Healthy Workplaces Campaign.

The Agency continued to support the integration of the Western Balkans and Turkey into the European OSH structure by organising training sessions, conferences and workshops throughout 2018. Its programme, funded by the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, aims to raise awareness of OSH issues and encourage a culture of risk prevention in these beneficiary countries.



**The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)** contributes to making Europe a safer, healthier and more productive place to work. The Agency researches, develops, and distributes reliable, balanced, and impartial safety and health information and organises pan-European awareness raising campaigns. Set up by the European Union in 1994 and based in Bilbao, Spain, the Agency brings together representatives from the European Commission, Member State governments, employers' and workers' organisations, as well as leading experts in each of the EU Member States and beyond.

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