

**Event:** Healthy Workplaces Summit 2013, **EEN OSH AWARD CEREMONY**

**Date:** 11 November 2013 (15:00hrs)

**Speaker:** Christa Sedlatschek, Director

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) award for occupational safety and health is a milestone in our cooperation with EEN. It's a statement of how much we value our partnership and how important it is to the success of this Agency. We want this collaboration to continue, and we hope that the award, will serve as a reminder each year of our partnership, consolidate it further and renew our energy for the road ahead.

The overall objective of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work is to make Europe a safer, healthier and more productive place to work. To achieve this objective, a significant part of the Agency's work is *communication*. The Healthy Workplace campaigns, the reason we are all here today, are a huge part of this communication strategy, reaching the grass-roots across Europe, including small and medium-sized enterprises.

Now, there are *over 20 million* SMEs in Europe, representing 99% of business. We must remember that SMEs employ more than 66% of the population!

Unfortunately, they also account for 82% of all occupational injuries and about 90% of fatal accidents.

So, the question is: how can we possibly reach them all? How can the message of our campaign penetrate all the way down to the workers?

**[short pause]**

Well, in 2009, to cover as much ground as possible, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work signed a Declaration of Cooperation with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry. This opened the doors to a partnership with EEN, which falls under the authority of the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation, specializing in assisting SMEs to make the most of the European marketplace.

EEN, which has almost 600 member organisations across the European Union, has helped us to reach even more SMEs and micro companies with our messages about the importance of occupational safety and health. Notably, EEN members have helped us reach some of the highest-risk sectors. The cooperation between our network of national focal points and EEN members within each country has proven extremely effective.

So how, exactly, has EEN helped spread our message?

**[short pause]**

First of all, occupational safety and health ambassadors of EEN were established and have been, and continue to be, the cornerstone of our communication partnership project.

Since 2011, 22 EEN members have volunteered for the role of occupational safety and health ambassador in 21 EU countries. Let me repeat that: **they have volunteered**. That means there is no formal remuneration for these roles.

These are people who clearly believe in the fundamental importance of good occupational safety and health. They are champions in the fullest sense of the word!

And following on from this first step, these ambassadors, together with their EEN national networks, have taken the lead in workplace health and safety and organized a number of activities, such as National Partnership Meetings, within their own countries. Together with our focal points they have coordinated OSH information sessions, sharing basic knowledge on OSH essentials, risk assessment and the importance of OSH to the EEN partners and SMEs. They distribute our publications and get heavily involved in the 'SME Week' activities.

### [short pause]

So, ladies and gentlemen, today we would like to demonstrate our appreciation and pay tribute to the outstanding contribution of EEN members to the field of occupational safety and health.

In 2013, as part of our communication partnership, we introduced what we hope will be an annual institution: the EEN occupational safety and health award.

Earlier this year we invited EEN members of the EU 27, as well as those of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, to put forward projects that aimed to promote the importance of good occupational safety and health in SMEs.

We narrowed the focus to three categories:

- activities and events promoting occupational safety and health;
- network building;
- and print and online communication and publications.

We received three projects in response.

- The first, from Poland, is entitled '*For OSH by images – mobile exhibition of posters and photos promoting OSH in Lodzkie companies*'. The project started with a competition that aimed to obtain original posters which, in contemporary form, would promote occupational safety and health issues.
- The next, from Slovenia, is entitled '*SOS – Stress, Absence, Distress*'. The project involved seven companies that wished to determine the causes of employees' problems and develop measures that would not only facilitate solutions to these problems, but also increase the companies' business performance and competitiveness while developing a culture of good occupational safety and health.

These were both impressive and worthwhile projects and we warmly commend them for their efforts.

And now I would like to announce that the third project, from Spain, is our worthy winner.

**[short pause]**

Congratulations to Confederación de Empresarios de Aragón, the first ever winner of our Enterprise Europe Network occupational safety and health award, for their '*Prevention campaign from school to work placement*' project.

Francisco Bono, Minister of Economy, Work and Employment in Aragon, and Jesús Morte, President of CREA, are here to collect the award on behalf of CREA.

**[pause - award presentation]**

CREA's project set out to promote a culture of risk prevention among two main groups: students between 10 and 18 years old and their teachers; and a second group consisting of entrepreneurs.

The project reached more than 400 students and 12 teachers and, remarkably, 110 SMEs – an incredible number of people learning about workplace safety and health.

What caught our eye about this project is that it considered *not only current but also future workforces*.

With this project, CREA aimed to reach different levels and scope of population to ensure that risk prevention culture is spread across society, with a special emphasis on children and teenagers, not only as citizens but as future employees. They organised several workshops and distributed material. They also actively promoted the initiative in newspapers, television and radio.

We hope that the Confederación de Empresarios de Aragón is proud of this award.

Muchas felicidades, CREA. Pueden estar muy orgullosos de su labor y les deseo más éxitos en el futuro. It is entirely possible that their efforts will create healthy and safe workplaces in businesses that have yet to be established. We celebrate their achievement, and look forward to continuing our journey together. I extend very warm congratulations to you.