

forum news

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FIRST EDITION

news

News from the European Forum

Forum de l'Assurance accidents
du travail et maladies professionnelles
en Europe

Forum dell'Assicurazione contro gli infortuni
sul lavoro e le malattie professionali
in Europa

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Depuis deux ans, les organismes d'assurance contre les risques professionnels adhérents du Forum ont appris à se connaître, à échanger points de vue et expériences et à s'estimer.

Un grand merci doit être adressé à nos amis italiens et danois qui ont assuré les deux premières présidences. C'est avec plaisir que la France a pris la succession le 1er juillet. Dans la continuité du travail déjà accompli, nous entendons multiplier les occasions de promouvoir le concept d'une assurance «accidents du travail et maladies professionnelles». Nous souhaitons également ouvrir davantage le Forum à l'ensemble de nos partenaires comme aux organismes européens ou internationaux. «Forum News» témoigne de cette volonté.



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Dear Colleagues and Friends of the European Forum,

Unfortunately, previous commitments do not allow me to be with you today and I regret this very much.

30 years, how time flies!

In Rome, hosted by INAIL, we signed the birth certificate of the European Forum in the Tapestry Hall of the Capitol. We were 10 countries and now the Forum has 21! What a satisfaction for those who wanted insurance against accidents at work and occupational diseases to remain a branch of Social Security.

Thank you all for continuing in this way.

I would like to salute my friend Dr. Gunther Sokoll, without whom nothing would have been possible.

I wish the Forum a long life so that the occupational Injury Insurance continues to ensure its missions of Prevention, Pricing, Repair and Rehabilitation. ■

Jean-Luc Marié
CNAM, France



The European Forum celebrates its 30th anniversary in June 2022

The idea of creating a European Forum for insurance against accidents at work and occupational diseases was born in November 1991 in Florence, during the European days entitled “Building Europe”... What a programme!

Defending the social usefulness of specific insurance against occupational injuries

On the eve of the opening of the Single European Market on 1st January 1993, a draft European Recommendation concerned the harmonisation of social protection policies. However, this text made no mention of insurance against accidents at work and occupational diseases. So, Dr. Günther Sokoll General Director of the HVBG (now the DGUV) in Germany, with the support of Alberto Tomassini of INAIL in Italy and Jean-Luc Marié of the CNAM in France, decided to bring together the counterpart organisations in charge of insurance against accidents at work and occupational diseases in order to highlight the social usefulness of a specific insurance against these risks. The aim was also to ensure that the “supermarket of social services”, as the Dutch Minister of Labour at the time put it, did not become the norm in Europe.

Italy took the initiative of organising a memorable ceremony on 20 June 1992 in the Capitol, the same place where the Treaty of Rome was signed, to sign the statutes of the European Forum of Occupational Safety and Health Insurance. The signatory organisations represented ten European countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal and Switzerland. They thus demonstrated their willingness to defend the specificity of insurance against the risks of occupational injuries and to participate in the process of convergence of these insurance systems in Europe. The aim was also to provide a new environment for the exchange of information and experience in the field of prevention, rehabilitation and compensation of victims of occupational injuries.

The first presidency was held by Alberto Tomassini, then President of INAIL for the period from 1st July 1992 to 30 June 1993. Then, on the principle of an annual presidency, the directors of the signatory organisations of the statutes succeeded each other.

The 1st issue of Forum news was published in September 1994 in four languages: English, German, Italian and French. Working groups were then set up to share good practice between members on the subjects of occupational diseases, communication, legislation, and the last one on digitalisation. Several reports were published on occupational diseases, as well as position papers on subjects of importance for the European Forum to be submitted to the Community institutions. Bilateral relations have enabled us to work more closely on certain issues of common concern. Today, the European Forum brings together representative institutions from 21 countries. The ten original signatories have been joined by Croatia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia and Sweden.

30 years later, what is the outcome and what is the future?

First of all, despite the health and political circumstances of recent years, the Forum is alive and well! Proof that the objectives pursued at its creation are still relevant. The working environment has of course evolved. But there is a real need to learn more about the practices of our counterparts in dealing with risks that are essentially the same in each of our countries. When asked about the main contribution of the European Forum, the members almost all highlighted the valuable network that the European Forum constitutes for EXCHANGING on our respective practices and the best ways to meet these challenges.

Finally, let us salute Germany in particular, which was the first country in the world to create an occupational injury insurance scheme, that launched the idea of creating the European Forum and who, at short notice, has done everything possible to ensure that we finally meet again after two years of digital meetings. Long live the Forum! ■

*Isabelle Leleu
Member of the European Forum since 30 Years
www.eurogip.fr*



European Forum: After all, the member states speak the best of it...

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the European Forum of insurance against accidents at work and occupational diseases, members were asked three questions:

Why did you join the Forum?

What do you expect from the European Forum today and what is the main contribution of the Forum for you?

What are the main challenges in the coming years in terms of insurance and prevention of occupational injuries to face?

The answers are presented below in alphabetical order by country.

AUSTRIA | AUVA

As an employee of AUVA in the management of benefit-coordination and international data exchange, I am already professionally interested in accident insurance topics (in the meantime, of course, also privately) and have participated in the events of the European Forum since 2007. In addition to a wealth of topics, it is also about building contacts. This immensely facilitates the daily work in the intergovernmental field.

And last but not least: I meet friends! The European Forum is an important medium for advancing the issues, concerns and goals of accident insurance in Europe and for having a “common” voice in Europe. In addition, there are important side effects such as interesting lectures, exchange of ideas, making contacts, meeting friends.

In Austria, the future of the statutory accident insurance as an independent insurance branch is always disputed because the (political) public is often not sufficiently aware of the meaning and benefits of accident insurance. Therefore, one of the challenges is clearly to be better perceived by the public and to highlight more convincingly the services in the field of prevention and benefit receipt. As in all other branches of social insurance, funding is a major challenge in statutory accident insurance.

Politicians want to keep contributions as low as possible, despite inflation in actually all areas. Here it is important to create awareness and acceptance for accident insurance in the above-mentioned sense among the population, so that we are also financially prepared for the future challenges. A better and more modern service, whether in prevention, benefits, accident treatment and rehabilitation at all levels (medical, occupational, social), with contemporary support from the available technical means, must always be the goal of our aspirations.

The bottom line is to reach the insured in the best possible way and, if necessary, to provide and compensate them as quickly, efficiently and sustainably as possible. In the intergovernmental sphere, too, cooperation must be massively improved. Unfortunately, communication and efficiency in this area still leave much to be desired, despite massive efforts (keyword: EESSI, electronic exchange of social security information).

BELGIUM FEDRIS

Since its foundation in Italy 30 years ago, Belgium has been fully involved in the organization of and participation in the European Forum. This Forum has always been a source of inspiration for Belgium in the way we approach the problem of occupational risks and in our working processes. The exchange of information and experience between the various national institutions concerned in Europe certainly contributes to greater convergence in European policies in this area. Finally, each Forum is an opportunity to meet European or even international colleagues, which brings its share of enrichment on a human level, not forgetting the strength of its networking, which lasts beyond the occasional event.

Each of these meetings is, in our opinion, a further step towards a socially just Europe. Our only wish is that this Forum lasts for many more years. See you soon!

CROATIA CHIF

Croatian Health Insurance Fund (CHIF) joined the European Forum in September 2015, because we share values and goals of this independent European organization, which are: promoting health and safety at work, improving the position of workers who have suffered an accident at work or occupational disease, and creating a socially just society.

Membership in the European Forum offers the possibility of cooperation with a dynamic social insurance system of the European countries, exchange of knowledge and experience in the prevention of injuries at work and occupational diseases, as well as opportunities to influence the creation of European legislation in this area.

By attending conferences of the European Forum, as well as participating in working groups, we have the opportunity to discuss current topics, to get introduced with the best practices in the European countries and the results of new research. We also have the opportunity to exchange opinions with enthusiastic experts and interesting people, to meet new colleagues and friends. The benefit of the conferences is also learning about the history and cultural values of the Member States, participating in building bridges and connecting in our diversity.

The ability to respond quickly to crises, including health and humanitarian ones, has become one of the most important challenges of contemporary times. We strongly believe that the European Forum will contribute to the unity and solidarity of the European society in areas of its activity.

GERMANY DGUV

We have always held the position that cooperation is for the benefit of all: accident insurance systems and the insured. Working together on a European level with other accident insurance systems willing to join the European Forum was only logical. Right from the beginning in 1992 we firmly believed in the core idea, which was also laid down in the Statute of our Association.

The European Forum is a community of interest of institutions for the insurance against accidents at work and occupational diseases that overcomes new challenges together. We stay together and support each other. The Forum informs and advises the institutions and executive bodies of the European Union, and in particular promotes the effective protection of people at work with regard to occupational risks, including prevention, rehabilitation and compensation for victims and survivors.

The main challenges are in the fields of digitalization, occupational diseases, communication and legislation. With regard to digitalization AI will be a major challenge and we should monitor relevant legislative developments at EU-level to promote policy measures that strive for the harmonization of international standards. A European digital identity (EUid) or “human-robotics-interaction” are further challenges that need to be addressed.

In the context of digitalization new forms of work and the question of a right to disconnect we will also face legal challenges. The same is true for the coverage of platform workers and the enforcement of the obligation to pay contributions.

With regard to occupational diseases, skin diseases, respiratory diseases and mental health needs to be addressed in the coming years. This includes finding the appropriate prevention measures based on best practices.

With regard to communication, we should strengthen the role of the European Forum as a competent counterpart for the institutions and stakeholders in the European Union.”

GERMANY SVLFG

As far as we remember, the legal predecessors of the SVLFG were there from the beginning. The exchange among each other and the common stand for values and goals have always been the focus for us.

With the number of insured persons in the green professions, especially in agriculture, continuously dwindling for decades, the financing and preservation of the independent special system is the greatest challenge. The ratio of active insured to pensioners has been unfavorable for a long time, which makes it difficult to finance contributions. Without state support, there is a threat of considerable increases in contributions.

A growing appreciation for healthy and regionally produced food is helpful for sectoral development. The issue can be positively supported by a higher social recognition of agriculture. The conversion of animal husbandry and the production of renewable energies (biogas, photovoltaics, wind power, hydropower) can play an important role here. Overall, it is a matter of making the positive significance of the sector more visible and developing it further. To the extent that this succeeds, the solidarity community of the insured will also be strengthened.

For prevention, climate change is an increasingly obvious challenge. Dangers from heat, drought, forest dieback, fire hazards, water scarcity and invasive species are increasing. This results in growing demands on prevention measures to prevent occupational accidents and diseases.

Another challenge is the ongoing change in production. Some examples: new stables create new hazards, e.g. dust pollution. The risk of communicable diseases increases. New plants can trigger allergies. The use of saddle horses in forestry leads to accident risks that were thought to have been overcome. Machine safety remains in focus in the face of a multitude of new technical developments. Digitalization and the use of artificial intelligence pose health risks for employees.

Finally, in view of an ageing population, workplaces in the cultivation, harvesting and processing of food must be designed to be age-appropriate.

DENMARK | WEA

The former National Board of Industrial Injuries was among the initiators of the establishment of the European Forum in 1992. The background for the wish to be part of a common platform for the European occupational injury institutions was – and still is – from Danish side to participate in a Forum where the individual European institutions can exchange knowledge and information. Our hope was that with the common knowledge sharing and discussion of issues, we would be better equipped to meet the challenges that we each face in the field of occupational injuries – both nationally and transnationally. It is our experience that the European Forum has fully lived up to these expectations.

In our opinion, the Forum is a good – and probably the only – European platform for exchanging knowledge and information on issues in the field of occupational injuries – both in relation to national and international issues. In addition, there is the value of professional personal relationships between the European occupational injury institutions, which have repeatedly proved useful when there has been a need for rapid clarification of cross-border issues in individual Member States.

In Denmark, we continue to anticipate challenges in the area of occupational injuries with too many occupational accidents, work-related MSD and diseases caused by the use of chemicals in work processes and products. Furthermore, we see a stable and relatively large number of reports of mental work-related injuries, which constitute a particular challenge, as the causes of these diseases can be multiple and make it difficult to assess the causal connection to the work.

In relation to the labour market, we also see challenges in relation to changed structures that affect the occupational injury area. This applies, among other things, to the platform economy, where the employer-employee relationship may be unclear. This also applies in relation to more people performing work from home and where the boundaries between work and leisure are blurred.

And last but not least. We are in a new era where, among other things, we do not yet know the expiration date of COVID-19 and any variants of this virus.

FINLAND | TVK

Finnish Workers' Compensation Center (TVK) joined the European Forum in 1992. TVK's former CEO Tapani Miettinen, personally considered international cooperation important.

Active international network of actors in the Workers' Comp area was before the European Forum quite limited, unlike in the areas of occupational safety and social security. It was therefore important to have a network for exchanging views and experiences on the development of Workers' Comp.

The network of contacts provided by the European Forum and direct channels to the main actors involved in Workers' Comp in European countries is one of the most important things the Forum offers. It is also a benefit that the European Forum is a flexible and cost-efficient network rather than a bureaucratic organization with a lot of administration etc. Let's keep it that way!

You can say that all the changes in the society somehow reflect to Workers Compensation as well. But to name a few, the transformation and change of working life is a key challenge. In addition, climate change and demographic changes create special challenges for occupational safety. In Workers' Compensation we are constantly handling personal information and other sensitive data. Therefore, information management and the increasing regulation related to it plays a major role. At the same time, the opportunities to increase efficiency and customer satisfaction using new technologies are growing.

Balancing these opportunities and the regulation requires high attention from us.

FRANCE CNAM | EUROGIP

The French occupational injury and disease insurance (CNAMTS) was one of the initiators to launch the Forum in 1992. Participating in this new European network was an obvious choice. Indeed, it had created EUROGIP a few months earlier precisely to monitor developments linked to the adoption of European directives on health and safety at work and to learn about the best practices of its counterparts in the face of virtually identical occupational risks in the various European countries. In fact, EUROGIP was heavily involved since the very beginning in the working groups, particularly with regard to communication and occupational diseases.

Today, the framework has certainly evolved, but the objectives remain the same. And it is still just as fundamental to be able to rely on this network to enrich each other, to be able to deal with changes in risks and to compare our practices in the field of occupational health and safety insurance and prevention. We saw this very recently during the health crisis linked to COVID-19, where contacts enabled us to exchange ideas on the best way to deal with a new pathology.

In terms of the challenges for the coming years, it seems necessary to reduce the number of accidents at work that still exist. Although accidents at work have decreased, we have reached a plateau today and we must redouble our efforts and creativity to obtain better results.

Another medium- and long-term challenge lies in the treatment of multifactorial pathologies, including psychosocial disorders. We are faced with a legitimate social demand for better prevention and compensation of these pathologies when they are work-related. Here again, 30 years after its creation, the Forum still offers the ideal framework for comparing our practices and responding to these challenges.

ITALY INAIL

The best way to summarize the importance of the European Forum is the concept of sharing. Sharing experiences and ideas in the field of occupational accidents and diseases in Europe, that is really important. Different realities are necessary, because they allow an enrichment of our knowledge.

LUXEM- BOURG | AAA

Luxembourg was among the first ten countries to join the European Forum and sign the statutes in Italy. For us, it is mainly the working groups that are interesting and give the opportunity to work together on common issues. About the future challenges, we can mention teleworking, older workers and well-being at work.

ROMANIA CNPP

European Forum has proven to be an important platform for the exchange of information and good practices in the field of insurance against work accidents and occupational diseases, for the awareness that occupational injuries have a major economic impact on society from an economic and social point of view. Also, the activity carried out at European Forum level has shown how important cooperation at European level is.

On June 28, 2007, the National House of Public Pensions, the insurer in case of work accidents and occupational diseases in Romania, became a full member of the European Forum and in 2012 during the Conference held in Bucharest were celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Forum.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, topics covered at the Forum, such as information on the recognition of COVID-19 as an occupational injury in the European Forum Member States and consequences of Long-COVID, employee's mental health during the pandemic, working from home, digitization, were areas of interest and support to the CNPP.

It is very important in these times to work together in order to promote the principles of the Forum, to improve the situation of workers suffering from an occupational injury.

SPAIN | AMAT

AMAT decided to join this Organization in 1996, as an active member, in order to exchange information and share experiences in the field of occupational injuries, as well as to make Spanish mutualism known as a paradigm of public and private collaboration in the international order.

The main asset is the exchange of information and knowledge with other Members about occupational injuries, health and safety at work and prevention of occupational risks. Moreover, one of the most important advantages of the European Forum is the possibility of being informed about the regulatory changes from other European Countries in the above-mentioned subjects, which allow similar proposals to be made in the Spanish field, management and economics comparisons, and analysis of European and international comparative law.

One of the main challenges encountered by Mutual Entities of Accidents at Work and Occupational Diseases is the dissemination of the approach "Vision 0 accidents at work" to reduce the accident rate in Companies.

To this end, Mutual Entities promote advice, support, and inform on prevention of occupational risk in companies. Besides, tools are disseminated to improve the integration of prevention in Companies with a special focus on new forms of development of work and its characteristics, in order to develop, control, maintain and improve the safety and health of workers.

There is no doubt that the prevention of occupational risks, in its own measure, is a guarantee of safety and health for employees and, in turn, generates significant economic savings for European Companies, giving them greater competitiveness, promoting employment, and in the case of Spain specifically, helping to support the Social Protection system.

SWEDEN AFA Försäkring

Afa Försäkring first took part in the European Forum in Paris in 2009. We were urged to attend the conference by the Swedish Social Insurance Agency, and my task was to write a report and recommendation to our CEO whether to apply for membership or not. Attending the first conference, I did not know what to expect, but I was very curious!

The main asset in Forum is the amount of knowledge that the members have in total. Most European countries have similar labour markets. It is therefore almost certain that whatever your problem or challenge is, someone has experienced something similar, and may have the solution. The European Forum offers a possibility to get good advice from colleagues!

Among challenges in the future, we can mention dealing with a labour market that is changing, partly due to the pandemic. Also, handling a variety of private companies that offers “advice” regarding insurance policies to the individual. These companies compete with the official information given by insurance companies, employers and unions, and they will also charge a fee of up to 25 % of the total amount paid to the person originally filing the claim. The company with the most aggressive marketing, Insurello, is currently establishing itself in Denmark, France and Italy.”

SWITZER- LAND | Suva

As a country located in the middle of Europe, but not an EU-Member, we traditionally maintain close contacts with our neighbouring countries and the whole of Europe. It is important for us to network, to learn from each other and actively support the Forum in achieving its goals. We are convinced that such a specific insurance needs the cohesion that the Forum has provided since its foundation in 1992.

30 Years of cooperation

This year's annual conference of the European Forum was marked by its 30th anniversary. Founded in 1992 the European Forum brought together accident insurance institutions from all over Europe. Its aim was to promote and safeguard the principle of occupational safety and health in Europe. As of today, accident insurance institutions of 21 countries all over Europe participate in the work of the European Forum.

The very fact that the conference came about shows the idea of cooperation, as it was only possible thanks to the cooperation of the Enlarged Bureau, involving Austria, Finland, France and Germany.

As the keynote speaker of the conference, professor Günther Sokoll, who witnessed the founding of the European Forum, took the participants down memory lane to the origins of the Forum. Impetus for a Europe-wide cooperation did not come from the accident insurance institutions themselves. European politics wanted to flank the economic union with a social union: through harmonization, coordination or convergence of national social security systems. To achieve that goal, first the national occupational health and safety laws were harmonized. Then national social law should be aligned with each other via convergence processes. It did not go as smoothly as intended, but after some birth pangs, and when it was agreed that the national social security structures in the respective member states should not be called into question, the road to the first Forum in Rome on 23 June 1992 was paved and the subsequent signing of the founding papers started 30 years of successful cooperation.

30 years on, the European Forum did not just dwell on the past. Stretching over three sessions, the forum members discussed topics such as “How can the European forum add value in the coming five years”, “Bridging gaps and building bridges: For a better protection of platform workers in Europe” and “Post COVID strategies”.

How can the European Forum add value in the coming five years? The members agreed on several steps to strengthen their network. They must

share knowledge, information and best practices of the different countries and institutions. In order to be a strong partner in Europe, the Forum needs to be a platform for sharing knowledge on current topics including OSHA, social security, digitalization of social security coordination as well as information on national legislative initiatives and legislation developments.

As stated in the directive of the European Parliament and of the European Council on improving working conditions in platform work, every worker has the right to “working conditions which respect their health, safety and dignity, and workers’ rights to information and consultation are enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union”. The European Pillar of Social Rights states that “regardless of the type and duration of the employment relationship, workers have the right to fair and equal treatment regarding working conditions and access to social protection”. How can that work when management consists of an algorithm? Annarita Piazza of Eurogip described the risks platform workers face: the terms and conditions of employment are imposed unilaterally by digital platforms, nine out of ten platforms active in the EU classify their workers as self-employed and as a result, up to 5.5 million platform workers could be at risk of misclassification of employment status in the EU. The legal situation in Europe for platform workers varies according to national legislation. Platform workers need to be (re)classified as “workers”. This would be in the spirit of the European directive the general objective of which is to improve the working conditions and social rights of people working through platforms and to support the conditions for the sustainable growth of digital labour platforms in the European Union.

Michael Maltrovsky of AUVA discussed post COVID strategies in Austria. The overall goal is maintaining an infrastructure, especially in the medical sector, convincing people to get vaccinated and the development of vaccines adapted to variants of the virus. What needs to be considered post COVID? As for working from home it needs to be incorporated into the (accident insurance) law and tailored prevention measures for the mental stress and the individual ergonomic challenges must be found. What is the insurance status when an employee works from a country other than the country of employment?

As to COVID-19, Mr Maltrovsky further stated that recognizing an infection as an accident at work is only possible within a narrow time frame (work shift). The burden of proof is with the insured person – there has to be a high probability that the insured person was infected at the workplace (professional context). In Austria only very few incidents are recognised as accidents at work (recognition rate 10%, very few reported cases). To have an infection with COVID-19 recognized as an occupational disease, is only possible in certain sectors like healthcare or education. In these trades, it is presumed that infection was caused by an occupational risk. The burden of proof lies with the insurance institution.

The working groups met and worked on today's issues.

The Working Group (WG) Legislation took up on its mandate given in the course of the 2021 Conference of the European Forum: Following the discussion on a European level on the “right to disconnect” from employment-related communication. When one follows a soft approach to the topic, the responsibility lies with the worker and the manager to ensure that remote work does not lead e.g. to an extension of working hours, bigger workloads or unsuitable management and workplace practices. The opposite would be

the so-called hard approach, taking the decision to disconnect out of the hands of the workers. Both approaches are the subject of controversial discussions, and the social partners do not agree on all points. Among the Forum members the different OSH risks were discussed, in particular increasing work intensity, long or irregular working hours with the result of over connection, isolation as consequence of poor communication or cooperation and ergonomic aspects.

The WG Occupational Diseases addressed the issues of light skin cancer and mental health. SUVA presented a pilot project on skin cancer. Having started the pilot in winter 2021/2022 with a big construction industry company with around 80 concerned outdoor workers, the new screening project aims at an early detection of occupational non-melanoma skin cancer. So far, there was no such assessment in place. Based on a questionnaire, employees aged 55 and older with an increased UV exposure were identified and preselected for a dermatological examination. SUVA's occupational physician receives the results of the dermatological examination and decides on further procedure. The examination showed among others that 65% of the investigated had significant skin damage from sunlight. The project will be extended to the construction (outdoor workers) and landscape gardening sectors in 2022/2023, followed successively by all other sectors concerned.

The WG discussed a draft report by the European Parliament on Mental Health in the Digital World of Work calling on the European Commission to recognize anxiety, depression, and the so-called burnouts as occupational diseases. Taking additionally into account an earlier resolution adopted by the European Parliament in October 2021 requiring the European Commission to propose a directive laying down minimum standards for the recognition and compensation of occupational diseases, the WG decided to contribute to the discussion with a position paper which is being prepared.

The WG Digitalisation met for the first time, yet it already had an impressive topic on its agenda: Artificial Intelligence (AI). Here the European Forum published a Position Paper on the ethical and legal aspects of using AI. With regard to the position paper, the WG discussed the pros (assisting workers, reduction of paperwork and costs) and cons (risk of discrimination and lack of transparency) of AI. The WG concluded that social insurance decisions must not be totally dependent on AI.

In terms of communication, EUid and EESSI are of importance. The key principles of EUid are that it is available to any EU citizen, resident, or business in the EU who wants to use it. It is widely useable as a way of identification or to confirm certain personal attributes for the purpose of access to public and private digital services across the EU. Furthermore, it gives full control to users to choose which aspects of their identity, data and certificates they share with third parties, and keep track of such sharing.

EESSI or the Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information is an IT system that helps social security institutions across the EU exchange information related to different areas like applicable legislation, sickness, accidents at work and occupational diseases, pensions, unemployment and family benefits more rapidly and securely, as required by the EU regulation on the coordination of social security systems.

The Communications Working Group is working to raise the profile of the European Forum website among its members. The WG wants to increase visibility, strengthen and expand the network and enable the exchange of information between members in the member area of the website.

Funding for the website is secured up to and including 2026. AUVA, EUROGIP and DGUV share the costs, with each institution paying for

the costs every three years, starting with DGUV in 2021, followed in 2022 und 2023 by AUVA and EUROGIP respectively. The same order applies for the years 2024 to 2026.

The WG intends to increase its activities in social media. It would also be beneficial for the visibility of the EF in social media if members who have accounts in international networks are encouraged to link to the EF. To do so, it is important to find content that can be posted and tweeted.

In addition to setting up a LinkedIn channel to attract professional contacts, the working group intends to strengthen the Forum's Twitter account.

The conference closed with the invitation to Helsinki in 2023 by Janne Reini, CEO of TVK, the Workers' compensation insurance in Finland. The conference will take place from 7 to 9 June 2023. Some of the themes of this year's conference will certainly be included in next year's discussions. But topics such as the crisis in Europe, a changing global risk environment and well-being at work will also be addressed. ■

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Austria's strategy for a possible increase in COVID cases in autumn 2022

Unfortunately, experience in times of COVID so far shows that after the epidemic is before the epidemic. At the beginning of May, the new Minister of Health presented the so-called Variant Management Plan to be better prepared for a possible new COVID-related pandemic next autumn.



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In the course of this, 4 scenarios were designed – they range from the “ideal case” (scenario 1) without any necessary restrictions, to the “favorable” case with new variants that are comparable to the Omicron and Delta mutations and only lead to partial restrictions (scenario 2), to the “unfavorable” cases. Scenario 3 (“unfavorable case”) means that COVID occurs frequently and with unpredictable variants that lead to far-reaching disruptions in social and community life. Scenario 4 means the “worst case” with severe restrictions in social and personal life, in which there are very high numbers of infections and hospitalisations.

The goal must be to keep the infrastructure, especially the medical infrastructure, functional even in a worst-case scenario and to have enough capacity available for severe COVID cases, but at the same time also for general health care for the population (raising understanding among the population for this has tended not to succeed in recent times).

In addition, the discussion about compulsory vaccination continues. The so-called compulsory vaccination commission presented a report at the end of May and will do so again at the end of August (question: regardless of whether someone

supports the compulsory vaccination or not, is it already too late for sufficient vaccination protection in the autumn and winter months?).

At the same time, however, efforts must be made to convince as many people as possible that voluntary vaccination makes sense and is also medically safe in most cases. Whether compulsory vaccination is at all feasible in view of the numerous persistent vaccination refusers remains questionable: a state with 9 million inhabitants will already have problems punishing 500,000 to one million vaccination refusers and completing the inevitable administrative procedures in a reasonable time.

Cautiously optimistic, it is the hope that a vaccine adapted to the previous variants will be available in autumn.

A final variant management plan is to be developed by the summer (July) and implemented during the summer in order to be better prepared in this autumn than in previous years. ■

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How to protect health and safety at work in a changing world?

Teleworking, robotics, new organisational frameworks, new types of status: the world of work is in the process of transformation. These changes can have consequences for workers' health and safety, and sometimes make it necessary to rethink occupational risk prevention policies. This was the issue examined by the latest EUROGIP Discussions ("Les Débats d'EUROGIP") held online on 5 April 2022.



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What has changed

Marc Malenfer, head of monitoring and long-range planning at French national research and safety institute INRS ("Institut national de recherche et de sécurité"), asserted straightaway that "we have no certainty about what tomorrow will be like." With his team, he tries to "explore possible future scenarios, identify the levers that will be decisive", and identify what occupational health and safety stakeholders should watch out for in the coming transformations.

He lists five identified issues, already present before the pandemic: an acceleration in the use of information and communication technologies, companies' determination to gain agility and flexibility, notably due to a growing awareness of their vulnerability (with regard to the supply chain and labour), the use of atypical forms of employment status, co-activity and, finally, companies' ability to maintain a work community or not. "Workforces are fragmented and impoverished by this development, and social dialogue in all its forms is experiencing difficulties," noted EUROGIP's chairman, Christian Expert, in his introduction to the conference.

The participants spoke a lot about teleworking, which admittedly existed already, but which has become more prevalent in the past two years. “It will persist: the trend will decline, but the level will remain higher than that before the pandemic,” predicted Ivailo Kalfin, Executive Director of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound). This tripartite EU agency, (the oldest one), aims to contribute through research to the development of social, labour and employment policies.

Now, “teleworking reflects a structural change in the organization of work, with new technologies, great work flexibility and a change in the nature of social and work relations,” commented Manuela Samek Lodovici, Director of the Research Department on the Labour Market and Productive Systems, at the Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale (IRS) in Italy, “so it is important to examine the challenges posed by this hybrid work form.”

Risks

Marc Malenfer does not want us to forget that “the use of technological progress forms part of the general principles of prevention (to improve working conditions and protect workers)”. Erick Lemonnier, Workplace Safety Director for the infrastructure branch of Eiffage, in France, gave the example of an assistive glove which can mitigate physical loads and thereby improve comfort and prevent the appearance of musculoskeletal disorders.

However, Marc Malenfer warns about the risk of “getting carried away by potential breakthroughs” in these technologies, when one should not lose sight of the fact that they are likely to increase the difference between stipulated work and actual work. It is essential to ensure that they are not merely tools for an acceleration in work requirements, he said.

A Eurofound survey shows that the workload increases with teleworking. The number of hours overtime is two times greater for teleworking, reported Ivailo Kalfin. And he added, “when you work at home you do not know what is your role

in the company and if what you do is useful and if you are doing it well.” Excessive control of employees working at home is also dangerous, said Maxime Bellego, doctor of psychology.

Several participants mentioned that managers were especially exposed to PSRs (psychosocial risks) in the case of teleworking. “They are the ones least in favour of teleworking. Supervision rests on their shoulders. It is not easy for them to adapt to the diversity of employee profiles,” observed Valérie Duburcq, head of the “collective work practices” transformation programme at Orange.

Laurent Bailly, head of the “insuree services” department and assistant in the Occupational Risks Department of the French National Health Insurance Fund (CNAM), reported on his analysis of the circumstances of teleworking accidents. The main accidents involve falls and cases of malaise. “That’s rather logical, because it is the same type of incidence rate as for jobs that can be done at home,” he pointed out.

In addition to teleworking, Maxime Bellego explained that the uncertainty due to the health crisis was having harmful consequences. It exacerbates the effects of a lack of social support, which is a PSR factor recognized by the Karasek model. In other words, the lack of support is in itself a PSR factor, but it is magnified in times of uncertainty.

In short, the transformations in work are generating new risks, but also risks that are already known, stressed Stéphane Pimbert, Director General of INRS. For example: “The risks of teleworking are fairly conventional: they concern the work environment, autonomy, the workload and resources.”

Risk prevention at home?

The risks related to these transformations, whether they be new or conventional, must be assessed. “We do not analyse teleworking as a risk in itself, but as a work station subject to risks,” specified Laurent Bailly.

Of course, in the case of teleworking, it is harder for the employer to assess the risks. “How to measure the workload and working time at a distance?”, asked Manuela Samek Lodovici. She continued: “It is necessary to find a balance between employers’ need to know what their employees are doing and the right to personal privacy.” The issue is often precisely one of balance.

In addition to risk assessment, the same difficulty is faced in implementing preventive measures. “The employer can hardly guarantee the quality of the air and lighting that you have in your home,” commented Ivailo Kalfin. “There is a conflict between employers’ obligations and the means that they have to influence working conditions,” observed Edlyn Höller, Deputy Managing Director of the Deutsche gesetzliche Unfallversicherung (DGUV) in Germany. It is especially difficult when teleworking does not take place in the home but in nomad mode, during business travel for example.

Coworking spaces and other third places should not be forgotten. The concern for health at work in general and for ergonomics in particular is also very important there. This is illustrated by the concerns of Jean-Claude Blachier, Head of Moulin Digital in Valence, and Marjolaine Devic, who is an occupational risk prevention actor and former manager of a coworking space, both working in France.

Faced with the tech world: prevention as early as possible

Regarding technological facilities, Maxime Bellego spoke strongly in favour of experimental phases, “vital for a good understanding of the quality of work.” He gave the example of France Télécom where, since the tragic series of suicides, any new technology is first tested for several months before being rolled out massively... or abandoned.

More generally, information feedback and working groups can prevent negative consequences of changes made very swiftly. But Maxime Bellego admits that these methods “are rather complicated in teleworking because the groups need a chair, especially in the technical world.”

Before that, the ideal approach is to bear occupational health and safety issues in mind at the very time the tools (machinery, software, etc.) are created. “Robot designers and integrators should work upstream on human/machine relations,” for example, recommended Stéphane Pimbert. Hence the need, according to Marc Malenfer, for upskilling of the designers, who should be made more aware of these issues. Prevention stakeholders should also acquire a better understanding of what these tools are.

Digital technology as a tool for awareness raising

During the pandemic, employers not very sensitive to occupational health issues became more aware of them. Moreover, the number of downloads of EU-OSHA documentation exploded. “We had never seen that before,” said William Cockburn, temporary Head of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.

According to the Occupational Risks Department of CNAM, the health crisis was a catalyst for transformations already underway. Its actions have not fundamentally changed in substance, but it uses new means to carry them out, explained Anne Thiebeauld, Head of the Branch. “We have definitely developed teleservices faster and more massively than we would have done if it were not for the crisis,” she said. The crisis enabled OSH personnel to reach a wider audience in small enterprises.

Dematerialization is a tool for massively raising awareness of health and safety at work. This is also shown by the self-checking questionnaire developed by the Swiss National Accident Insurance Fund (Suva), sent to 9,000 small and medium-sized enterprises. Eric Rochat, safety and health protection expert at the Fund, explains that processing the collected data naturally requires less personnel. After answering the questions, enterprises receive a summary of the measures that they should take. Some of them even then call on Suva to obtain further advice. “This tool raises awareness and opens doors,” observed Eric Rochat.

What role for social partners and regulations?

The various contributions have shown that the regulations regarding teleworking vary from one European country to another. The same holds for the recognition of occupational injuries in work-at-home jobs. The pandemic has led some countries to change their legislation. This is the case of Portugal. Catarina de Oliveira Carvalho, Associate Professor at the Law Faculty in Oporto, explained that faced with the increasing prevalence of teleworking, which was governed by very general legislation dating from 2003, the government undertook a reform in 2021 with legislation that is far more protective for employees. In this case, social dialogue was brief.

On the European level, it generally works well. This, in any case, is what was claimed by Francisco Jesús Alvarez Hidalgo, policy manager in the Occupational Health and Safety unit of the European Commission’s Directorate General

of Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. Aude Cefaliello, researcher at ETUI (the research centre of the European Trade Union Confederation), and Rebekah Smith, Deputy Director of the Social Affairs Department of the BusinessEurope employers’ organization, were its representatives at the EUROGIP Discussions. With regard to teleworking, both agreed that it should be voluntary. “Teleworking can be a very positive tool. [...] It must be the subject of a compromise and discussions in order to be acceptable by both parties,” advocated Aude Cafaliello. She is generally favourable to a directive on the right to disconnect. Rebekah Smith, without clearly rejecting this idea, warns against “excessively strict rules”. In her opinion, the review of the Workplaces Directive could be an opportunity to speak about teleworking.

Directive or no directive? “Legislation was one option, but not the only one,” Francisco Jesús Alvarez Hidalgo stated simply. He indicated two limits to European regulations on teleworking and disconnection: the fact that the changes are rapid, whereas legislation must have a medium- and long-term perspective and cannot be changed too frequently, and cultural differences between the countries. This comment corresponds to the testimony of Valérie Duburcq, from Orange: in some African countries, being on the spot is valued because it is perceived as a form of professional recognition, whereas in Nordic countries teleworking is generally synonymous with trust and flexibility. ■

To find out more: <https://eurogip.fr/en/debate/>

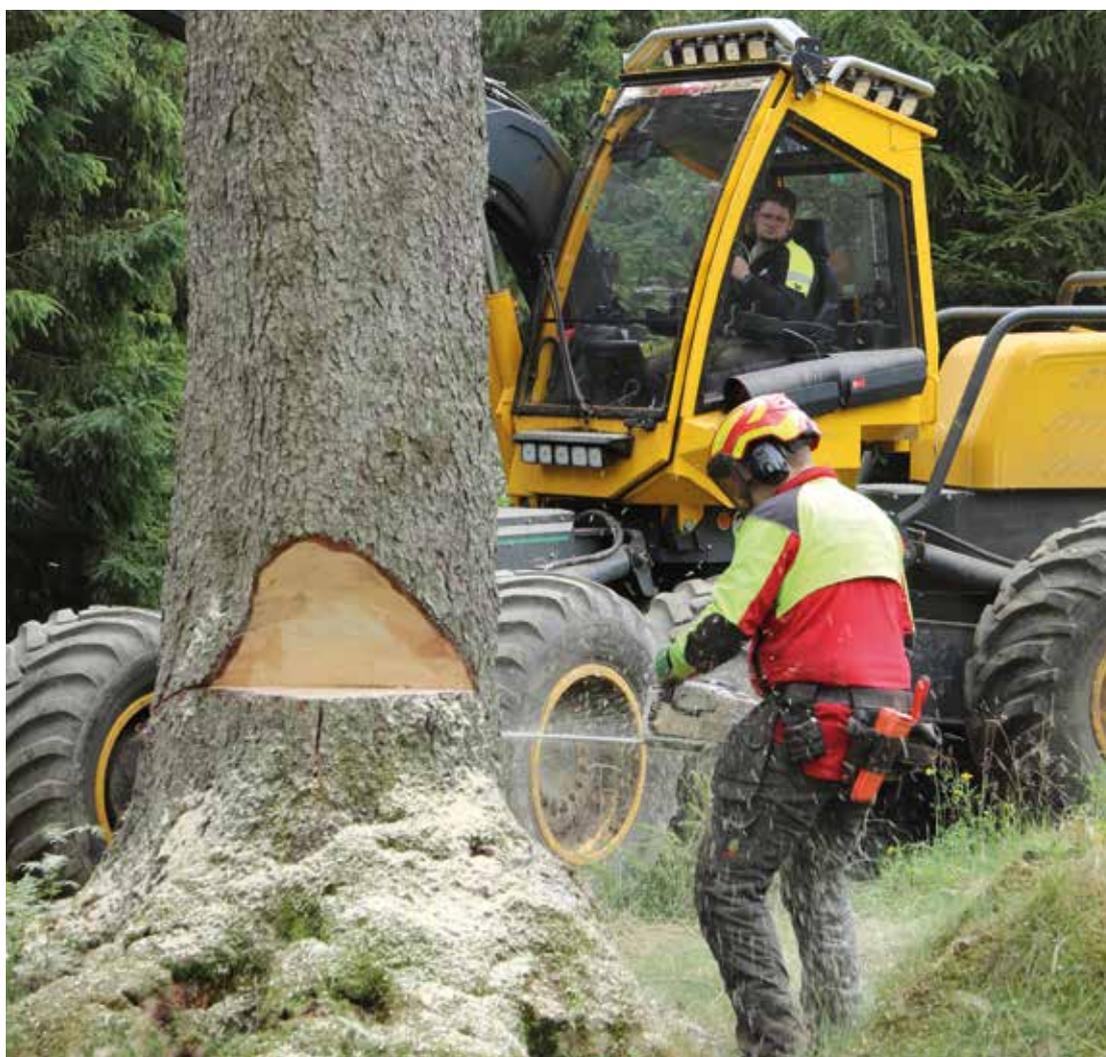
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App “Stockfibel to go” increases safety when felling trees

There are still a large number of often serious accidents during tree felling. Where motor-manual felling cannot be dispensed with, compliance with professional rules is vital.

With the again improved app “Stockfibel to go” of the German Social Insurance for Agriculture, Forestry and Horticulture (SVLFG), foresters have an aid to action for stock assessment at hand at any time. With it, they can assess the

expertise in motor-manual felling. In other words, the “stick guide to go” can be used to determine whether the chainsaw operator is working safely or endangering himself and others while working.



© SVLFG

After a tree has been felled, the remaining rootstock of the felled tree shows whether the chainsaw operator has worked competently and safely. The rootstock assessment shows whether the most important component of competent work is present during tree felling. Chainsaw operators, forest owners, contractors and clients are required to be able to assess, or have assessed, the safety of felling work on the basis of the stock image. Up to now, the assessment of the cane was reserved for a professionally experienced group of people. With the “Stockfibel to go” this is a thing of the past. With the assessment features drop notch, drop notch chord, break bar dimension, break bar shape, break stage and cut position, every user can make a meaningful and rule-compliant

assessment of the stick appearance. This helps to increase work safety on a broad basis in the long term and to reduce the number of work accidents during motor-manual tree felling.

How does this work in practice? With the help of the app, one can take stock images, record assessment features, save and manage stock images and results, and receive practical information and help. It is important to note that after only a short processing time, there are already results for the prescribed skilled crafts features. At the same time, the craftsmanship of the chainsaw work during tree felling is documented. The SVLFG recommends using the app for training as well.



© SVLFG

Based on feedback from users, the SVLFG is continuously improving the app; this was also the case with the latest update. This has improved for the users:

- The app has been optimised for all mobile devices.
- The pictures can be enlarged for better editing.
- An assessment is now possible for cane diameters generally up to 80 centimetres.
- The definition of the cane diameter to be assessed is reversible.
- Recorded canes can be processed subsequently. This means that one only has to photograph the stick in the forest and the actual assessment can be done at a later time.

The app “Stockfibel to go” can be downloaded free of charge from the Google Play Store and the App Store. It can be used offline. The app does not collect any personal data. User behaviour is not tracked. The app does not establish a data connection to the SVLFG. ■

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Home office

Due to the pandemic, working in home office has reached a level that was previously not thought possible. In addition, there is the phenomenon of mobile working, i.e. working in or from places that cannot be influenced in any way by the employer, because the employees are free to choose them.



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Home office in (accident insurance) law

Consequently, an attempt has been made to extend the already existing accident insurance protection for professional activities. Home office has been introduced as a separate term in Austrian law with integration into labour law, and separate provisions have also been created in statutory accident insurance law:

According to this, accidents at work also include accidents that occur in the local, temporal and causal connection with the employment at home (home office) that constitutes the basis for the insurance.

The home can be one's own or that of close relatives, including cohabitants. In connection with routes, the home office flat is now considered a place of work, so that the same routes that were previously protected in connection with the workplace are now also protected in the case of home office.

This is all consistent, but leads to new challenges:

Prevention – ergonomics, mental stress

What consequences for health development do the ergonomic conditions that an employee finds at home or elsewhere outside the workplace have? Poor seating, unergonomic desks, the use of laptops without their own screens (compulsory, but who controls it?). In contrast to the associated freedom to organise working time as freely as possible, increasingly free working time organisation can mean, in the worst case, being available for work and the employer at all times? What is the effect of double workloads if, in addition to the home office, there are small children or other members of the household to look after? What about the psychological impact of working from home? Can preventive measures, e.g. by the accident insurance institutions, help to avoid negative effects?

Home office in a country other than the country of employment

Another new phenomenon is that home office work is increasingly being done from a state other than the state of the place of business where the person previously worked. According to the relevant provisions of Regulation 883/04 and the implementing Regulation 987/09, the Member State of residence is responsible for insurance if a substantial part of the activity is carried out in the Member State of residence. A “substantial part” of the activity may be assumed to be 25%

or more. The situation assumed for the following 12 calendar months shall be taken into account.

Even up to now, there has been little concern throughout Europe if someone was insured in more than one country. The social insurance institutions are simply not prepared to create the situation demanded by the regulation, i.e. that one state is responsible for all social insurance matters of an insured person. Legally, everything is complicated; there are no suitable structures and, above all, no personnel capacities for this.

One would have to establish the applicability of the legislation of one state, retroactively repeal the social security statuses in the state that proved to be irresponsible and re-register them in the other state. At the same time, contributions would have to be refunded and recollected, and benefits already granted by the state institution that had been declared not responsible would have to be offset against the state institution that was now responsible.

Usually, such constellations only come to the surface in the case of an occupational accident. If one wants to resolve things in the sense of the applicable regulations, one quickly notices that there are few to no routines for efficient case handling. In extreme cases an insured person is left behind and receives no benefits. ■

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The Online Access Act (OZG) – a challenge and an opportunity for German social accident insurance

The Act to Improve Online Access to Administrative Services (Online Access Act, OZG) is intended to make administration more digital in Germany. It places all administrative entities in Germany under an obligation to offer services to the general public and businesses not just offline, but also online. Implementation of the OZG also affects the social accident insurance.

In the future, applications, notifications and enquiries will be made available electronically, on portals, and can be handled online in a few clicks. In addition to a Bundesportal (federal portal), there will also be Landesportal (national portal) in each of the 16 countries as well as suitable specialist portals of other authorities. To ensure that the general public and businesses are always passed on to the relevant authorities, all administrative portals are to be linked via a portal network.

Which administrative services can be found on the portals is mapped and controlled by the so-called Public Administration Service Catalogue (LeiKa). Each of the administrative services will need to be explained, and where applications or notifications are required, an online procedure will have to be offered. This procedure can be initiated directly from the portal.

All services from the LeiKa catalogue will have to be OZG-compliant in the way they are offered. Whether the relevant requirements are met will then be assessed under a “Level of Maturity Model”, developed by the German Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community. It comprises four stages in all. OZG conformity has been achieved by services that have reached stages 3 or 4 (see illustration).

For stage 3 of the model, users must be able to submit application data with all supporting documents online; a decision must be delivered online in a service account and it must be possible to

file an appeal online. It must be possible, where desired, to announce notifications and, in the future, to communicate with the general public and companies entirely via the online service account.

For stage 4 of the model, the once-only principle must also be fulfilled. Information already provided does not have to be submitted to the authority.

Online services of German social accident insurance

In a first step, the German social accident insurance already made three services available online in 2018. An accident can be reported online, a new company can be registered, and insured people can use a self-service for the submission of documentary proof and to send notifications to the relevant social accident insurer.

From 2023, 31 services will be available on a central portal of the German social accident insurance institution (UV- service portal). It will thus be possible, for example, to apply for costs to be borne for medical devices, to apply for a survivor’s pension or to report an occupational disease. The UV Service Portal can be used both by insured individuals and businesses.

To ensure the efficient implementation of the OZG, a portal will be set up, providing standard, central access to the online services of the German social accident insurance. Any existing services provided by social accident insurance institutions will also be included, as applicants will be passed on to the relevant insurance institutions with their specific services. If social accident insurance institutions have so far not had any online services of their own, their insured individuals and businesses can use the central UV Service Portal directly.

Anyone wanting to use an online service, will need to submit identification, depending on the service and the channel of communication they choose. The requirements on data security and identification are very high in online communication. The UV Service Portal therefore links up with the service accounts that are provided for the general public and businesses under the Online Access Act (OZG). Applicants can submit online identification of themselves through these service accounts. The accounts allow the saving of data imported from online forms. Also, the mailbox system in a service account can be used for the legally secure delivery of notifications and messages.

Stage 0	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offline • The website of the authority has neither an application form nor information about the service. • Communication takes place on paper, in person or over the phone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information • The website of the authority has information about the service, such as details required for the application and the necessary documents. An application form is available for downloading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form assistant • The form can be completed online. • An online request must be submitted on paper, as online authentication is not available. • Some of the required documents can be sent online. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online services • Complete online handling is possible. • Authentication is possible online, using a method adapted to the level of trust required in each case. • Communication can take place online. • Information about the service meets the requirements for a description of services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online transaction • Complete online handling is possible. • The once-only principle is applied to certificates. • Subject to the user's consent, master data can be imported from any service account. • Subject to the user's consent, any data that has already been entered can be imported from previously made applications.

Conclusion

In all, implementation of the Online Access Act (OZG) will deliver noticeable added value to the general public and businesses and indeed also to the social accident insurance. An increasing number of people want to use online services more and more frequently. This means that public authorities need to provide suitable facilities. It is therefore important that such services should be convenient to use, centrally available, secure and

fully online – preferably at a stage 4 level of maturity. This does, of course, involve a challenge: Users do not want to fail because they cannot work out which unit is responsible for them, and they want to deal with administrative services securely and conveniently from the comfort of their homes, using their mobile phones. ■

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INTERVIEW

Teleworking – the new deal.

Since the beginning of the Corona crisis at the latest, teleworking or working from home has arrived in the public at large. What does this form of work mean for the German social accident insurance? What is covered by the accident insurance? How does prevention work when administered from afar? Answers to these questions from Dr Edlyn Höller, Deputy Director General of DGUV.

Dr. Höller, how was the massive switch to telework in Germany managed and do you view it as sustainable change?

Before the pandemic, telework was the exception to the rule. Data from 2019 showed that only 3 percent of workers worked exclusively from their homes. 17 percent said that they worked from home at least some of the time. This changed dramatically during the pandemic. The proportions fluctuate from survey to survey and from month to month. It is safe to say, though, that in 2020 and 2021, between 20 and 30 percent of all workers in Germany worked from home at least some of the time. In January of this year, the cross-sector average of telework was still more than 28 percent.

The big question is: will this change be permanent? In my opinion, there is no “one-size-fits-all” answer to this question. Most people who have worked from home since the beginning of the pandemic describe their experience as positive. The overwhelming majority of employers share this opinion. But working from home also has its limitations, for example with regard to informal conversations and a lack of personal contact. Surveys show that workers are aware of this. Only a small fraction of workers would like to work exclusively from their homes. So, in the end, I would say that yes, our pandemic experience will change work organisation permanently but only to the extent that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

In Germany, you have two different concepts to refer to distant work: telework and mobile work. What are the differences?

The difference between both concepts is mainly technical. Telework is an agreement between employer and worker. This establishes an office within the worker’s private flat or house. The workstation regulation (German: Arbeitsstättenverordnung) requires employers to set up the workstation in compliance with safety and health requirements. In contrast to this, mobile work can be carried out from any place in the world and usually while on the move. The classic example for this would be the manager on a plane during a business trip working on his or her laptop.

When the pandemic started, a lot of office workers began working from home. In order to facilitate this change, the government defined this temporary arrangement as “mobile work”, too.

The two different concepts I have just mentioned are important for safety and health regulation. They do not matter with regard to insurance coverage. Insurance coverage by German Social Accident Insurance does not depend on the place of work.

When working at home, one difficulty is to differentiate between working and domestic agendas. How can you be certain of the professional cause of an accident occurring in a private home?

This is an interesting question because it assumes that another question has already been answered: where exactly do we draw the line between an employer's responsibility for safe and healthy working conditions and workers' responsibility for their own safety and health in their private homes? Consider the following scenario: A man gets up in the morning in order to go straight to his study and start working on his laptop. The study is situated on the floor beneath his bedroom. The man slips on the stairs, falls and breaks a vertebra. Should we regard this accident as a work accident?

This is an actual case decided by the Federal Social Court of Germany in last December. In its verdict, the judges applied a new law adopted in 2021. It states explicitly that accident insurance coverage covers teleworkers to the same extent as workers who work at the office or on the factory floor. The first instance court had judged that the accident in question was a work accident. The court of appeal, however, regarded the accident on the way from the bedroom to the study as not covered by accident insurance. The federal social court decided that: yes, this was a work accident.

How can the DGUV adapt its prevention services to the work in private homes and through digitalised work equipment?

The question is not where people should work. The question is: How can we ensure that work is healthy and safe regardless of the actual place of work? This line of reasoning has prompted us to start by first defining a common understanding of our role in the context of telework. This common understanding stresses that health and safety laws apply to telework, too. This means that employers are still obliged to assess the risks associated with telework.

At the same time, we acknowledge that telework requires workers to adopt a more active role with regard to safety and health. To this end, companies need to ensure that teleworkers have access not only to safe equipment but also to internal networks. We also know that long working hours can be detrimental to one's health. Agreements as to working times and availability of workers are central to avoiding excessive working times. Our job in this context is to provide advice and recommendations. We also plan to develop digital tools that can help companies to fulfil their legal obligations and to ensure healthy and safe working conditions for their workers. ■

The questions were asked during a roundtable conference "Protecting health and safety at work in a changing world" at the EURIGP headquarters in Paris on 5 April 2022. One of the invitees was Dr. Edlyn Höller, Deputy Director General of DGUV.

Andrea Tardiola is the new Director General of Inail

Andrea Tardiola, born in Rome in 1971, comes from the Ministry of Sustainable Infrastructure and Mobility, where in the last year he held the position of head of the minister's secretariat. Previously he held various offices in other ministries and in the Lazio Region.



In addition, as part of his academic activity, Tardiola was a researcher at the Department of Theory of the State of Sapienza University of Rome and an adjunct professor at the Chair of Administration Science at the University of Tuscia. ■

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The statements of the members in alphabetical order by country



Alexander Bernart (AUVA)

“30 years of worldwide exchange of experience on social security – a good occasion to draw attention to the importance of international cooperation. As Director General of the Austrian Workers’ Compensation Board, I am particularly pleased that we have been able to support this important association with our expert knowledge from the very beginning and thus contribute to the further development of accident insurance and the promotion of occupational safety across national borders.”



Michael Maltrovsky (AUVA)

“The European Forum is an important medium for advancing the issues, concerns and goals of accident insurance in Europe and for having a “common” voice in Europe. In addition, there are important side effects such as interesting lectures, exchange of ideas, making contacts, meeting friends.”



Brussels | picture made by Ilka Woeffle (Commissioner for European Relations of the European Forum | DSV-EUROPA)



Croatia | Zagreb (HZZO)

“Investment in quality and efficient health services and programs that will add years to life and life to years is mission of the Croatian Health Insurance Fund (HZZO).

In line with our mission, it is an honour to be a member of the European Forum, which contributes exchange of knowledge and experience among member organisations facing the similar challenges in terms of insurance, prevention, medical care and rehabilitation.

By attending the European Forum conferences we can also learn about the history and cultural values of the Member States.”



Janne Reini (TVK)

“European Forum: An opportunity for development of Accident Insurance in Europe, valuable network of expertise and friendship cross borders.”



Marja Kaari (TVK)

“European Forum – connecting people.”



Heli Lgerblom and Elina Holmas (TVK)

“We Working Together in the European Forum.”



Sari-Leena Lund (TVK)

“Better Together.”



Sanna Sinkkilä (TVK)

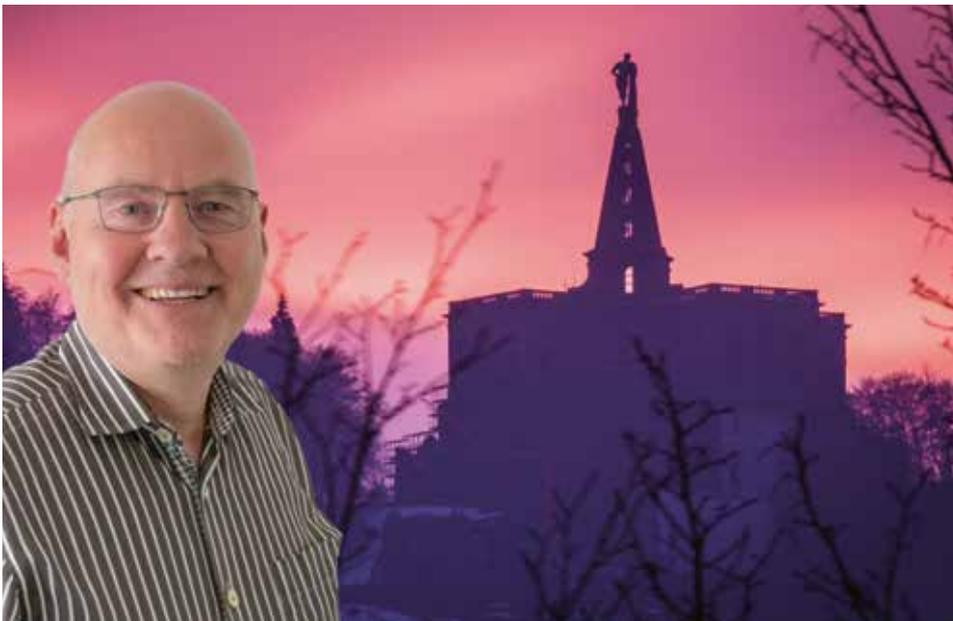
“We’re more together.”





Edlyn Hoeller (DGUV)

“I am delighted to see the family of the European Forum coming together in person these days at the beginning of June. Even though it says in the Forum’s Statutes that its aims shall be furthered by all suitable means of communication, the best means is that the members come together for the annual conference.”



Erich Koch (SVLFG)

“German agricultural social insurance (SVLFG) also has its place in the European Forum. The Hercules is the landmark of Kassel, where the SVLFG headquarters are located.”



Julita Varanauskienė (SODRA)

“The European Forum is a lively and vital organisation. It is a good platform for exchanging experiences and to gather new ideas. I would like to thank our colleagues for the initiative and the opportunity to meet again in Berlin for the first time after our meeting in Vilnius before the pandemic. I look forward to meeting you.”



Romania | Bucharest (CNPP)

“European Forum has proven to be an important platform for the exchange of information and good practice in the field of insurance against work accidents and occupational diseases, for the awareness that the work accidents and occupational diseases have a major economic impact on society, from an economic and social point of view.

Also, the activity carried out at European Forum level has shown how important cooperation between European countries is. On June 28, 2007, the National House of Public Pensions, the Romanian insurer in case of work accidents and occupational diseases, became a full member of the European Forum. In Romania, the insurance for work accidents and occupational diseases is part of the social insurance system and is guaranteed by the state.

The activity in the field of work accidents and occupational diseases is organized at the level of the General Directorate in the National House of Public Pensions with territorial representatives at county level. Since Romania’s accession to the European Union, in 2007, the National House of Public Pensions, through the General Directorate Work Accidents and Occupational Diseases, was designated liaison body in the field of work accidents and occupational diseases.”



Pedro Pablo Sanz Casado (AMAT)

“AMAT joined European Forum in 1996, as an active member, to exchange information and share experiences in the field of Accident at Work and Occupational Diseases as well as to make Spanish mutualism known in the international order, as a paradigm of public and private collaboration.”

IMPRINT:

**The European Forum of Insurance against
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