

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

EU-OSHA Strategy 2025–2034



European Agency
for Safety and Health
at Work



Safety and health at work is everyone's concern. It's good for you. It's good for business.



1 Introduction

Protecting workers' occupational safety and health is a longstanding commitment of the EU.¹ The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) has a key role in the delivery of this commitment, together with the institutions, the Member States, social partners and other stakeholders.

The EU faces important challenges over the next decade to maintain a competitive economy while ensuring workers' rights to safety and health at work. No matter whether one looks at climate change, digitalisation,

demographic change, preparedness or the accession of new Member States, safety and health at work play a key role. If these issues are to be addressed successfully, it is essential that both new and long-standing risks to the safety and health of workers are prevented effectively. This Strategy sets out the direction and framework for EU-OSHA to be an effective contributor to meeting these challenges.

EU-OSHA is well-placed to help tackle these difficulties. Since its establishment in 1994, it has built a

¹ See particularly the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*, art 31 but also the *European Pillar of Social Rights* proclaimed at the 2017 Gothenburg Summit

and article 153 (1) (a) of the *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*.

wealth of experience and expertise, making it an authoritative source of knowledge on occupational safety and health. In order to gather knowledge and disseminate it, the agency has developed effective networks, in particular its national Focal Points and their networks that include social partners. The important role of EU-OSHA has been confirmed in successive evaluations and in feedback from stakeholders, recognising its contribution to key EU priorities in recent years.²

EU-OSHA's success also creates high expectations and, given that it is one of the smallest EU agencies, it is important to set priorities to ensure the greatest impact with the resources available. This Strategy sets out the priorities for EU-OSHA for the years 2025 to 2034. The Strategy and its priorities will be implemented through programming documents over the strategy period,

with achievements closely monitored and transparently reported.

This Strategy has been developed in close cooperation with the EU-OSHA Management Board, and with input from the Focal Points. They will both play a key role in delivering the Strategy and this shared ownership provides a strong basis for EU-OSHA's work over the next ten years.

Certain assumptions have been made when formulating this Strategy. In particular, that resources will remain constant in real terms over the period. If framework conditions change significantly, the Strategy may be reviewed.

The Strategy does not set out the occupational safety and health themes and topics that EU-OSHA will work on, as these are determined in the annual planning cycle reflecting EU policy priorities.

Despite improvements over the last decades, occupational safety and health challenges in the EU remain significant with serious consequences for the individual worker, companies and society.³ There are over 3,300⁴ fatal injuries per year at work and approximately 170,000 deaths from work-related illness.⁵ Workers and their families bear the main burden, but there is also an important impact on society in general, including costs equal to about 3.3% of GDP⁶ and restrictions on the labour force supply.

² For a recent significant confirmation of this, see the Commission Staff Working Document, *Evaluation of EU Agencies: Eurofound, Cedefop, ETF and EU-OSHA*, Brussels 27 September 2024, SWD(2024)222final.

³ Further data can be found in EU-OSHA, *Occupational safety and health in Europe: state and trends 2023* (2023).

⁴ Eurostat, *Accident at Work Statistics* (2023).

⁵ Takala J, Hämäläinen P, Sauni R, Nygård C-H, Gagliardi D, Neupane S, (2024), "Global-, regional- and country-level estimates of the work-related burden of diseases and accidents in 2019", *Scand J Work Environ Health* (2024:50(2):73-82).

⁶ EU-OSHA, *An international comparison of the cost of work-related accidents and illnesses* (2017).

2 Our mandate

EU-OSHA's mandate is clearly formulated in its founding regulation that was updated in 2019 when adopted by the European Parliament and Council.⁷ This is aligned with the mandate in the previous regulation but makes EU-OSHA's link to policymaking clearer. It is within this mandate that the Strategy in this document is formulated.

EU-OSHA's objective shall be to provide the Union institutions and bodies, the Member States, the social partners and other actors involved in the field of safety and health at work with relevant technical, scientific and economic information and qualified expertise in that field in order to improve the working environment as regards the protection of the safety and health of workers.

To that end, EU-OSHA shall enhance and disseminate knowledge, provide evidence and services for the purpose of policy making, including research-based conclusions, and shall facilitate knowledge sharing among and between Union and national actors.

Article 1 (2) of EU-OSHA's founding regulation

⁷ Regulation (EU) 2019/126 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019 establishing the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 2062/94.



3 How EU-OSHA works

EU-OSHA works with knowledge and information in a broad sense. This includes monitoring, analysing and anticipating developments in relation to occupational safety and health, sharing tools and good practices to prevent occupational safety and health risks; and raising awareness on occupational safety and health issues. These tasks complement regulation, enforcement, research and support to workers and workplaces provided by others.

From its inception, EU-OSHA was conceived as a networking organisation, leveraging key actors at national and EU level to achieve its impact. Of particular importance is the agency's unique network of Focal Points and their national networks.

Every Member State has appointed a national authority as a Focal Point with a national network that includes social partners to work with EU-OSHA. This 'Focal Point network' underpins the agency's capacity to deliver on its ambitious mandate despite its relatively small size, while reinforcing social dialogue at the national level.

EU-OSHA's success is therefore not only based on its development of high-quality products, but also on its capacity to leverage this broad network, fostering take-up of these products and delivering them to the end users. While the agency's networks are important across all its activities, they are crucial to the successful delivery of some products in particular, such as its awareness-raising campaigns and its resources for workplace risk prevention.

EU-OSHA has a proven track record of working hand-in-hand with its network and partners – and this is key to delivering an important impact across a broad range of areas. The tripartite nature of EU-OSHA's networks plays a significant part in this respect, which is why the agency prioritises working with its networks and partners to realise its full potential. Social dialogue is widely recognised as essential for successful action on occupational safety and health and it is integral to how the agency functions.

4 Vision for EU-OSHA 2025–2034

EU-OSHA's vision for 2025-2034 encapsulates the overarching goal of its contribution. This is not a goal that EU-OSHA can achieve on its own, and the agency will have to engage its networks and partners to achieve it. It is therefore important that this vision statement is shared by the agency's network and partners.

It is essential that the agency's horizon scanning has a dual focus. On the one hand there is a need to be proactive in addressing new and emerging risks deriving from major transitions in European society, such as digitalisation, climate change and demographic change. And, on the other hand, a host of well-known safety and health challenges at work persist, including risks to both physical and mental health.

Depending on the topic, there is a need for evidence and knowledge for policy-making and research; tools and resources that can support improved prevention of safety and health risks at the workplace; targeted network engagement of relevant partners to facilitate the exchange of information and raise awareness about risks and ways to prevent them. The engagement of relevant partners and key actors vary depending on what EU-OSHA works on but would typically cover the European Parliament, Council, Commission and agencies, Member States including labour inspectorates, social partners, research organisations, occupational health services, research institutes as well as specialised networks.

EU-OSHA's vision for 2025–2034

EU-OSHA's vision is to protect workers' safety and health by informing policy, supporting risk prevention, raising awareness and engaging key actors.



5 Strategic lines of action

Three strategic lines of action have been defined. They set the framework for EU-OSHA's operational work where there is a need for action and where the agency can have an impact on occupational safety and health in Europe. Together, the three strategic lines of action ensure the effective implementation of the tasks defined for EU-OSHA in its founding regulation and the

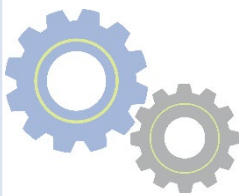
delivery of the priorities established by its Management Board in multi-annual and annual work programmes.

EU-OSHA's mandate as defined in the founding regulation is broad and ambitious, while the agency's resources are limited. It is therefore important to focus on the areas where EU-OSHA can maximise its impact.



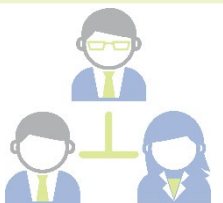
STRATEGIC LINE OF ACTION 1

Evidence and knowledge for policy and research



STRATEGIC LINE OF ACTION 2

Tools and resources for prevention



STRATEGIC LINE OF ACTION 3

Raising awareness and networking for a positive safety and health culture at work

The strategic lines of action reinforce each other, and this synergy is important to increase the impact of EU-OSHA's work. Focusing its work on these three strategic lines of action will place EU-OSHA in a strong position to actively contribute together with its tripartite network to current and future

EU policy priorities, such as the EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021–2027, the digital and green transitions, and the European Pillar of Social Rights. This Strategy will be reviewed if relevant EU policy priorities change.



5.1 Evidence and knowledge for policy and research

Providing evidence and knowledge in support of policymaking and research is one of the tasks given to the agency in its founding regulation. It is also a task that has grown significantly over the last decade, resulting in a stronger role for EU-OSHA in supporting policy-making.

In order to provide this evidence, knowledge and expertise, EU-OSHA will carry out a variety of research activities with EU-added value. The founding regulation gives the Focal Points an important role in providing data and information for these research activities. Through its primary research, where new data are collected across Europe, for example via workplace surveys, the agency will develop new insights on trends, compare across countries and sectors, as well as monitor the overall European picture. The agency will also undertake more thematic research on different topics, sectors and groups, applying a mix of methods to optimise insights and relevance. Research will aim at supporting both policy-formulation and policy-implementation. Finally, EU-OSHA will build on its extensive experience in foresight studies to anticipate new risks and support preparedness.

Across all of the agency's research, the methods applied have to follow high standards for the results and messages to be reliable and credible. This includes ensuring transparency on how it produces its results and conclusions.

Complementing its work to provide research-based products for policy-making and research, EU-OSHA will engage in actions to stimulate awareness, uptake and use of the products. EU-OSHA will proactively take action at the EU level, whereas uptake at the Member State level will be driven mainly by the Focal Points. While the primary focus will be on occupational safety and health policies, EU-OSHA will also aim at mainstreaming occupational safety and health issues into other policy areas where relevant.

What we aim at

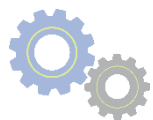


Providing evidence and knowledge on current, new and emerging risks regarding their impact on workplace safety and health and their prevention, to support policymaking and research.

What success looks like



- Supply of data and analysis of risks, health impacts and prevention options at EU and national levels.
- Active contribution to the formulation of - and delivery on - EU occupational safety and health policy priorities.
- Proactive identification of upcoming occupational safety and health policy challenges and opportunities.
- Promoting the incorporation of occupational safety and health in other policy areas.
- Delivery of credible products and expertise based on sound research methods which are relevant and useful for policy-makers and researchers.



5.2 Tools and resources for prevention

Promoting and facilitating the development of tools and resources that can support prevention of safety and health risks at work has been a longstanding priority for EU-OSHA. Providing solutions and guidance on how regulatory requirements can be implemented and thereby support compliance, in addition to identifying risks, is another key pillar of the agency's work.

In some cases, there is a need for new resources, such as with the COVID-19 pandemic, or working under extreme heat. However, in many instances there are already good practices, guidance and tools available across the EU, and EU-OSHA can facilitate their exchange as, for example, with dangerous substances.

In this area, EU-OSHA will work closely with intermediaries to achieve the desired impact. The agency can foster the exchange of good practices and resources but, in almost all cases, intermediaries play a key role in adapting them to national and sectoral needs. Therefore, an important element of the work under this strategic action line is the engagement of these intermediaries, particularly the Focal Points and their national networks, but also other stakeholders such as sectoral social partners.

Tools and resources must be practical and relevant, but equally they must be based on sound knowledge, research and expertise. In order to engage networks and partners, they have to see the resources provided by EU-OSHA as credible.

What we aim at



Promoting and facilitating the development of tools and resources to empower the agency's networks and partners to improve the prevention of safety and health risks in the workplace.

What success looks like



- Identification of good practices across Europe and making them available to the intended target groups.
- Promotion and facilitation of reliable, useful and relevant tools and resources allowing intermediaries to proactively prevent risks at work.
- Active engagement with targeted networks and partners that adapt and use EU-OSHA's resources.
- Making tools and resources available that match the pace of change at workplaces.



5.3 Raising awareness and networking for a positive safety and health culture at work

Raising awareness about occupational safety and health risks and their prevention is one of the strengths of EU-OSHA and complements other measures, such as regulation and enforcement, to improve occupational safety and health in Europe.

EU-OSHA will continue to deliver dynamic campaigns and develop impactful multilingual content to inform and engage its EU and national partners, supporting them and their tripartite networks to amplify messages that reach beneficiary audiences in workplaces. At the same time, strong networking and communication capacity will allow the agency to achieve the anticipated impact across all its activities.

But for this to happen, it is critical that EU-OSHA's networks and partners engage too. Thanks to their position at the heart of national networks and accrued communication expertise, the Focal Points will play a key role in delivering this at Member State level.

EU-OSHA will continue to prioritise support to - and engagement with - all its networks to promote a positive occupational safety and health culture, develop institutional capacity where necessary, increase the impact of the agency's work and, by facilitating the exchange of experiences, benefit those involved. The main focus will be on the EU/EEA area, but EU-OSHA will also engage with international partners on a more selective basis, as well as continue to support pre-enlargement efforts under specific programmes.

EU-OSHA will also strengthen its differentiated approach across its own digital platforms, activities and social media channels. It will increase leveraging of targeted media and widen the circle of communication partners. In this way, EU-OSHA will support partners, drive outreach and raise awareness of the agency's work to boost its impact and relevance.

What we aim at



Driving awareness-raising and networking actions to enable the agency and its stakeholders to foster a positive risk prevention culture at work.

What success looks like



- Engagement of the most relevant intermediaries in order to disseminate targeted messages and products, achieving impact across all three lines of action.
- Campaigning and promotion targeting clearly identified needs, priorities and groups with tailored tools, channels, products and messages.
- Effective networking that creates ownership among networks and partners as well as shared understandings and ultimately increases the impact of EU-OSHA's work.
- Maximising the potential of the Focal Points and their national networks by taking into account their needs or situation.



6 Good governance for a responsible, effective and inclusive agency

Over many years the agency has built a reputation as a professional and responsible organisation. Conscious that hard-won reputations can be lost in an instant and good governance is essential to avoid this, the agency will also strive to maintain the highest level of professionalism and to excel in social and environmental responsibility.

The most important resources required to implement the Strategy are its staff

and annual budget. These resources are limited and established by the ceilings provided in the EU Multiannual Financial Framework. This Strategy assumes that the agency's resources will remain largely stable over 2025-2034 and therefore, making the best use of them is crucial. In fact, resource constraints have several times been identified as the main factor preventing EU-OSHA from achieving an even bigger impact.⁸

⁸ See e.g. the Commission Staff Working Document, *Evaluation of EU Agencies: Eurofound, Cedefop, ETF and EU-OSHA*, Brussels 27 September 2024, SWD(2024)222final, page 15 where lack of financial

resources is listed as the primary hindering factor for a higher effectiveness and lack of staff resources as the second.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and technological developments in general are likely to have an impact on EU-OSHA's work. EU-OSHA will explore the benefits and advantages to make the best use of AI and new technologies, while at the same time take responsibility for the agency's performance. This will have to be done while also assessing the risks and

limitations associated with their adoption.

EU-OSHA as an organisation has an impact on both the environment and its staff. Achieving social and environmental sustainability are important horizontal objectives for the Strategy period and being an inclusive organisation is one important element of this.

What we aim at



Ensuring that EU-OSHA is an environmentally and socially sustainable organisation which makes good and responsible use of available resources.

What success looks like



- Implementation of actions towards environmental and social sustainability.
- Continued development of staff competencies and enhancement of organisational capacity to meet new needs.
- A workplace which supports its employees and remains attractive to prospective staff.
- Active participation of the Management Board in the oversight of the agency's plans and performance.
- Sound management of the agency's resources.
- Effective and timely delivery of adopted strategies and work programmes.
- Constructive cooperation with other agencies.
- Transparency and accountability regarding performance.

7 Our values

In addition to working within an established legal framework and towards strategic objectives defined elsewhere in this Strategy, the agency and its Management Board have agreed a number of key values that will guide everyone involved in implementing this Strategy – staff, management, Management Board, Focal Points and other networks.

In implementing this Strategy, EU-OSHA and its Management Board will aim at ensuring that the agency is:



RELEVANT AND TARGETED

EU-OSHA aims at having a significant impact on workers' occupational safety and health in Europe. To achieve that, the agency will direct its efforts towards activities that address the most important needs in the EU while also provide deliverables that are relevant and useful for its target audiences. Making this happen in a fast-changing environment will require innovative approaches and continued close dialogue with our stakeholders. Tripartism is of particular importance to EU-OSHA in order to achieve this, both in its governance arrangements and in its operational work.



RESPONSIBLE AND PROFESSIONAL

EU-OSHA wants to be exemplary in occupational safety and health and manage its staff in a way that respects their physical and mental wellbeing while fostering professional development. Towards the external world, EU-OSHA will aim at having a sustainable impact, particularly by reducing its environmental footprint and endeavouring to be a responsible organisation by promoting principles such as inclusion, diversity and equity.



RELIABLE AND TRANSPARENT

EU-OSHA will continue to be seen as a trusted partner. To achieve this, EU-OSHA will aim at providing deliverables which are regarded as credible and based on sound evidence and research. The agency will also aim at inspiring trust by being transparent about its working methods and about how it spends its resources.



RESPONSIVE AND PROACTIVE

EU-OSHA will work closely with external stakeholders and networks. It aims at being proactive and responsive to upcoming and developing needs and requests, while taking due account of the resources available. The agency will strive to provide knowledge and expertise in a timely manner which will require foresight, flexibility, innovation and adaptability.

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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, and employers' and workers' organisations, as well as leading experts in each of the EU Member States and beyond.

**European Agency
for Safety and Health at Work**

Santiago de Compostela 12

48003 Bilbao, Spain

E-mail: information@osha.europa.eu

<https://osha.europa.eu>



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