



**Joint position  
of EUPAN and TUNED  
On work-related stress in central  
government administrations**

**In the framework of the social  
Dialogue test-phase 2008-2009**

## 1. Background

Acting in the framework of their joint work programme 2008-2009 (Social Dialogue Test Phase), EUPAN<sup>1</sup> and TUNED<sup>2</sup>:

Recognize that work-related stress is a serious occupational health and safety hazard with important human, organisational and financial implications;

Consider the directive 89/391 on safety and health of workers at work and the European cross-sectoral Framework Agreement on stress at work (2004);

Recognize the duty of public authorities and employers to promote and enforce a safe and healthy working environment in cooperation with workers and trade unions;

Recognize that a good working environment is a precondition for healthy and attractive work places and for ensuring quality and efficiency in carrying out the job.

## 2. Objectives

The aim of the present joint position is to increase the awareness and understanding of work-related stress within central government administrations to identify, prevent and manage problems of work related stress.

## 3. Description of work-related stress<sup>3</sup>

Stress is a state, which is accompanied by physical, psychological or social complaints or dysfunctions and which results from individuals feeling unable to bridge a gap with the requirements or expectations placed on them. The individual is well adapted to cope with short-term exposure to pressure, which can be considered as positive, but has greater difficulty in coping with prolonged exposure to intensive pressure.

Moreover, different individuals can react differently to similar situations and the same individual can react differently to similar situations at different times of his/her life.

Stress is not a disease but prolonged exposure to it may reduce effectiveness at work and may cause ill health.

Stress originating outside the working environment can lead to changes in behaviour and reduced effectiveness at work. All manifestations of stress at work cannot be considered as work-related stress.

## 4. Identifying work-related stress in central government administrations

Identifying whether there is a problem of work-related stress requires a prior analysis of risk factors such as the ones identified in the European cross-sectoral agreement, including work organisation, working conditions, communication and subjective factors.

Furthermore, social partners in central government administrations can agree to establish indicators identifying work-related stress, taking into account their context (e.g. pace and scope of reforms,

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<sup>1</sup> EUPAN is an informal network of the Directors General responsible for Public Administration in the Member States of the European Union.

<sup>2</sup> TUNED is the Trade Unions' National and European Administration Delegation, representing state sector trade unions affiliated to EPSU ([www.epsu.org](http://www.epsu.org)) and CESI ([www.cesi.org](http://www.cesi.org)) and, based on country majority representativity criteria, GÖD-FCG, SLOVES and KSZSZ. The contact is [nsalson@epsu.org](mailto:nsalson@epsu.org)

<sup>3</sup> Extract of the description given by the European Framework agreement on work-related stress (2004)

possible tensions in the relationship with the public, work/life balance, demographic change, mismatch between resources and public service mission, quality of social dialogue).

## **5. Measures for preventing, eliminating and reducing problems of work-related stress**

On the basis of a prior risk assessment, different measures may be put in place or reinforced by social partners in cooperation with health and safety structures, such as:

- Take into account both physical and psycho-social risks in the context of risk prevention approaches
- Training of managers, workers and their representatives
- Management and communication measures
- Individual and team support
- Information, consultation and participation of workers and their representatives in change processes
- Improvement of working conditions
- Take into account gender equality and diversity

## **6. Implementation and follow-up**

EUPAN and TUNED will launch appropriate measures to promote the joint position (translation, dissemination...) from January/February 2009;

They will identify and promote interesting practices and good policies (June 2009);

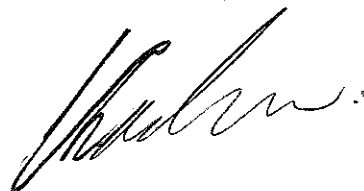
They will evaluate the results and study the perspectives in December 2009.

This joint position does not constitute valid grounds to reduce the general level of protection afforded to workers in the field of this joint position.

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