



## **EU Social Dialogue and the implementation of EU Social Dialogue Instruments, 22-23/05/12 in Tallinn, Estonia**

### **Action Plan of the Estonian Social Partners 2012-2014**

#### **1. Introduction**

This Action Plan contains the joint activities of the Estonian Employers' Confederation and the Estonian Trade Union Confederation in implementing the following three framework agreements:

Framework Agreement on Telework;

Framework Agreement on Work-Related Stress;

Framework Agreement on Harassment and Violence at Work.

#### **2. Representativeness**

The low representative status of social partners in Estonia makes it complicated to regulate local work life, including reaching joint agreements to implement the European level social partner framework agreements. Only 5–7% of Estonian employees have a trade union membership. The organisation level of employers is somewhat higher at around 20–30%.

#### **3. Extending of collective agreements**

According to the Collective Agreements Act, collective agreements may be extended by agreement of the parties only in the areas of wage conditions and work and rest time. This means that no legal instrument exists for implementing framework agreements by employers' or employees' confederations or other such organisations directly.

#### **4. Need for situational analysis**

Since the exact nature and the depth of problems is unclear, it is necessary to carry out a relevant analysis of the current situation. There appear to be fewer problems with the organisation and implementation of teleworking. In this respect, in most cases, a mutually suitable agreement is

reached as required. There are clearly many more problems related to work stress and harassment and violence at workplace, where employees themselves often don't even realise that the problem exists. In order to analyse these issues additional resources, both financial and manpower, are required.

## **5. Preparing and distributing guidance material**

The most effective method for achieving the objectives of framework agreements appears to be developing of good practices through guidance materials. Organised employers can thereby set examples to others and unionised employees can demand that good practices are followed. The guidelines need to adjust the content of framework agreements to Estonia's requirements and try and provide specific advice on a more practical level.

## **6. Training**

Training is especially effective as a measure for reducing work related stress. Management training is useful for improving work organisation and management skills and can in theory be of interest both to top and middle managers. Training courses on creating awareness and understanding of the nature of stress, on its possible causes and coping mechanisms could be popular among employees.

## **7. Changes in taxation policy**

All recreational sports opportunities offered by the employer to its employees and costs of health promoting events are all classed as fringe benefits and are highly taxed. Social partners are able to raise this issue with the government once again and request for a specific differentiation in the income tax regulation. Sports and promotion of healthy living would undoubtedly aid the improved mental health at workplaces.

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