



Mental Health at Work and Social Dialogue Lessons Learned from the IncreMe(n)tal Project

Maurizio Curtarelli, senior research project manager - EU-OSHA

Afternoon session - Stakeholders' perspectives and sustainability

26th February 2026

Psychosocial risks, stress and mental health



Other work-related risk factors

Physical load, heat stress, effects of chemical, etc.

Psychosocial risks

poor work design,
organisation and
management
unfavourable social
context of work

Work-related Stress

demands at work are
beyond
worker's capacity to
cope with them

Non work-related factors

major life events, serious illness, bereavement, etc.

Negative outcomes

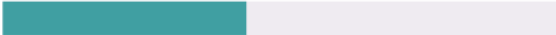
Emotional

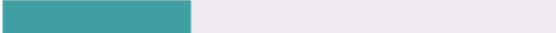
Cognitive

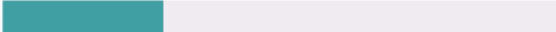
Behavioural


**Mental (and physical)
ill-health**

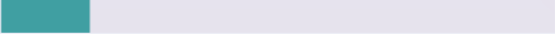
Share of workers reporting exposure to psychosocial risks EU27, 2025


Severe time pressure or overload of work
 **44%**

Lack of rewards (e.g. pay,
career opportunities, recognition)
for all the efforts put in their job
 **34%**

Poor communication or
cooperation within the organisatio
 **29%**

Lack of autonomy or lack of influence
over the workplace or work processes
 **17%**

Violence or verbal abuse from
customers, patients, pupils, etc.
 **16%**

Harassment or bullying
 **8%**



Higher exposure for workers
using digital devices

% of workers saying that the use of digital technologies for their main job...

EU27, 2025

determines the speed or pace of
their work **48%**

results in them working in isolation **30%**

increases their workload **28%**

reduces the opportunities to use their
knowledge and skills **19%**

reduces their ability to make decisions
about the methods they use or the ways
they do their work **16%**

makes their job tasks seem
trivial or useless **9%**



Algorithmic management EU27, 2025

% of workers saying that algorithms are used to...

EU27 workers

Share of
EU27 digital
platform workers:
5%

27%

...automatically
allocate tasks or
working time or
shifts to them

31%

26%

...have their
performance rated by
third parties
(e.g. customers,
colleagues, patients, etc.)

30%

26%

...give automated
instructions or
directions
to complete
their work

30%

25%

...supervise or
monitor the
work and
behaviour of
them personally

28%

EU27 digital platform workers

EU27, 2025

% of workers concerned that...



...climate change-related issues (e.g. extreme heat or extreme weather events) can impact their safety and health at work



...their current job and tasks will change due to measures introduced to prevent climate change-related risks



Work-related health problems

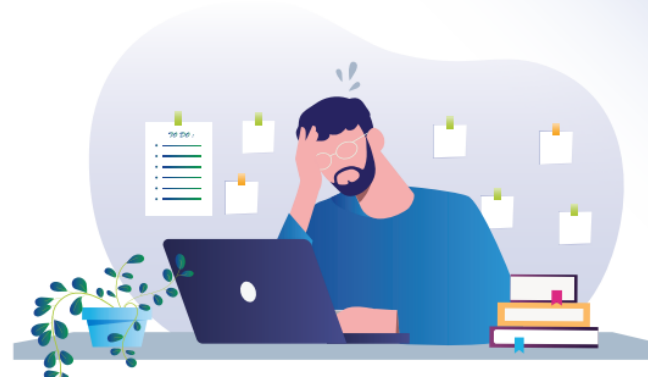
EU27, 2025

Overall, **65%** of workers experienced health problems caused or made worse by work in the last 12 months

More specifically....



of workers experienced **stress, depression or anxiety** caused or made worse by their work



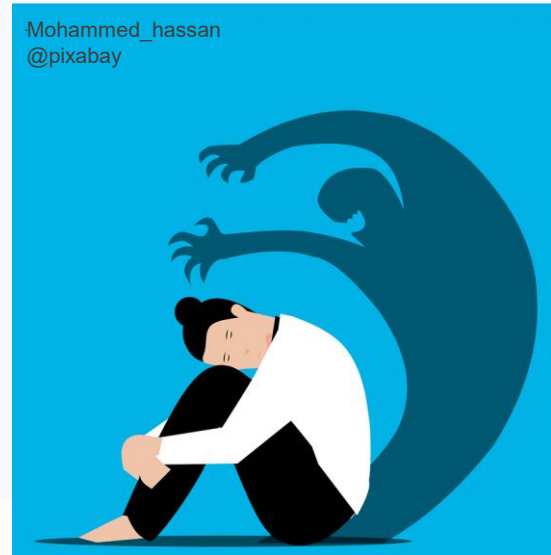
Overall fatigue



37%

Stress – consequences

- **Anxiety, Depression, Sleep disorders, exhaustion, fatigue...**
- **Increase in absenteeism**
 - Stress is one of the main causes of lost working days (Europe)
 - Stress-related sick leave tends to last much longer than sick leave caused by other problems
- **Increase in workplace accidents**
- **Mental health conditions leading cause of disability**
- **High staff turnover**
- **Overall poor business performance**
- **Healthcare costs**
- **Early retirement**



Economic impact

- **Spain:** between **11% and 27%** of mental disorders can be attributed to working conditions. Direct health cost estimated at **€150-€372 million** (UGT, 2013)
- **Germany:** job strain costs **€29 billion** annually; reduced performance estimated to cost twice that of absence (Bodeker & Friedrichs, 2011)
- Costs of **depression in Europe attributable to 5 Psychosocial Work Environment Factors** (2015): **€45-103billion** (H. Sultan Taïeb et al, 2022).
- **United Kingdom:** ‘work-related stress, depression and anxiety’ accounts for **37%** of work-related ill health cases and **45%** of days lost in 2015/16 (HSE, 2017)

Preventing and managing psychosocial risks

Preventing and managing work-related psychosocial risks is the cornerstone of good mental health at work

- **Primary level – sources of organisational stress**
 - Identify and tackle the stressors
 - Primary level 2 - promoting wellbeing at work
- **Secondary level – individuals or groups**
 - Identify and support individuals or groups in stressful situations
- **Tertiary level – the individual**
 - Provide support to stressed individuals
 - Return to work programmes

Mental Health at Work

PREVENT

Preventing and managing work-related psychosocial risks

Leadership & Participation

SUPPORT

Supporting workers going through professional or personal challenges

Culture of care & understanding

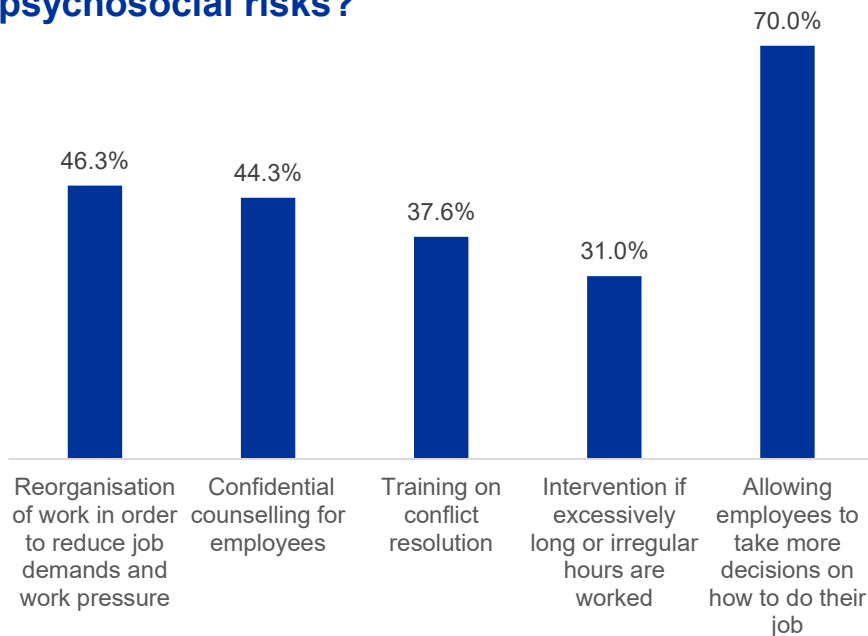
ACCOMMODATE

Designing workplaces that welcome differences and remove barriers to participation

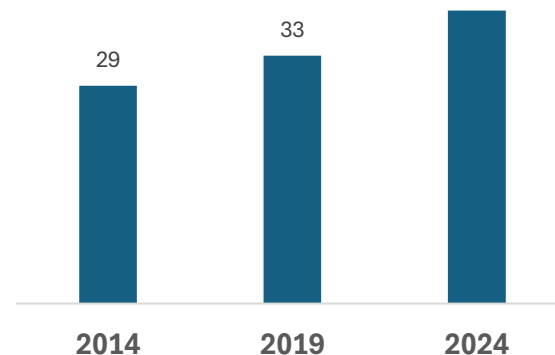
Inclusive workplaces & diversity

ESENER - establishments (EU-OSHA, 2024)

In the last 3 years, has your establishment used any of the following measures to prevent psychosocial risks?



Action plans to prevent work-related stress (EU-27)



Main drivers:

- Workers wellbeing
- Legal obligations

Psychosocial risks more difficult to manage than other OSH risks: 21%

Main difficulties:

- Reluctance to talk openly about the issue
- Lack of expertise or specialist support
- Lack of awareness

Psychosocial risk management



- **Risk assessment - same principles and processes as for other hazards**
 - Raise awareness and ensure common understanding
 - Identify hazards and those at risk
 - Evaluate and prioritise risk
 - Take action on preventive and corrective measures
 - Document, monitor and review
- **Worker consultation and involvement**
- **Manager support - training**
- **Information, communication, awareness raising**
- **Improve work environment, then look for individual measures**



Psychosocial risk management in workplaces



Legislative developments have a role influencing management of PSR

Implementation must be supported by other national, sectoral etc. actions

By key actors, including labour inspectorates, social partners, OSH experts



Guidance and practical support

Better understanding of the nature of psychosocial risks as an organisational issue needed

Carrying out risk assessment and implementing prevention measures



Dealing with stigma around PSR and mental health

Shaping company culture based on open communication and trust

The role of managers – increasing awareness, knowledge and skills

Importance of worker involvement

OSH overview on psychosocial risks (2022 – 2026)

EU-OSHA is running a **large-scale research programme** on work-related psychosocial risks and mental health at work, with the aim to:



Improve the understanding

of the underlying causes and effective prevention practices in various sectors and groups



Identify successful initiatives

to prevent and manage PSRs and promote mental health at work among a wide audience



Stimulate discussions

on national-level policy and preventive measures among policymakers and OSH professionals

Preventing psychosocial risks at work

- **How working conditions affect workers mental health, with a focus on new and overlooked occupational groups, sectors and areas.**
 - sectors with low PSRs awareness
 - highly affected sectors
 - neglected groups, precarious workers, vulnerable groups, diversity
 - New risk factors
 - Barriers to prevention
 - The positive aspects of a good working environment
- **Wider context**
 - European Commission Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health
 - European Strategic Framework on OSH
 - Developments in the Member States



TOGETHER FOR MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK

Preventing psychosocial risks at work

Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2026-2028

Priority areas

1. Psychosocial risk assessment and management

- better awareness and understanding, leadership, worker involvement, positive aspects.

2. Harassment, sexual harassment, and violence

- better awareness and understanding, consequences, good prevention practices, cyberbullying

3. Physical risks and mental health

- interaction between different risks, effects of physical risks on mental health, inc. agriculture and construction

4. Psychosocial risks in the health and social care sector

- high prevalence of PSR risks, overlooked groups within the sector

5. Working with mental health problems

- Inclusive workplaces, early intervention, return to work



Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2026-28

TOGETHER FOR MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK

Preventing psychosocial risks at work



Many thanks for your attention!

curtarelli@osha.europa.eu

© European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2026

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

For any use or reproduction of photos or other material that is not under the copyright of EU-OSHA, permission must be sought directly from the copyright holders.