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Factsheet for case SI-2020-12/439

Health and safety at work in the epidemic

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Country	Slovenia, applies nationwide
Time period	Temporary, 19 March 2020 - 31 May 2020
Type	Recommendation
Category	Protection of workers at the workplace – Occupational health and safety
Case created	10 April 2020 (updated 23 April 2020)

Background Information

Trade unions have been calling attention to the lack of health and safety measures at work since the outbreak of the epidemic. Workers who had to continue working in large groups or on assembly lines felt left behind. Trade unions reported cases where workers kept working close to each other with no safety equipment. Under the trade union pressure, the Minister of Health issued instructions for companies on how to implement health and safety measures at work.

Content of measure

Experts for occupational medicine participated in drafting instructions for companies, issued on 19 March 2020 by the Minister of Health. They recommended work at a slower pace; rearrangement of workplaces which would guarantee a safe distance between persons; organization of coming to work and leaving in a way that would avoid large gatherings; ban on smoking pauses and breaks which would lead to the creation of groups (Ministry of Health, Measures for health and safety at work during the epidemic). The Association of occupational, transport, and sports medicine also published their own more detailed instructions for companies at its website and offered consultancies on how practically implement safety measures in particular environments. It advised temporary shutdown of the production process if appropriate safety measures could not be adopted.

The Labour Inspectorate recommended work at home when feasible. When not, the Labour Inspectorate is checking if the company has adopted appropriate health and security measures, such as:

- a distance of two metres between workers or the use of safety equipment (masks, gloves, glasses);
- availability of soap, warm water, and disinfectant;

- regular cleaning and disinfection of surfaces in general use (hooks, bathrooms, keyboards, and so on);
- awareness about health and safety at work among workers;
- participation of an expert for occupational medicine in planning health and safety measures.

Use of measure

The Labour Inspectorate reported about receiving numerous complaints against violation of health and safety at work. On 19 March, the Labour Inspectorate announced more controls. In this domain, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia published an example of good practice from the Chinese owned company Hisense Gorenje, on how to adopt health and safety measures in production.

Actors, target groups and funding

Actors	Target groups	Funding
National government	employees All companies	Companies

Social partners

Role of social partners	No involvement
Form of involvement	Other

Trade union was campaigning for safety measures at work

Sectors and occupations

This case is not sector-specific.

This case is not occupation-specific.

Sources

- 18 March 2020: Labour Inspectorate, 'Delo na domu in zagotavljanje varnega in zdravega dela v izrednih razmerah' [Work at home – healthy and safe work in the state of emergency (www.gov.si)
- 18 March 2020: The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, 'Primeri praks ravnanja članov' [Examples of GZS members (www.gzs.si)
- 19 March 2020: Ministry for Health, 'Ukrepi za varovanje zdravja delavcev v času epidemije Covid-19' [Measures for health and safety at work during the epidemic (www.gov.si)

- 19 March 2020: The Association of occupational, transport, and sports medicine, 'Priporočila za zagotavljanje varnih delovnih pogojev v času epidemije COVID 19' [Recommendations for safe working conditions during the epidemic (www.zmdps.si)]
- 19 March 2020: The Association of free trade unions of Slovenia, 'Izbruh novega koronavirusa' [The outbreak of corona crisis (www.zsss.si)]
- 19 March 2020: Labour Inspectorate, 'Inšpektorat za delo napoveduje poostren nadzor' [The Labour Inspectorate announces stricter checks (www.gov.si)]