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CONCLUSIONS OF WHOLE REPORT

In the EU 7.8 million people are employed in the Horeca sector, which is one of the most important sources of job creation in the economy. Within this sector are found groups of people who are unable to work in other fields of employment for many different reasons.

This arises from the jobs which can be carried out without professional qualification; this sector offers the chance for a secure existence as an independent contractor, even without professional qualifications. Female workers, young workers and migrant workers represent a large proportion of employees, partly because of the low basic requirements, as well as the possibility especially for women to work part-time.

Few employees spend their whole professional life in the Horeca sector. Often people work in it during an apprenticeship, during study, or during temporarily limited transition periods. The share of seasonal workers amounts to between 26 % and 50 % of the total.

40 % of employees may be regarded as relatively unskilled (EU-15). At the same time the sector offers numerous apprenticeship opportunities for entrants, leading to internationally-accepted certification. In comparison with other sectors a professional qualification in the Horeca sector frequently offers the possibility to climb up to leading positions within three to five years, e.g. as restaurant manager or kitchen chef. Young, dynamic, flexible and above all highly-qualified skilled employees are rare and in demand in this sector.

Working conditions in the Horeca sector are characterised by high mental and physical demands. Night and weekend work, shift work, workplaces that allow standing only, lifting of heavy loads, forced postures, monotony and dealing with difficult customers are only a few typical characteristics. The number of hours worked exceeds the average of other sectors, as the working hours of employees in the Horeca sector are almost always in the leisure time of the remaining population, so that social activities are difficult. The ability to deal with mental stress is a frequently described aspect of the work-specific requirements of the sector.

In terms of occupational accidents, slips, trips and falls, as well as cuts and burns, represent the largest share. In the field of occupational diseases musculoskeletal disorders and skin diseases predominate. The hazards and risks, the difficult working conditions, and work-related accident and disease rates are described in many places for the Horeca sector; branch-specific prevention strategies in Europe are, on the contrary, hardly described.

What are the barriers to developing successful, branch-specific prevention strategies which are suitable for the Horeca sector? On closer inspection of sector characteristics, the challenges may be clearly recognised.

The sector is dominated by restaurants, bars and catering enterprises. More than 90 % of companies are micro-enterprises employing 10 employees or fewer. Many of the companies are family-run. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and especially micro-enterprises are difficult to reach due to their number and their structures. All organisations and institutions dealing with health and safety in practice are aware of this problem, and many promising approaches have been developed which deserve the title 'good practice' for SMEs.

What are the special characteristics of the Horeca sector? As well as the prevalence of small enterprises, there are specific Horeca problems as follows.

- Horeca enterprises have to face a very high fluctuation, both among their employees and among the enterprises themselves. In Germany, for example, about a quarter of

all enterprises close down every year, while the total number of enterprises rises. Often continuous care, lasting for a longer period of time, is not possible.

- Entrepreneurs do not need professional education for the establishment of a company. Almost half of all employees in the Horeca sector have no special professional training concerning products, handcraft skills, machines and tools, and they do not know the hazards involved.
- The sector is traditionally international and many migrant workers find employment in it. Language barriers in connection with regulations complicate their implementation.
- Employees in small enterprises in general, and enterprises in the gastronomy and the hotel sector in particular, are rarely members of trade associations.

The policy review illustrates the fact that branch-specific policies are an exception in the Horeca sector. The discussion and introduction of different policies, e.g. HACCP or the smoking ban, has focused the attention of state institutions and prevention service providers more intensely on this sector, and in some cases has resulted in further measures in the field of health and safety. Looking at the different approaches that can be observed in Europe, it is often difficult to assess when a measure or a limited prevention programme can be described as a 'policy'.

In the case-study reports numerous excellent examples have been given of successful, practice-oriented prevention. The challenge will be to implement these approaches, not only for a few single enterprises but for the great number of enterprises and employees.

The future challenge is to develop prevention strategies which protect the employees in the Horeca sector effectively. The following factors of success seem to be important here:

- Strategies should be oriented to the specific requirements of this sector and to the specific target group (e.g. female workers, young workers, migrant workers, entrepreneurs, etc.).
- Reliable partners must be found who serve as champions and promote an implementation throughout the country (employers' and employees' associations, vocational schools etc.). Networks should be created for this purpose.
- Enterprises and employees have to be made aware of health and safety topics and as far as possible included in the development of measures.
- Motivated enterprises have to be able to fall back on practice-oriented measures.
- Methods of analysis have to be developed in order to identify enterprises with a high risk potential, and there should be practical support for putting in place adequate prevention measures.
- The development of practice-oriented practical aids and tools should support enterprises in implementation.