Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Stress at work

Motion for a resolution
tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

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This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

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Stress at the workplace has been found to be the second most common occupational safety and health concern in Europe. According to a 2005 survey of the European Agency on Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), 22% of Europeans experienced stressful situations at their workplace. A recent ILO Global Study on stress at work shows that the concepts of work-related stress and psychological risks are unclear for many, even though the impact on workers' health can have the most serious consequences. Indeed, managers often lack knowledge and understanding of this issue, and occupational health services do not sufficiently focus on preventive policies.

Stress at work emerges when the knowledge and abilities to cope of an individual worker or of a group are not matched with the expectations of the enterprise. Demographic changes, technological developments and new forms of work organisation have led to new standards in the contemporary world of work. In societies severely affected by the economic crisis, precarious employment is common and competition between employees is rising due to fewer job opportunities. This context of uncertainty and pressure creates work environments which are favourable to the development of stress symptoms.

Consequently, action should be taken at national and European levels concerning this widespread public health issue which has detrimental effects not only on employees' physical and mental health, but also affects workforce performance and leads to huge financial costs for enterprises The Parliamentary Assembly should address this issue with member States and promote the development of healthy work places in the interest of all.