



SAFETY AND HEALTH OF TEMPORARY AGENCY WORKERS AND CROSS-BORDER WORKERS



European Campaign on Occupational Safety and Health of Temporary Agency Workers and Cross-Border Workers 2017-2019

“Safe and healthy work for temporary jobs”

Temporary agency work is an important topic in occupational safety and health. Not only because temporary agency workers belong to the group of vulnerable workers and the number of occupational accidents is high but also because the employment rate is increasing in temporary agency jobs. Senior Labour Inspector's Committee (SLIC), having recognized the importance of this issue, has planned to conduct a European campaign.

Employment in temporary work agencies⁽¹⁾ in the EU has increased rapidly during the last decade. The average number of hours worked by temporary agency workers across Europe in January 2017, compared with the same period the year before, increased by 7,2% ⁽²⁾.

The temporary agency workers count among a group of workers who may be vulnerable in the occupational health and safety context. As shown in the report “Temporary agency work in the European Union”, the incidence of occupational accidents among temporary agency workers is higher than among other groups of employees⁽³⁾.

“They experience a higher incidence of workplace injury and a greater likelihood of more severe injuries. Temporary agency workers also experience economic pressures more than other types of precarious workers. They are vulnerable to disorganization risks such as mismatched placements, lack of familiarity with host workplaces and communication breakdowns in the triangular employment relationship between temporary agency workers, the temporary work agency, and the user undertaking. These contribute to workplace risks and create barriers to improving experience ⁽⁴⁾.”

One of the most important reasons for the high number of occupational accidents is that the temporary agency workers are new in performing specific jobs and therefore less

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2008/104/EC on temporary agency work, including inter alia the definitions of a temporary work agency (Article 3.1b), a temporary agency worker (Article 3.1c), a user undertaking (3.1d) and a temporary work assignment (3.1e).

⁽²⁾ Agency Work Business Indicator, World Employment Confederation.

⁽³⁾ Report on the “Temporary agency work in the European Union”, Eurofound 2007. The example concerns France, Germany and the Netherlands.

⁽⁴⁾ Source: Industrial Relations - vol. 66, n° 3, 2011, p. 397-421; Underhill and Quinlan.



informed and trained about specific occupational safety and health prevention (OSH). In fact, they are not well informed about health risks at work compared with other employment types (5).

According to the 2016 research report (6) from EUROFOUND, 12 of 29 countries (the 28 EU Member States and Norway) reported fraudulent use of temporary agency work.

Within this context, the Senior Labour Inspectors' Committee decided to launch an information and enforcement Campaign entitled "Safe and healthy work for temporary jobs". Aim of the inspections visits from October 2017 to October 2018 is to improve the protection of safety and health of workers employed by temporary agencies and also by user undertakings.

This campaign is an opportunity to inform and raise awareness among the temporary agency worker, the temporary work agency, and the user undertaking about their obligations on occupational safety and health protection. The most relevant points in the OSH protection approach are to inform the temporary workers on:

- the workplace conditions of the user undertaking before their assignment;
- OSH training in general and in particular on the risk occurrence in workplaces;
- health surveillance and special medical examination with regard to dangerous risk at the workplace;
- the advantages of the risk assessment and the resulting safety measures, such as the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE);
- the need to notify the occupational accidents and diseases to authorities.

The sectors where temporary agency workers are more frequently employed are: construction, agriculture, food manufacturing, metal industry, transport/logistics, health care, hotel/restaurant/catering (HoReCa) and cleaning services.

This campaign includes a pilot experience on cross-border enforcement that will target the temporary work agencies in case of posting workers. An effective collaboration between different national Labour Inspectorate is foreseen.

Key dates:

- Campaign kick-off seminary: 20 and 21 September 2017 in Luxembourg
- Member States National campaign: October 2017 to October 2018
- Final conference: May 2019 in France

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⁽⁵⁾ European working conditions survey, Eurofound 2000.

⁽⁶⁾ Eurofound (2016), *Exploring the fraudulent contracting of work in the European Union*, Publications Office of the EU, Luxembourg.