



Occupational Health & Safety Authority

Media Release

World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2015

Join in Building a Culture of Prevention on Occupational Safety and Health

27.04.15

- Each day, an average of 865,000 people will either die or be injured at their place of work.
- Every year, 2.8 trillion US\$ dollars are taken up by lost working time, treatment, compensation and rehabilitation of occupational injuries and diseases.

(International Labour Organisation, 2015)

With a focus on such and other statistical data, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) will tomorrow mark the World Day for Safety and Health at Work with the theme 'Join in Building a Culture of Prevention on OSH'. It particularly aims to highlight the concept that ensuring decent, safe and healthy working conditions and environments is everyone's responsibility.

"The Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) in Malta has since its inception stressed about the need of concerted action in the field of OHS. It is about time that we move away from the erroneous concept that a government authority has to take action in this field for anyone to be instigated to do anything. OHS should be embraced by all as a positive investment in all workplaces," Said Dr Mark Gauci, Chief Executive Officer of the OHSA.

The commemoration of the World Day emanates from the Workers Memorial Day started in America and Canada in 1989 to commemorate dead and injured workers annually on 28 April, a date which the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and Global Union Federations converted into a global event endorsing also the concept of sustainable workplaces and work.

It is also seen as a day to raise international awareness on occupational safety and health among trade unions, employers' organizations and government representatives alike. The ILO acknowledges the shared responsibility of key stakeholders and encourages them to promote a preventive safety and health culture to fulfill their obligations and responsibilities for preventing deaths, injuries and diseases in the workplace, allowing workers to return safely to their homes at the end of the working day.

“The OHSA has undertaken various campaigns on safety both at a national level as well as in collaboration with international entities such as the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, the Senior Labour Inspectors' Committee and the International Labour Organisation. Nevertheless, awareness-raising from our part alone is not enough. There has to be real and effective commitment from all stake holders, be it the government, employers in the private sectors, self-employed, OHS representatives and specialists, unions and workers. No employment contract should cost workers their lives or impair them in any way, sometimes for the rest of their lives,” Dr Gauci said.

It has been proved in various countries that concrete social dialogue, collective bargaining between employers and unions, enterprise management and commitment coupled with effective legislation and a powerful enforcement authority all contribute towards high safety standards. Although statistics show a downward trend in the rate of occupational accidents and fatalities, each statistic represents in fact a human life – a person who went out to work healthy and either did not make it back home or else ended up injured at work.

The 28 April is also the International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers organized worldwide by the trade union movement since 1996. Its purpose is to honour the memory of victims of occupational accidents and diseases by organizing worldwide mobilizations and awareness campaigns on this date.

“The ILO is using the slogan ‘Remember the dead; fight like hell for the living’. This slogan is so very apt. We should never forget the people who lost their lives at work – and our deepest condolences go to the families of such victims. However, it is not enough to take stock of the situation once a year. This has to be a principle effectively adopted by everyone, acted upon seriously and more importantly fostered as the way forward. The time for complacency is over. The time for concerted action by everyone is now,” Dr Gauci concluded.

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