



Media Release

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European Week for Safety and Health at Work – Lighten the Load

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) is an umbrella term encompassing several impairments of bodily structures, such as muscles, ligaments, joints, tendons, bones, cartilage, nerves, and localised blood circulation system. MSDs are a problem that affects not only individual workers, but also businesses, economies, and society, as they are one of the leading causes of disability, sick leave, and early retirement.

Indeed, the 2015 European Working Conditions Survey showed that approximately 60% of workers report having an MSD, with backache and upper limb pain being the most common. Moreover, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work's 2019 ESENER study showed that three of the four most frequently identified risk factors were 'repetitive hand or arm movements', 'prolonged sitting' and 'lifting or moving people or heavy loads'.

In view of this, 'Lighten the Load' is the theme for this year's European Week for Safety and Health at Work organised between 25-29 October by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work in all the EU member states in collaboration with other countries and entities.

The Occupational Health and Safety Authority in Malta will organise a webinar on the subject on 29 October. Apart from information on the campaign, the webinar will tackle issues such as the preventive and protective measures to be implemented regarding MSDs, the effects that MSDs have on vulnerable workers as well as information on the methodology of carrying out an MSDs risk assessment. This can be followed online free of charge through OHS's Facebook page (@ohsamalta) on the day.

This European Week is part of a wider two-year campaign launched at a European level last year. Preventing work-related MSDs is not only a legal obligation imposed on employers by OHS

legislation, but it is also vital for the sustainability of work, especially in the context of an ageing workforce and the increase in employment rates among older age groups.

The campaign aims to raise awareness of work-related MSDs and to provide employers with the necessary tools and information on how work-related MSDs can be prevented like any other hazard. The campaign will also highlight how any arising work-related MSD can be prevented from becoming chronic by early interventions. In this regard, EU-OSHA has dedicated a new website with abundant information and helpful resources on work-related MSDs <https://healthy-workplaces.eu/en> Most of the information is also available in the Maltese language.

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