

DGUV Kompakt



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Markus Hofmann, Head of the Social-Politics Division of the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB)

TOP STORY

International Cooperation with Bangladesh

Delegation attends three-week seminar in Germany



The DGUV is helping Bangladesh to make jobs in the textile industry safer

It was April three years ago that the devastating accident in the Rana Plaza textile factory occurred – a wake-up call for the international community, which prompted many new initiatives. Occupational safety and health has now taken on an increasingly important role for Bangladeshi industry. There are plans to establish a statutory accident insurance system. Germany has been supporting Bangladesh in its endeavours since 2010. In April 2016, a delegation from Bangladesh visited Germany for a second time.

In a three-week seminar, the delegation consisting of politicians, government officials and representatives from both employers and employees, worked on topics related to statutory accident insurance and workplace prevention. The seminar was initiated by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internatio-

nale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). It was conducted in cooperation with the DGUV, the Institute for Work and Health of the DGUV (IAG) and the German Social Accident Insurance Institution for the energy, textile, electrical and media products sectors (BG ETEM).

The participants were able to learn about the structures of the statutory accident insurance system in Germany, to ex-

“The information and experiences they have collected will help them to actively engage in OSH when they return home.”

**Dr Joachim Breuer,
Director General, DGUV**

change ideas and information with German experts in occupational safety and health and to experience social dialogue in Germany. “The information and experiences they have collected will help them to actively engage in OSH and to make jobs safer when they return home – particularly in the textile industry”, said DGUV Director General, Dr Joachim Breuer.

Cooperation between Germany and Bangladesh is based on several agreements signed in 2014 and 2015 by the Bangladeshi Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), the BMZ and the ILO as well as between MoLE, the GIZ and the DGUV. The signatories intend to push ahead with plans for a statutory accident insurance system in Bangladesh and to promote sustainable and safe production conditions. The delegation’s visit to Germany will make a major contribution to this and is a positive sign – very much in the spirit of World Day for Safety and Health at Work on 28 April.

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Towards better workplace integration management in companies

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Number of reportable workplace accidents dropped last year



Taking responsibility

Dear reader,

You and I – all of us are consumers. We buy and consume, often without thinking about it. Accidents such as the collapse of the Rana Plaza textile factory in Bangladesh three years ago always make that painfully clear. But every one of us has a responsibility, everyone can do something within their own means. For the German Social Accident Insurance, this means making available our expertise and know-how in order to improve local conditions in countries where social security and OSH still do not have the type of high standards that are desired. This is the reason why we have worked for many years with the government and other organisations in an intensive dialogue with Bangladesh. And not just at a top level. Much more it's about raising the awareness of those directly involved at a hands-on level and providing them with advice and training. Only then can the situation be improved for workers in the factories there. And a lot has already been done: there are plans to establish a statutory accident insurance system such as we have in Germany. We are also seeing improvements in the workplace. But this is not enough. As recently made clear in a statement by the EU Commission, there is still a great deal to be done. We see it as our obligation to keep up our efforts and thus, fulfil our responsibilities.

Dr Joachim Breuer
Director General of the DGUV

“Mobile work requires clear rules and regulations”

Talking with Markus Hofmann, Head of the Social-Politics Division of the Federal Executive Board of the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB)

The German Trade Union Confederation (DGB) is the voice of the unions when talking with policy-makers, parties and associations at federal, state and local level. It also coordinates union activities for its members. Union representatives for workers also have equal representation on the autonomous administration committees of the accident insurance institutions, where, together with employer representatives, they look for good, practical solutions and co-determine the overall direction of the organization as a whole. DGUV Kompakt spoke with Markus Hofmann about issues related to OSH and social security as well as future challenges in the world of work.

Mr Hofmann, you have been Head of the Social-Politics Division of the Federal Executive Board of the DGB since 2015 and are responsible, among other things, for the area of social accident insurance. What topics are of particular importance to you?

What we are particularly concerned about is the development of legislation for occupational diseases. In addition, we see with concern the quite slow development of measures and tools for prevention work in the areas of dust, noise and psychological strain. Naturally, the issue of how to sustainably and efficiently protect workers from the effects of hazardous substances, particularly carcinogenic substances, is very important to us. These are two areas where legislature and law-makers need to be more proactive and commit to more effective protection measures. For quite some time, we have been calling for the burden of proof in procedures for identifying occupational illnesses to be eased and for the official occupational illnesses list to be expanded. We also want to see more transparency in the decisions made by the medical expert advisory board.

A motto of the DGB is: “Social is only what results in good work and provides social security”. What does this mean exactly and what role does the social accident insurance play in this?

The question is easy to answer: Good work is work which doesn't make you ill and which is characterised by a large degree of worker participation and self-

termination. In addition, good work is work that not only provides workers and their families with their livelihood, but also allows them to participate in social life and, in the event of unemployment, illness, long-term disability or retirement, means that they have social security so that there is no social decline.

Healthy working conditions, participation, good wages and good social security are distinguishing characteristics of good work. Unfortunately, the reality is that many workers are far removed from this as shown by the DGB Good Work Index every year.

The world of work is changing dramatically, especially in terms of digitisation. What opportunities and risks do you see for workers?

Digitalisation is fundamentally changing the world of work. It brings new opportunities for humanising work, particularly by relieving heavy physical work, but it also places new demands on occupational safety and health, particularly with regards to psychological stress factors. Employees' actions are completely transparent and due to internal performance benchmarking and external rankings they will come under far more pressure than they do today. The expectations that come with this result in workers having to permanently prove themselves. Therefore, digitisation presents us with new challenges for workplace safety as well as data protection. But there are also new possibilities for



Photograph: kantver/fotolia

Mobile, flexible work raises many new questions for OSH

greater flexibility at work, including working hours and working location. This benefits many workers. However, mobile work requires clear rules and regulations which must be anchored in the Workplace Ordinance so that there is no further blurring of the boundary between work and private life and the mental stress that comes with this. In particular, we must clamp down on the constant reachability of employees.

The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) has initiated the Work 4.0 dialogue process. What are your expectations regarding this and what course do politicians and OSH experts need to set for the future?

A common basis of trust needs to be created for the Work 4.0 dialogue process, otherwise we won't manage to successfully create a digital change process in the world of work where "Work 4.0" is accepted and its full potential is realised. In order to ensure this, there are certain prerequisites that are essential. Workers and their representatives need to be given suitable opportunities for participation and involvement, particularly when introducing digital technologies, safeguarding employment and training as well as

when creating new work processes. Furthermore, privacy must be guaranteed with the help of an effective law for employee data protection. This includes secure networking and use of data, for example, in human-machine interactions or working in the cloud as well as legal protection of the scope for flexibility for companies and employees, particularly with regard to new forms of work such as mobile work. In addition, occupational safety and health must be binding – particularly in view of work that is increasingly flexible, labour-intensive and mobile. Finally, we need mandatory minimum standards which cover new forms of platform-based work and platform economics in order to avoid distorting competition and creating even more precarious employment conditions.



Markus Hofmann
Head of the Social-Politics
Division of the Federal
Executive Board of the
German Trade Union
Confederation (DGB)

TOPIC

Workplace Integration Management

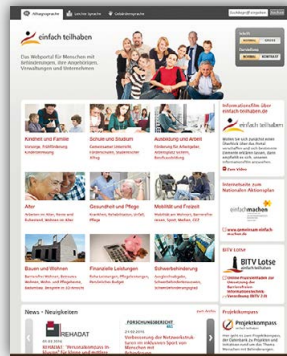
Since 2004, companies have been required by law to offer workplace integration management to employees who have been ill for more than a total of six weeks in a given year. However, not all German companies know about this approach. The German Social Accident Insurance wants to better promote workplace integration management in companies and has initiated a project to run between 2016-2018.

The DGUV's project "UV-Unterstützung BEM" (English: Accident Insurance supports Workplace Integration Management) addresses the wish of the federal government, which is laid down in a coalition agreement, to improve workplace integration management and to make it more binding. In addition to prevention work, social accident insurance is also responsible for compensation and rehabilitation. As part of this responsibility, it helps companies to integrate employees back into the workforce who have been unfit for work due to a workplace accident or occupational illness for a longer period of time. The German Social Accident Insurance wants to use its expertise and the close relationship that the accident insurance inspectors and prevention consultants have with companies to encourage and support workplace integration management beyond what is stipulated by occupational safety and health. As part of the project, the existing activities of the accident insurance institutions will be further developed and quality criteria for consulting will be compiled. In addition, networks will be established for a practical "one-stop service" and for better cooperation with other providers of social security. "Workplace integration management is best done jointly and is something that companies want. It is a cross-cutting issue for prevention and rehabilitation", said Dr Joachim Breuer, Director General of the DGUV. This benefits both companies and employees because maintaining the workforce is not only a social imperative but also an economic one.

RECOMMENDED

Topic of inclusion: information portal

Inclusion is an important process which aims to offer all people equal participation in society and to break down individual and collective barriers. The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has created the website www.einfach-teilhaben.de as a way of helping to promote inclusion. It is aimed at people with disabilities and their families, at employers and at administrations. The website is divided into nine topic areas and provides free information, research, brochures, addresses and links to other sites. The content of the website is available in everyday German, plain German and sign language. Text can be read out and the size and contrast of the font can be changed. This means that people can get barrier-free access to information on the topic of inclusion.

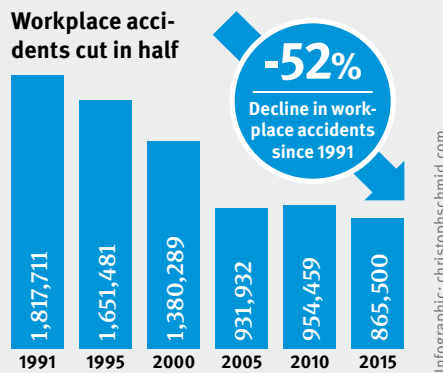


More online at:
www.einfach-teilhaben.de
(German only)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Number of workplace accidents drops in 2015

The number of reportable workplace accidents dropped last year by 0.5% from 869,817 to 865,500. This was evidenced by preliminary figures for the number of workplace and school accidents occurring in 2015 published by the DGUV in the middle of April. There was a particularly strong decline in the number of fatal accidents which fell from 483 to 438. This is the lowest number since these figures have been recorded. However, the number of commuting accidents and fatal commuting accidents slightly increased compared to 2014. Of note is the significant 7.6% increase in cases of suspected occupational diseases, which is attributable to the



Since the reunification of Germany, the number of workplace accidents has dropped by more than 50 per cent

inclusion of four new diseases in the official Occupational Diseases List. Fortunately, the number of school accidents and school commuting accidents fell. However, the number of fatal school-related accidents rose from 42 to 60. But 16 students alone died in the Germanwings crash in France last spring.



Illustration: Karo Rigaud

Beautiful New World of Work?

► What opportunities and risks does digitalisation offer the world of work today and in the future? Approaches to help design Work 4.0 to be safe and healthy can be found in the new brochure “New Forms of Work – New Forms of Prevention”.

To download the free brochure in English, visit www.dguv.de/publikationen and enter 12422 into the search field “Begriff oder Bestellnummer” on the right-hand side.

IMPORTANT DATES

8 – 11 May 2016
8th International Conference
on Occupational Safety
and Health
ISTANBUL
www.issa.int > events

10 – 11 May 2016
Corporate Health Convention 2016
STUTT GART
www.corporate-health-convention.de

16 – 17 June 2016
ASU Prevention Congress 2016
“Prevention in the world of work”
LEINFELDEN-ECHTERDINGEN
www.asu-kongress.com

NUMBER OF THE MONTH

1,072

Certified Disability Management
Professionals (CDMP) ...

are currently deployed in German companies for the optimal reintegration of employees on extended sick leave. In 2015, the DGUV trained 167 CDMPs.

LEGAL INFORMATION

Published by: Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung (DGUV), Dr Joachim Breuer (Director General); The DGUV is the umbrella association of the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions for the public sector and for trade and industry

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Layout: Christoph Schmid, www.christophschmid.com

Publishers: Helios Media GmbH, Friedrichstraße 209, 10969 Berlin, www.helios-media.de

Printed by: DCM Druckcenter Meckenheim

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