

# Barcelona Declaration

However, mechanisms should be provided at supranational level, which enable all our countries to learn from each other and use diversity as a source for innovation. It is important that these mechanisms create an appropriate balance between statutory and formal infrastructures, and use non-governmental and informal arenas for joint learning and action.

Another need in many European countries is related to the lack of knowledge on methods for analysis and implementation of workplace health promotion. Here, ENWHP will provide a European "toolbox" to support wider dissemination and implementation of good workplace health practice.

Finally, real progress in terms of the level of implementation in practice depends on whether more decision-makers and potential investors can be convinced of the benefits of investing in workplace health promotion. This requires close co-operation between researchers, practitioners and decision-makers, in order to ensure that scientific evidence and good practice information can guide decisions on strategies, policies and budget allocation.

## A new alliance for change: Action points

The Member States are invited

- To encourage the development of common strategies, policies and processes that will lead to improvements in the health of people at work, healthier lifestyles and reduced inequality in workplace health;
- To ensure effective partnership between the various public bodies at central, regional and local levels with regard to workplaces, thus improving communication and co-ordination between Occupational Safety and Health and Public Health sectors;
- To ensure that public health agencies give a high priority to promoting workplace health
- To support the implementation of national fora and networks for promoting workplace health, involving all relevant national stakeholders such as social partners, representatives of governments, enterprises, and others with a view to creating supportive infrastructures for information exchange and concerted action;
- To stimulate and support training and research on workplace health promotion.

The European Institutions are invited

- To support co-ordination between established national infrastructures for workplace health promotion;
- To help ensure that good practice knowledge in one region in Europe can be accessed from all workplaces in Europe;
- To become a model of good practice for inter-sectoral and cross-disciplinary policy development in Europe.

# Barcelona Declaration on **Developing Good Workplace Health Practice in Europe**

## Secretariat of the ENWHP

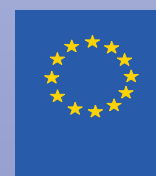
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European Network for  
Workplace Health Promotion



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EN EL TRABAJO



MINISTERIO  
DE SANIDAD  
Y CONSUMO

# Barcelona Declaration on Developing Good Workplace Health Practice in Europe

## Introduction

The Barcelona Declaration is based on the results of the 3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference on Workplace Health Promotion, which was held in Barcelona on June 17-18, 2002. The conference was jointly organised by the Spanish Ministry of Health and Consumer Protection, the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the European Commission, and the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP).

The mission of the Barcelona Conference and ENWHP was to disseminate good workplace health practice in Europe, and to encourage all stakeholders involved to support the implementation of the vision “healthy employees in healthy organisations”.

ENWHP comprises members from all EU Member States, from the three EEA countries and from the candidate countries. The network has been consistently supported by the European Commission, under the Health Promotion Programme.

## Paving the way for improved workplace health practice

Sustainable prosperity and social justice depend on a high level of health protection in the European Communities. Good workplace health practice is a fundamental prerequisite for both economic and social success in Europe.

The Spanish EU Presidency (January-June 2002) took the lead in highlighting the benefits of investing in workplace health promotion, in order to respond

to current and future challenges to public health and health at work, at national and European level.

The European Commission laid the foundations at European level, by implementing a programme of Community action on health promotion, information, education and training within the framework for action in the field of public health.

Various communications from the European Commission, and European Council conclusions in the past, have underlined and recognised the significant role of social and economic factors as determinants for population and public health.

In particular, the Commission Communication of 20 June 2001 on “Employment and Social Policies: a Framework for Investing in Quality” identified the promotion of health at work as one of the dimensions of quality in work, which in turn has been established as the key concept with regard to the modernisation of the European social model.

The new Community action programme in the field of public health aims at health promotion and disease prevention, by addressing health determinants across all policies and activities, which include the workplace as an arena for the new health strategy.

## No public health without good workplace health

The level of health protection within the European Communities is influenced by a broad range of factors, which include individual behaviour and lifestyle, the health care system, social and economic factors, the environment, and biologi-

cal factors. Various policies and actions outside the health care system have a significant impact on public health.

The world of work, and the way that working life is organised in our societies today, is a major, and perhaps the strongest, single social determinant of health. Individual health practices are shaped by our workplace cultures and values. The increase in mental health disorders can only be understood in the context of increasing psycho-social stressors and strains at the workplaces. Smoking and alcohol consumption are deeply rooted in our daily working life, and can only be tackled through health promoting workplaces, which have incorporated respective policies and values. Workplace health is not confined within the factory walls. The workplace has major impacts on the health of families and communities.

The world of work contributes substantially to the increasing costs of our health care systems. The most important cost factors can be related to psycho-social factors of work organisation, and carrying heavy loads. There is strong evidence that workplace health promotion significantly reduces the burden of work-related diseases, and supports healthy practices and individual well-being at work.

In the changing world of work, the workplace is an important arena and forum for public health. One person’s home or community facility is another person’s workplace. European citizens expect that their children will grow up safely, with healthy schools and healthy workplaces.

## Good workplace health practice – driver for social and economic success in Europe

The “Business Case” for investment in workplace health promotion has been understood by successful organisations. They realise that a healthy workforce and a healthy workplace are the foundations for sustainable economic success. In the context of the transition to the knowledge society, and the growing service sector in our economies, the role of the workforce becomes even more important. It is vital, and increasingly recognised, that only healthy employees enable enterprises and our societies at large to develop innovative capacities which ensure survival within the globalised competition.

The challenge for Europe is to become the most innovative and dynamic region in the world, and thus to develop a new balance between economic efficiency and social cohesion. This challenge can only be met by combining technical and economic innovation with social innovation. Health and all its various dimensions, including workplace health, has turned into a strategic asset for our communities to reach this goal. “No innovation without health and workplace health promotion” is the basis for a successful strategy for preparing European industries and other businesses to respond to the new challenges.

## Responding to the current and future challenges for workplace health

Despite the available evidence, and clear benefits of investing in workplace health, so far only a small number of enterprises have begun to implement

comprehensive workplace health policies and strategies. In particular, small and medium sized enterprises, who form the backbones of our economies in terms of economic growth and employment, have considerable difficulties in integrating good workplace health practice into daily working life. In addition, public sector organisations have only recently started to adopt comprehensive workplace health policies, as part of ongoing public sector reform in many countries in Europe.

Another challenge is linked with the enlargement process in the European Union. New countries are preparing themselves to become Member States of the union; many efforts are necessary to ensure sustainable development, based on a high level of health protection in all regions of Europe.

Ongoing changes in working and non-working life in our communities require new strategies and new partnerships between the traditional stakeholders. However, good practices which ensure a high level of health protection, including workplace health, exist and can be demonstrated. The European Network for Workplace Health Promotion has successfully identified and disseminated models of good practice for workplace health promotion in larger private sector companies, small and medium sized enterprises and public administrations. This European good practice knowledge confirms the belief that investments in workplace health pays off: for employees and their families and communities, for enterprises, and for society at large.

## The Way Forward: building supportive infrastructures for the implementation of good workplace health practice

Europe includes various countries, traditions, values, experiences, successes and failures. One of its biggest strengths is the high level of diversity, the existence of different and meaningful experiences. Further improvements in workplace health as part of public health depend on our capacity to make use of this wealth of knowledge. In particular, new mechanisms for effective dissemination and implementation of good practice knowledge are needed.

ENWHP is responding to this challenge by initiating and supporting networking and partnership building, both at national level and between Member States. National fora and networks linked together at European level will invite all stakeholders – users and consumers, service providers, academia and policy makers – to work together, share knowledge and good practice and agree on joint action, towards the common vision “Healthy Employees in Healthy Organisations”. Each country needs to develop its own agenda for workplace health improvement. Starting points, needs and traditions are different and unique, and therefore require specific responses.

