

Press Information



Berlin, 11th November 2009

By 2020 anxiety disorders and depression are expected to become the second and third most important cause of human illness. The campaign “Work. In Tune with Life. Move Europe”, promotes mental health at work.

Contrary to the current trend of falling sickness rates, absenteeism due to mental problems has quadrupled – and is still increasing. The signs that may indicate depression, range from feelings of sadness to apathy, low self esteem and concentration problems but also physical disorders such as weight loss, insomnia or pain. An employer should not avoid talking to an employee out of misconceived feelings of consideration when they notice behavioural changes – also for economic reasons. According to estimates, the costs of mental illnesses are responsible for a loss of three to four percent of the gross national product in the European Union, mainly through loss of productivity.

The causes of mental problems are manifold. Growing pressure to perform and the increasing demand for flexibility are putting employees under intensified pressure. At the same time, the social understanding of mental problems is growing and the diagnosis of emotional problems is better.

The 8th Initiative carried out by the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP), “Work. In tune with Life. Move Europe”, aims to underline the importance of promoting mental health throughout Europe. This initiative seeks to make Europe a place where healthy employees can create healthy companies. Leading European companies in 20 countries will undergo a neutral evaluation of their health promotion activities and present their own good practice. In 2009 and 2010 the focus will be on promoting mental health. The campaign is coordinated by the ENWHP Secretariat at the BKK Bundesverband in Essen.