



Toward CEMR-EPSU Guidelines for well-being at work for local and regional governments

DRAFT FINAL DOCUMENT

of the joint project “New forms of service delivery for municipality, the contribution of social dialogue and good practice for well-being at work”

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Local and regional governments play a double role: as employers, they are responsible for the health and safety of their employees and for identifying and addressing together with trade unions health and safety problems; as public authorities, they fulfil certain tasks that ensure the health and safety of their communities (e.g. regulatory functions). This ‘dual role’ of local and regional government is distinctive.

Current austerity policies in local and regional government provide an important context. Budget reductions have led to cuts in the number of jobs as well as increased workloads when there is a failure to replace workers. Some local authorities have outsourced public services so that workers are moved to a private sector employer.

This may have implications for the economic security of the workers as well as increased work pressures and new forms of work organisation. All these changes are recognised as affecting the health of individual workers. These changes may also affect the quality and/or availability of services that citizens rely on for their well-being.

In terms of organisational change in the workplace, there is growing evidence that its impact on the health of workers – and especially more vulnerable workers – is underestimated. Initiatives in local and regional government to improve well-being and workers’ involvement in work organisation can be an alternative to traditional forms of restructuring.

Local government is also changing the way in which services are delivered with more demand for higher qualified workers. This means existing workers can lose out of new employment opportunities that may arise if their skill profiles do not match.

Greater take-up of training and life-long learning, including ‘on the job’ learning by all workers and managers, must be a common objective. Demands for new skills, for example linked to digitalisation of services also put pressure on workers and managers to update their competences.

Furthermore, social partners should play a strong role in the promotion of more age-friendly policies through exchanges of good practices and sharing information materials, toolkits etc. National framework remains important (funding, pensions and retirement schemes).

Social partners are able to negotiate solutions. Collective agreements and social dialogue can provide contributions to the current employment challenges. Social partners should also make sure that there are more apprenticeship schemes of good quality in local and regional government.

Negotiating positive forms of flexible working can support workers and managers in adapting to caring responsibilities, financial needs, and career aspirations over the life-cycle. Flexibility should be jointly agreed and in line with the long-term objective to have high quality services and sustainable jobs in the sector.

Local and regional government employers should collect data on the demographic profile of the workforce, including in outsourced services, identifying the future implications of changes in composition of different age groups.

*CEMR and EPSU as social partners therefore would like to take action and build a social dialogue framework for the well-being of local government workers and guidance for employers to look at following themes:*

- Promote and share good practices to identify problems, design solutions and evaluate outcomes;
- Recognise the importance of developing good social relationships at work, but also in the community;
- Carry out health impact assessments before carrying out organisational change. Particular attention should be paid to specific groups (e.g. waste workers, administrative workers...) and specific processes (e.g. digitalisation). The 'precautionary principle' should guide the introduction of new work processes;
- Gather data on the occupational health of employees and emerging health concerns;
- Recognise gender differences in occupational safety and health problems and develop strategies that recognise these differences;
- Assess developments in new ways for managers to manage workers in different ways and to be more flexible;
- Inform new initiatives with effective communication for all stakeholders involved.