

CHRONIC DISEASE & WORK

WHAT IS THE SITUATION?

The prevalence of chronic diseases and disabling conditions has been growing in Europe over the past decades due to an increasingly ageing population.

86%

of all deaths in Europe are due to chronic diseases



Chronic diseases lead to the premature death of more than 550,000 people of working age annually across the EU



1/3 of the European population aged 15+ and 25% of the working age population live with a chronic disease

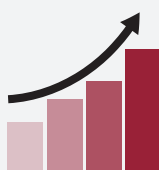
The employment rate of people with one or more chronic conditions, especially aged +50 yrs, is much lower than for those who do not suffer from any condition



Beyond the direct costs of healthcare (€700 billion in the EU), chronic diseases generate indirect costs for workers, employers and the society. Chronic diseases have a significant impact on labour supply in terms of workforce participation, hours worked, job turnover and early retirement.



Chronic disease can result in increased sick leave, unemployment, or early retirement, and thus increased welfare reliance for disability



Retaining the experience and knowledge of a worker who risks to be lost to permanent sick leave can be a critical factor for business outcomes

The EU and several Member States support the employment of people with chronic diseases through anti-discrimination legislations or frameworks and strategies for people with disabilities. However policies do not specifically respond to the needs of people with chronic diseases nor aim to improve their employment; and lack an adequate focus on the needs of the caregivers

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE LABOUR OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC DISEASES



1.

Invest in the prevention and earlier detection of chronic diseases to fight the epidemic



2.

Integrate primary and specialist care to strengthen chronic disease rehabilitation, recovery and employment



3.

Put in place adequate policy frameworks and incentives to support the employment, return-to-work or retention at work of people with chronic diseases



4.

Ensure appropriate training of employers on the issue of chronic diseases and working conditions and promote awareness at the work place

EXISTING POLICY FRAMEWORKS PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE EU AND MEMBER STATES TO ACT :

- UN Sustainable Development Goals including Goal 3 on Health and Well-Being
- EU Treaties: EU role and responsibility in health (Article 168 TFUE) & objectives of full employment and social progress in Europe (Article 3 TUE)
- Europe 2020 Strategy with priorities on investment, growth and job creation
- European Pillar of Social Rights
- EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020

1. INVEST IN THE PREVENTION AND EARLIER DETECTION OF CHRONIC DISEASES TO FIGHT THE EPIDEMIC



Effective regulation on the major risk factors of chronic diseases under the Health in all policies approach



Increased investment in prevention



National strategies for health promotion and prevention



EU-wide awareness campaign on chronic diseases and risk factors such as a European Chronic Diseases Awareness Day



Comprehensive EU Action Plan based on the Health in all policies approach, to support Member States' efforts on chronic diseases

2. IMPROVE THE INTEGRATION OF PRIMARY AND SPECIALIST CARE TO STRENGTHEN CHRONIC DISEASE REHABILITATION, RECOVERY AND EMPLOYMENT



Integrated health services with a patient-centred and a multi-disciplinary team



National health strategies including return-to-work, work retention, work-related costs and management of chronic conditions at the work place



Rehabilitation programmes incorporated in a patient's treatment plan



Appropriate training of healthcare professionals on multi-disciplinary team work and on informing and involving patients in rehabilitation programmes and referral to work-related counselling



Communication activities to improve understanding of the benefits of rehabilitation programmes



IT solutions to foster communication and information transfer between health and social care providers

3. PUT IN PLACE ADEQUATE POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND INCENTIVES TO SUPPORT THE EMPLOYMENT, RETURN-TO-WORK OR RETENTION AT WORK OF PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC DISEASES



National workplace health strategies including rehabilitation, retention of work and return-to-work interventions for companies



National chronic diseases guidelines and recommendations to support employers and employees coping with chronic disease conditions in the workplace



Policy frameworks allowing to combine a share of sick leave benefit with wages



Financial support to companies for: conducting workplace arrangements; investing in innovative business models to facilitate the inclusion of people with chronic diseases and implementing employment plans



Effective application and monitoring of anti-discrimination legislations



National and local employment support/reintegration agencies and counselling agencies



EU guidelines on workplace health promotion and work retention aimed at businesses and employers



EU Employment and Chronic Diseases Award for companies



Exchange of good practices in the management of workers with chronic illnesses and promotion of evidence-based interventions

4. ENSURE APPROPRIATE TRAINING OF EMPLOYERS ON THE ISSUE OF CHRONIC DISEASES AND WORKING CONDITIONS, AND PROMOTE AWARENESS AT THE WORKPLACE



Educational modules on health and mental health promotion, disease prevention and chronic disease management at the workplace in curricula in higher/professional education as relevant



Voluntary educational sessions in the workplace on risk factors for chronic diseases and life with a chronic condition



National awareness campaigns and initiatives to help promote health in workplaces and reduce stigma and discrimination



EU-led online interactive stakeholder platform to promote and disseminate initiatives aimed at enhancing chronic disease awareness at the workplace

Putting in place these actions will make significant contribution to achieving the sustainable employment component of the Europe 2020 Strategy in particular the objective of "achieving a 75% employment rate for 20-64 year olds throughout the EU"

ecda

United to reverse the rise in chronic disease

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