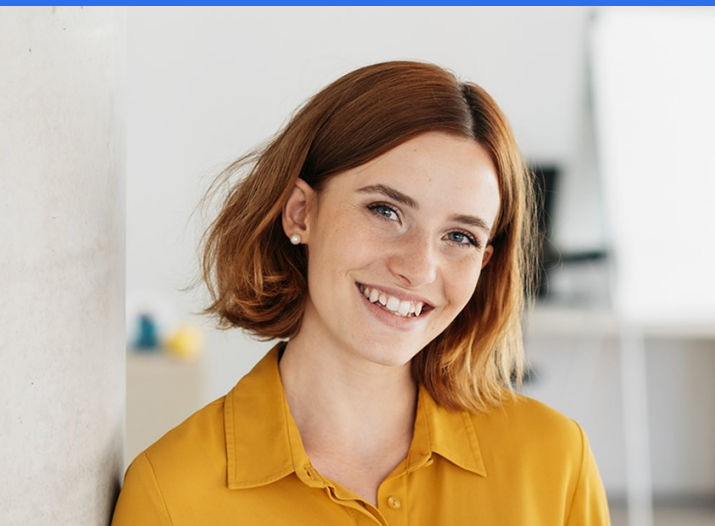


2026
**Industry
Report**



Modern Occupational Health and Safety in Office Environments

ERSTE 

Developed in cooperation with:

CIOP  **PIB**

 **PAŃSTWOWA INSPEKCJA PRACY**

PCS

 **KONFEDERACJA
LEWIATAN**

**GROW
SPACE**

 **medonet**

 **ibs**
instytut
badań
strukturalnych

 **KRAJOWE CENTRUM
PROMOCJI ZDROWIA
W MIEJSCU PRACY**
INSTYTUT MEDYCYNY PRACY
IM. PROF. J. NOFERA

kaucyjscy



2026 Industry Report

Modern Occupational Health and Safety in Office Environments

Expert insights and recommendations

The report is based on presentations and workshops with health and safety management practitioners during the 3rd **Meeting of Occupational Health and Safety Experts for Administrative and Office Workplaces**, held on 25 October 2025. Individual interviews with experts included in the report were conducted between January and April 2026.

Edited by: **Małgorzata Furtak**

Project group: **Beata Jędrecka, Ewa Krawczyk, Anna Skibicka, Piotr Niedziela**

Language editing: **Gabriela Kruczkowska**

Graphic design: **Sebastian Sokołowski**

Typesetting and layout: **Katarzyna Gubernat**

Translation into English: **Tomasz Żamejć**

Content support and preparation: **GrowSPACE Foundation**

Report partners:

- **Central Institute for Labour Protection – National Research Institute (CIOP-PIB)**
- **National Labour Inspectorate (PIP)**
- **PCS Paruch Chruściel Stępień Kanclerz**
- **Lewiatan Confederation**
- **GrowSpace**
- **Institute for Structural Research**
- **Medonet**
- **National Centre for Workplace Health Promotion at the Nofer Institute of Occupational Medicine in Łódź**
- **Kalicińscy**

Initiator and organiser of the Expert Meeting: Erste Bank Polska S.A.

Members of the organiser's team:

Małgorzata Furtak - Head of the Health and Safety & Wellbeing Office

Beata Jędrecka - Chief Health and Safety Specialist

Agnieszka Domaradzka - Senior Health and Safety Specialist

Patrycja Chrzan - Health and Safety Specialist

Katarzyna Gubernat - Senior Health and Safety Specialist

Matylda Kawczyńska-Siwa - Wellbeing Expert

Katarzyna Błaszczuk - Health and Safety Specialist

Marta Świderek - Health and Safety Specialist

Daniel Trybus - Senior Health and Safety Specialist

Mateusz Starke - Health and Safety Expert



Table of Contents part 1

Introduction

Dorota Strojowska	6
-------------------------	---

INTRODUCTION: Voices of Leaders

Agata Roziel	9
Nadia Winiarska	9
Beata Kubida	10
Kamila Włoszczak	10
Krzysztof Puchalski	11

1. The Modern Health and Safety Manifesto

Introduction: Why did we need the Manifesto? Beata Jędrecka	12
Elements of modern health and safety in practice – expert comments. Key expert insights and recommendations	14
Putting people first in practice – Katarzyna Sobieraj	15
Mental well-being = physical well-being in practice – Diana Żochowska	16
Respect for diversity in practice – Anna Walaszczyk	17
Values over rules in practice – Daniel Trybus	18
Building the health and safety brand in practice – Mateusz Starke	19

Table of Contents part 2

2. Practices, challenges and development directions based on the expert session

<u>Health-promoting activities (Physical Health)</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>Psychosocial factors (Mental Health)</u>	<u>27</u>
<u>Tasks arising from the duties of the health and safety function</u>	<u>31</u>
<u>Training and communication for employees</u>	<u>34</u>
<u>Training and communication for managers</u>	<u>37</u>
<u>Work models (remote, hybrid, distributed structure, global)</u>	<u>41</u>
<u>Optimisation and digitalisation of health and safety processes</u>	<u>44</u>

3. Challenges of modern health and safety: practical expert advice

<u>AI in health and safety – smart use of technology for a safer workplace – Łukasz Podgórski ...</u>	<u>49</u>
<u>Workplace stress is often not your problem, but an organisational problem – Zuzanna Kowalik</u>	<u>52</u>
<u>Emotional health and safety at work – your right to a safe mental environment – Karolina Kanclerz</u>	<u>56</u>
<u>The silver workforce. Why the 50+ generation is changing the rules of modern health and safety – Agnieszka Krawczyk-Dąbrowska</u>	<u>58</u>
<u>Competencies of the future – Karolina Pawłowska-Cyprysiak</u>	<u>61</u>

Table of Contents part 3

4. Health and safety is a genuine requirement arising from regulations, needs and trends. Practical guidance

<u>#1 EU requirements, directives, the Constitution and legislation – the manager’s role in promoting modern health and safety – Agata Sucharska</u>	<u>64</u>
<u>#2 Occupational safety as one of the pillars of ESG – Michał Wróblewski</u>	<u>66</u>
<u>#3 A sense of safety as the foundation of employee experience – Olga Biczal</u>	<u>67</u>
<u>#4 EVP rooted in safety – how health and safety becomes an employer promise – Celina Prinz...69</u>	<u>69</u>
<u>#5 Building a culture of care for health and safety – when health and safety becomes a mindset, not a procedure – Małgorzata Furtak</u>	<u>71</u>
<u>Report summary and market context – Ewa Ulicz</u>	<u>73</u>

5. Supplement

<u>National Labour Inspectorate: Psychosocial risks as the missing pillar of a modern labour protection system – Marcin Stanecki</u>	<u>77</u>
<u>The future of occupational safety: how CIOP-PIB’s free tools help organisations build modern health and safety - Agnieszka Szczygielska</u>	<u>84</u>

6. Experts

Introduction



Dorota Strojowska,
Managing Director of the Business
Partnership Division,
Erste Bank Polska

At Erste Bank Polska, we believe that safety begins with trust – in the organisation, in others, and also in oneself. We translate the motto “Believe in yourself” into everyday practice by forging a culture in which employees feel safe not only physically, but also psychologically, have the space to express themselves, voice their needs, and co-create solutions.

Care for occupational health and safety is one of the key commitments of every employer. Today, however, we understand it more broadly than before – as the conscious shaping of a working environment in which people are truly at the centre.

The responsibility of managers includes ensuring working conditions that comply with regulations, maintaining infrastructure and developing competencies. However, modern health and safety is more than a system of rules and procedures. It is a value-based mindset.

The Modern Health and Safety Manifesto, as summarised in the 2026 Report, reflects a shift away from a command-and-control culture towards a values-based culture. We move from “you must” to showing why it matters. We inspire informed choices and build responsibility rooted in understanding, not just obligation.

This report is the result of cooperation between experts and practitioners whose knowledge, courage and openness have contributed to the development of good practices that address the challenges of today’s world of work.

I am delighted to share it with you. I trust it will inspire the continued strengthening of a safety culture based on values, courage and trust in people.

Modern Health and Safety Manifesto

People first

- People and their physical and mental safety come before business
- We build health and safety awareness among employees
- We cooperate, share knowledge and experience, and support each other
- We treat colleagues the way we would like to be treated

Mental wellbeing = **Physical** wellbeing

- We believe that health is a single whole
- We equally promote working conditions and behaviours that support both physical and mental wellbeing

Respect for **age** and **diversity**

- We apply principles of equality, transparency, and inclusion

Value over rules

- We focus on value added by applying health and safety in practice rather than enforcing compliance

Building the **health** and **safety brand**

- We ensure that health and safety keeps pace with the times



Voices of Leaders



Agata Roziel

Director of the Strategic Partnership
Department, Erste Bank Polska
“People First”

“My entire HR career has led me to one enduring belief: procedures, regulations, and systems are important, but people are at the heart of every effective health and safety practice. At Erste Bank Polska, “People First” is our management philosophy, one that translates directly into engagement, trust, and results. Organisations that put people before metrics build a culture in which safety becomes a value rather than an obligation. After all, balancing performance with strong human relationships is the foundation of lasting change”.



Nadia Winiarska

Deputy Director of the Labour
Department, Lewiatan Confederation
“Respect for age and diversity”

“Workplace diversity is not a challenge to be managed – it is an asset that too often remains untapped. The experience of older employees and the energy of younger generations do not compete – they complement each other. Respecting age diversity means designing the working environment in a way that enables everyone to work safely and effectively at every stage of their career. In this report, you will find evidence that inclusive health and safety does more than protect – it helps build stronger organisations. Join us and discover how diversity becomes a source of strength”.



Beata Kubida

Manager of the ESG & Sustainability
Team, Erste Bank Polska
„Value over rules”

“Within an ESG framework, health and safety is no longer seen purely as a regulatory obligation, but becomes a genuine organisational value co-created by all employees. In particular, within the social (“S”) dimension, this means conscious care for physical and mental well-being, as well as building a culture of responsibility and respect. From a governance (“G”) perspective, this translates into transparent processes, leadership engagement, and measurable objectives, while the environmental (“E”) dimension reinforces the elimination of physical hazards affecting human health. In this context, the “value over rules” principle marks a qualitative shift – from enforcing compliance to building awareness and shared responsibility”.



Kamila Włoszczak

Director of Strategic Leadership
Department, Erste Bank Polska
„Building the health and safety brand”

“For decades, health and safety has suffered from an image problem – it has been associated with rules, penalties, and dull training sessions. It is time to change that. Building the health and safety brand is a strategic decision: when employees perceive health and safety professionals as partners rather than controllers, everything changes – from hazard reporting rates to engagement in safety culture. The health and safety brand is an investment that pays off in trust, talent retention, and corporate reputation. This report demonstrates that this transformation is already underway. Be part of it.”



Krzysztof Puchalski

sociologist, PhD, Assistant Professor at the National Centre for Workplace Health Promotion, Nofer Institute of Occupational Medicine

“For years, health and safety has focused on the body – ergonomics, injuries, and accidents. It has protected against physical, chemical, and biological hazards and risks. Today, we know this is an incomplete picture. Stress, burnout, isolation, cognitive overload, as well as dysfunctional relationships (discrimination, aggression, harassment, and bullying), are equally significant to employees’ health and safety – and consequently to organisations – as an unguarded machine. Health, however, is not only about risks, but also about enabling factors that support well-being and effective functioning, including supportive workplace design, empowerment, recognition, and a sense of purpose. Research clearly shows that mental and physical health are inseparable, and that interventions in one area produce effects in the other. Modern health and safety must therefore operate on both fronts simultaneously. This report demonstrates how this can be done effectively. I invite you to explore it and join the discussion”.

Background: Why did we need the Manifesto?



Beata Jędrecka,
Chief Health and Safety
Specialist,
Erste Bank Polska

Manifestos are not created in times of calm. They emerge when something important needs to be redefined, when the old language no longer describes reality and the old tools stop working. This is exactly the moment that health and safety finds itself in today.

For years, occupational health and safety was associated mainly with orders, prohibitions and documentation. With training sessions that had to be “passed” and inspections that had to be “survived.” That approach had its time and served its purpose, but that time has passed. Today’s working environment is too complex, too human and too dynamic to be managed solely through the lens of regulations. That is why the idea for our Manifesto was born.

The Modern Health and Safety Manifesto is a public declaration of intent by a group of experts who have been working in this field for years and who, each from their own perspective, see that change is not only possible, but necessary.

What matters most to us?

Five values that have become the compass guiding the design of this Report and every action that stems from it.

1. **First:** people matter more than metrics – we put physical and mental safety above short-term business goals.
2. **Second:** health is a single whole – there is no physical health without mental health, and vice versa.
3. **Third:** diversity is an asset – we respect the age, experience, and individual needs of every employee.
4. **Fourth:** values change behaviour more effectively than rules – we want people to take care of themselves because they understand why they do it, not because they have to.
5. **Fifth:** health and safety merits recognition, as it safeguards what matters most.

The Manifesto, however, is only the beginning of the journey. The document itself sets the direction, but it does not show how to get there. That is why the accompanying Report is more than just a collection of data. It is a practical guide to putting the principles of the Manifesto into everyday practice. How can we build health and safety awareness among employees dispersed across Poland? How can we convince executives that mental well-being is not a benefit, but an investment? How can we implement a safety culture in an organisation that, until recently, treated health and safety as a necessary evil? These questions – and many others – are addressed in the following chapters.



Elements of modern health and safety in practice

Key expert insights
and
recommendations



„Putting people first in practice”

Katarzyna Sobieraj,
Director of the
Development Office,
Erste Bank Polska

“People first” is, for me, a daily practice. It shapes how I respond to mistakes, how I make development decisions, and how I stay mindful of whose voice I hear first. I start with the person – not to put business second, but because without people, business simply does not work.

Research shows that organisations adopting a “people first” approach achieve higher productivity and greater employee engagement¹. At the heart of this is psychological safety – the ability to say “I don’t know” or “I made a mistake” without fear of judgement. This, in turn, fosters effectiveness and innovation, as confirmed by global analyses showing that well-being and trust translate into better performance, lower turnover and a greater willingness among employees to become actively engaged².

In the Development Office, we translate these insights into action. We support leaders in building psychological safety through workshops and webinars based on real-life situations. We ensure that new skills can be applied immediately.

We place strong emphasis on a culture of openness during regular meetings, both at team level and across the entire division. In development, I use mentoring and peer-to-peer learning, which increases opportunities for knowledge sharing. I pay particular attention to middle managers, as they are the ones who shape the day-to-day atmosphere within teams.

Is it simple? Not always. The greatest challenge is often balancing “here and now” pressures with long-term thinking about people. However, I believe that it is precisely in such moments that the true value of the “people first” principle becomes most visible.

Sources:

¹ Impact International (2025). Leading into Tomorrow – Leadership Playbook.

<https://www.impactinternational.com/leadership-playbook>

² Aristotle Performance (2024). Project Aristotle: Google’s Data-Driven Insights on High-Performing Teams. aristotleperformance.com



“Mental well-being = physical well-being in practice”

Diana Żochowska,
Health Business
Development
Director,
Ringier Axel
Springer
Polska

Physical and mental health are two equally important pillars of well-being. If one is disrupted, it automatically affects the other. Therefore, organisations that care about their employees should provide, to an equal extent, solutions focused on prevention, diagnostics and support in regaining health in both the physical and mental domains.

Today, considerable attention is paid to mental health; however, aspects of building mental resilience in everyday work and management are often overlooked. The greatest impact on psychological well-being in the workplace comes from the organisational and team atmosphere, alignment of tasks with competencies, and active support for employee development through regular feedback – both appreciative and constructive. Even the best solutions available in the market, applications, expert-led webinars or free psychological consultations provided by external companies, cannot replace an organisational culture that is focused on genuinely caring for employee well-being.

Such an approach, however, requires organisational focus, the preparation of managers, and the management of well-being through objectives, in the same way as business performance is managed.

Well-being should not be an addition to organisational culture, but its foundation. It should set the operational rhythm of teams and be embedded in the natural cycle of how the organisation functions. This can only be implemented if the management board is personally committed to shaping such an approach. Companies that understand this first will gain an advantage over those that fail to integrate their strategy and operations with the physical and mental well-being of employees.



“Respect for diversity in practice”

Anna Walaszczyk,
Organisational
Culture
Expert,
Erste Bank Polska

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) mean much more to me than a set of policies or declarations. I see them as values that are reflected in everyday relationships and in attentiveness to people. They begin with recognising that we work together, even though we are not the same – and that it is precisely in this diversity that real value lies. I understand inclusion as creating conditions in which everyone can be themselves: speak openly, ask questions, make mistakes and raise risks without fear of judgement. This is the foundation of a safe working environment.

When designing solutions, it is worth moving away from the idea of a single “right” way of doing things. Different paths can lead to the same goal – each adapted to specific needs and capabilities. Therefore, it is essential to take into account various communication styles, learning paces, life stages and levels of psychophysical capacity. Testing solutions with diverse groups of users, and regularly asking about real needs and feedback, strengthens not only inclusion but also the sense of safety.

From my observations, the presence of diverse perspectives in team and project work – for example, people with different levels of seniority or experience – clearly improves the comfort of collaboration and increases the willingness to talk about difficulties. Better understanding of processes, along with clear and open communication, supports earlier identification and reporting of risks before they develop into real problems.

Building an inclusive work culture is based on openness, respect and acceptance of diversity. Such an approach fosters collaboration, supports innovation and facilitates the achievement of goals. At the same time, the greatest challenge remains ingrained habits and beliefs – changing them is a process that requires time, consistency and conscious commitment. Each of us, through our mindset as well as our everyday decisions and actions, has a real impact on shaping a safe and inclusive working environment.

That is why I see DEI as a long-term process based on education, dialogue and strengthening grassroots initiatives such as employee networks. These help to build awareness, reinforce good practices and consistently strengthen psychological safety within the organisation.



“Values over rules in practice”

Daniel Trybus,
Senior Health and
Safety Specialist,
Erste Bank Polska

The traditional occupational health and safety model based on orders and prohibitions is increasingly proving insufficient. Modern organisations recognise that real and lasting change is only achieved through a values-based approach – a shift in emphasis from “you must” to “I choose to”. This represents a move from control to understanding why safety rules exist in the first place. Health and safety ceases to be a set of obligations and becomes part of everyday decision-making and conscious action.

In practice, this means that employees begin to be guided by intrinsic motivation rather than merely by formal requirements. Not everyone responds well to rigid rules – for some, clear instructions are helpful, while others perceive them as a limitation. Therefore, it is worth engaging employees, asking for their opinions and showing them what they can gain by applying specific rules.

Referring to fundamental values, such as health and the safety of oneself and co-workers, is usually far more effective than another piece of regulation.

The greatest barrier to moving away from the “orders and prohibitions” model is a lack of awareness of the benefits that a safety culture built on understanding can bring. It may seem easier to issue instructions than to invest time in education. However, it is precisely through awareness-based dialogue, explanation and consistent communication that a community emerges which takes care of health and safety on its own. In practice, this can be strengthened, for example, through health and safety champion programmes – individuals who demonstrate through their behaviour how to apply values in everyday work.

When safety is driven by values, the entire organisation changes: employees inform one another, initiate improvements and are better at identifying risks. The role of leaders – who always set the tone at the top – is crucial here.



„Building the health and safety brand in practice”

Mateusz Starke,
Health and Safety
Expert,
Erste Bank Polska

The health and safety brand is the way health and safety is perceived within the organisation – not as a set of legal requirements or procedures, but as a real value that supports employees and the business.

For me, a strong health and safety brand means a situation in which employees and managers see us as a partner who helps them work safely, take care of their health and reduce risks in their daily work. It also means trust in us when it comes to reporting issues, which are part of a shared responsibility for the working environment.

For health and safety to be associated with modernity, professionalism and real value, it is essential to move away from a model based primarily on documentation towards actions that are visible and felt meaningful to employees.

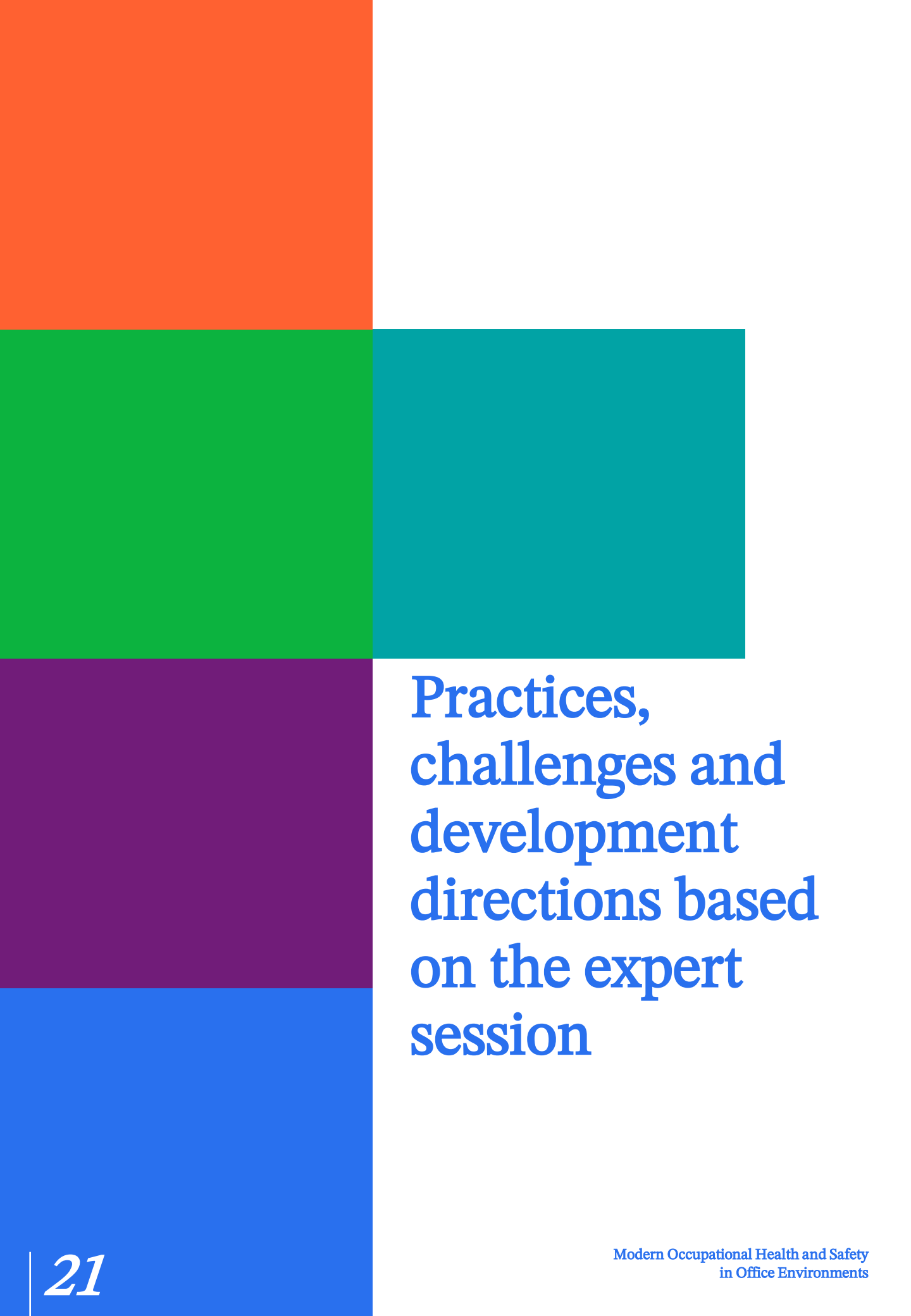
In practice, this means, among other things:

- using digital tools for audits, incident reporting and communication with employees;
- simplifying procedures and communications so that they are clear and practical;
- educational and health-promoting activities that demonstrate that health and safety is not only about accidents, but also about physical and mental well-being.

The perception of health and safety by employees and leaders is most strongly influenced by:

- **Clear and simple communication** – health and safety should be presented in a practical way, close to everyday work, rather than in the language of regulations.
- **A sense of agency** – employees quickly recognise that health and safety-related issues are a genuine priority, not just a communication slogan.
- **Leadership engagement** – when managers actively support activities related to health and safety, it significantly strengthens their credibility.

It is important to design safety processes in a way that they are perceived not only as an area responsible for regulatory compliance, but above all as a partner supporting organisational development and employee well-being.



Practices, challenges and development directions based on the expert session

This chapter was developed on the basis of workshops with health and safety management practitioners held during the 3rd edition of the Meeting of OSH Experts for administrative and office workers, which took place on 21 October 2025.

Part of the publication was developed as well as current scientific literature and institutional documents (EU-OSHA, ILO, CIOP-PIB, PubMed).

All cited empirical data are drawn from sources published between 2023 and 2026.

The promotion of physical health in the workplace is no longer solely a matter of employers' goodwill – it has become a strategic element of human capital management. The modern office environment, characterised by sedentary work, constant visual strain and low levels of physical activity, generates a wide spectrum of health risks. Their consequences – sickness absence, reduced productivity and rising health insurance costs – are felt by both employees and organisations. Meta-analytical studies from 2025 confirm that workplace physical activity programmes (Physical Activity-led Workplace Health Interventions, PAWHIs) deliver positive outcomes in over 60% of the indicators analysed, in particular by increasing levels of physical activity (26 out of 32 study groups), reducing psychological strain (4 out of 5 studies) and improving dietary habits (12 out of 19 studies).

What experts are satisfied with

Participants of the expert session held on 21 October 2025 pointed to a rich and diverse range of implemented health-promoting practices. Sports cards, groups or clubs dedicated to sports activities, participation in mass running events (Business Run, Warsaw Half Marathon), as well as access to gyms, constitute the pillars of employees' physical activity.

Particular recognition was given to highly innovative initiatives: office massages and massage chairs, a personal trainer leading short exercises at the workstation, webinars on self-massage, and online yoga and healthy spine classes.

Experts emphasise the value of oncological prevention – co-financing of cancer marker testing, mammography campaigns and mobile screening units – as examples of going beyond the legal minimum.

Sports challenges (“cycling to work”, step counting, squats during breaks) introduce an element of competition and integration, strengthening the social dimension of health promotion.

Barriers and challenges

Experts identified the following as the main obstacles:

- employee motivation and their resistance to stepping out of their comfort zone;
- budget constraints;
- difficulties related to implementation timelines under heavy workloads;
- challenges associated with a dispersed organisational structure.

The need to ensure alignment of activities with applicable labour law regulations was also highlighted, which can be challenging in a dynamically changing regulatory environment. EU-OSHA research confirms that the geographical dispersion of employees constitutes a significant implementation barrier for wellness programmes – particularly in hybrid and global environments.

Best practice

Experts unanimously pointed to the fundamental importance of leadership as the driving force behind the implementation of a culture of health. Physical activity programmes should be based on a thorough analysis of employees' needs – not on the employer's intuition – and their design should incorporate dialogue with employees and an understanding of their perspective. Research shows that interventions tailored to individual needs and time constraints (short, feasible at the workstation, independent of location) are characterised by higher participation retention rates. Regulatory requirements set the baseline and should be treated as a starting point.

Proposed regulatory changes

Experts unanimously highlighted the need for the legal formalisation of work–life balance. They also called for clear legal parameters for assessing workplace bullying, as well as for establishing minimum standards for employer-funded preventive healthcare. The lack of specific regulations in the area of health promotion means that many organisations limit themselves to the minimum, without undertaking health-promoting initiatives beyond the required baseline.



Expert commentary:
Izabela Laskowska, Rossmann

Health prevention is one of the key elements of health management within an organisation. However, despite the growing availability of benefits – such as private medical packages or a wide range of diagnostic tests – employees continue to postpone medical appointments and diagnostics “until later”. This issue stems not only from a lack of access, but above all from low health awareness, ingrained habits, stereotypical beliefs and competing professional and personal priorities.

For this reason, building a culture of health prevention remains a key challenge. It is this culture that determines whether employees perceive medical check-ups as an unpleasant obligation or as a natural element of taking care of themselves. This culture should be strengthened systemically – through communication, education and leading by example within the organisation. If leaders openly communicate the importance of check-ups, use them themselves and allow the time to attend them, the likelihood of changing attitudes across the entire team increases.

It is also important to move away from a reactive approach towards a proactive one. Instead of reminding employees once a year about mandatory check-ups, organisations should create an environment that facilitates preventive care. This may include organising medical examinations in the workplace, mobile diagnostic units, or integrating employee calendars with time slots for short exercises at the workstation. The less effort required to take action, the greater the likelihood that it will be taken.

Personalisation of activities is also essential. A young employee has different health needs than a pre-retirement employee. Tailoring communication, the scope of examinations and health-promoting activities to age, lifestyle and the nature of work can significantly increase engagement.

Ongoing changes to regulations concerning preventive medical examinations may represent an important step forward; however, regulation alone will not solve the problem of postponing preventive care.

In summary, health prevention today requires a shift in focus – from availability to utilisation. Care for employee health should be seen as a shared goal – both of the organisation and of employees themselves. Without active engagement from both sides, even the best-designed preventive programmes will not deliver the expected results. Medical packages and regulatory frameworks alone are not sufficient if they are not accompanied by a genuine shift in awareness and organisational culture. In the context of an ageing society, this is not only a matter of social responsibility, but also a rational business decision. Organisations that successfully build a culture of prevention will benefit from healthier, more engaged employees and greater long-term stability.

Bibliography:

- [1] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2024). Physical activity in the workplace: Employer guide. CDC.
<https://www.cdc.gov/workplace-health-promotion/media/pdfs/2024/08/physicalactivity-employerguide-508.pdf>
- [2] Frontiers in Public Health (2025). “Promotion of physical activity-related health competence using digital workplace-based health promotion”, Frontiers in Public Health, 13, Article 1437172.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2025.1437172>
- [3] Jiménez Díaz-Benito, V., et al. (2025). “Health and productivity benefits of a multicomponent workplace physical activity program”, Frontiers in Sports and Active Living, 7, Article 1672619.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2025.1672619>
- [4] Multi.Life (2025). Sport is not only health – how to use physical activity for the good of the company.
<https://multi.life/en/article/sport-is-not-only-health-how-to-use-physical-activity-for-the-good-of-the-company-b2b>
- [5] Zhang, S., et al. (2025). “Effectiveness of physical activity-led workplace health interventions”, PubMed Central, PMC12154417.
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12154417/>

Psychosocial risk in the workplace is currently one of the most serious challenges facing modern occupational health and safety. According to data from the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), stress, anxiety and depression are the second most frequently reported health problem among European workers, and nearly 45% of them are exposed to factors that may negatively affect their mental health. Importantly, although these risks are subjective in nature, they can be managed just as systematically as physical hazards – provided they are treated as an organisational issue rather than an individual employee deficit.

What experts are satisfied with

Health and safety practitioners participating in the expert meeting on administrative and office work pointed to a number of valuable initiatives in the area of mental health. Particular attention was given to the role of “mental health champions” – informal supporters who assist employees facing mental health difficulties and act as intermediaries between employees and available support resources. This model, examined by the Employment Studies Institute, has proven effective in increasing access to support and reducing stigma.

Experts also highlight:

- educational campaigns;
- preventive webinars;
- one-to-one counselling;
- a helpline operated by internal specialists;
- the “Harmonia” centre helpline;
- Mental Health Days.

Regular surveys combining the measurement of well-being, satisfaction and working conditions are also considered valuable, as is the “Great Place to Work” survey as a tool for evaluating organisational culture.

Barriers and challenges

Experts identified significant systemic gaps. The absence of uniform standards and binding regulatory framework for managing psychosocial risks means that their implementation remains discretionary.

Legal aspects have proven particularly problematic: concerns raised by legal departments regarding GDPR and the protection of sensitive health data constitute a significant barrier to collecting and analysing information on employees' mental health. Research in Poland indicates that two key systemic issues are low employer engagement and insufficient preparedness of health and safety specialists to manage psychosocial risks.

Experts also point to the tendency to shift responsibility for mental health onto individuals, rather than managing risks systemically at the organisational level. An unsupportive organisational culture and difficulties in securing budget from senior management further compound these barriers.

Best practice

Recommended directions for action identified by experts include regular monitoring of well-being using KPIs and periodic evaluation, integrating mental well-being into the organisational strategy (rather than treating it as a CSR initiative), building communities based on dialogue and mutual learning, and establishing mental health champions as a structural element of the organisation. EU-OSHA emphasises that employers are required to manage psychosocial risks under the Framework Directive 89/391/EEC, and that this obligation should be effectively implemented in practice.

Proposed regulatory changes

Experts clearly called for an urgent revision of the regulatory framework. They recommend incorporating the management of psychosocial risk factors into applicable requirements, along with precise definitions and standards of conduct. The need to revise the content of health and safety training to include mental health issues was also highlighted. As emphasised, binding requirements would act as a lever for those employers who currently neglect this area.



Expert commentary:
Agnieszka Zawadzka-Jabłonowska,
Leon Kozminski Academy

Managing employees' mental health is one of the key challenges of modern occupational health and safety.

A significant issue remains the persistent approach in many organisations whereby responsibility for experienced stress is attributed almost exclusively to the individual. As a result, psychosocial risks are viewed primarily through the lens of mental resilience and employee characteristics, and preventive actions focus mainly on strengthening individual resources. Meanwhile, the important impact of environmental factors – such as work organisation, organisational culture or management style – is often overlooked.

Effective prevention, however, requires a systemic perspective, encompassing parallel actions at the individual, team, leadership and organisational levels. Such an approach not only enables more effective mitigation of psychosocial risks, but also strengthens employee engagement, well-being and performance, contributing to the development of long-term resilience and a sustainable competitive advantage for the organisation.

Bibliography:

[1] Employment Studies Institute (2024). Independent evaluation of the Workplace Health Champion project.

<https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/BHM%20WHC%20final%20report%20v2.1.pdf>

[2] EU-OSHA. (2026). Psychosocial risks and mental health at work.

<https://osha.europa.eu/en/themes/psychosocial-risks-and-mental-health>

EU-OSHA. (2024). Research on psychosocial risks and mental health at work.

<https://osha.europa.eu/en/themes/psychosocial-risks-and-mental-health/research>

[3] Interreg Baltic. (2025). Mental health at work: Needed improvements in Poland.

https://interreg-baltic.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Poland_Longlist-of-needed-improvements_FINAL.pdf

[4] Smallwood, A., et al. (2023). “Identifying the key elements of psychologically safe workplaces”. BMC Public Health, 23, Article 1956.

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10605501/>

The role of a health and safety specialist in the administrative and office environment is evolving rapidly. The traditional model, based on documentation control and reactive accident management, is giving way to a systemic approach in which the health and safety specialist becomes a strategic business partner, a champion of a safety culture and a coordinator of technological implementations. This transformation is global in nature – the World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2025 focused on the role of artificial intelligence and digitalisation in shaping the future of health and safety, and a report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) from the same year confirms that digital technologies offer unprecedented opportunities for risk reduction and improved efficiency.

What experts are satisfied with

Among the practices considered particularly noteworthy, experts primarily pointed to the standardisation of procedures: checklists, regular audits of working conditions and workstation reviews. International cooperation was also highly valued – including the exchange of experience, standardised communication within global structures, accident analysis based on aggregated data, and the development of post-incident procedures. A particularly important development is the implementation of AI to standardise the work of health and safety services on a global scale – AI-based tools streamline document management, risk analysis and reporting. Experts also highlight internal solutions that enable employee engagement in proposing ideas and improving health and safety processes – in line with EU-OSHA recommendations on participatory safety management.

Barriers and challenges

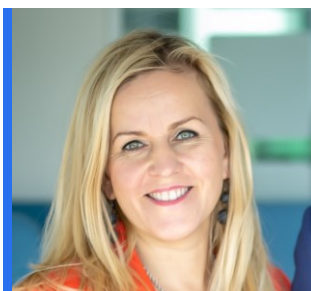
The main identified obstacles include: GDPR-related issues and the protection of sensitive data (in particular medical data), lack of access to the necessary technological tools, and technological constraints hindering the implementation of unified systems in organisations with diverse IT infrastructures. Experts point to the absence of requirements adapted to new technologies and their application in the working environment. The generational gap in technological proficiency among health and safety staff constitutes an additional implementation challenge.

Best practice

Knowledge sharing at a global level has been identified as a key good practice – including accident statistics, benchmarking of safety indicators, and joint training on new technologies and applications. Experts recommend continued investment in modern technological solutions, viewing this not as a cost but as a strategic means of reducing risk. The ILO report highlights that a human-centred approach is key – technologies should support human decision-making, not replace it.

Proposed regulatory changes

Experts call for adapting requirements to new technologies and their practical application in the workplace. An urgent need was identified to revise the regulation on health and safety – a document considered outdated in relation to current organisational realities. The absence of requirements governing the use of AI in health and safety management, data protection in the use of predictive tools, and standards for the digitalisation of accident documentation constitutes a significant regulatory gap.



Expert commentary:
Edyta Paduch, Luxmed

The findings presented indicate that health and safety services are undergoing a dynamic technological and organisational transformation. Data analytics, process digitalisation and the use of AI in managing workplace safety are becoming increasingly important.

At the same time, key challenges remain in relation to data protection, gaps in the regulatory framework, and disparities in technology-related competencies.

Particular emphasis should be placed on the development of a safety culture based on employee participation, knowledge sharing and the standardisation of practices.

The direction of change suggests that modern health and safety services will assume an increasingly strategic and advisory role within organisations, combining expert, technological and consulting competencies, while maintaining the overarching principle of a human-centred approach, in which technology supports people rather than replacing their accountability and decision-making.

Bibliography:

- [1] EU-OSHA. (2022). Artificial intelligence for worker management: Summary.
https://osha.europa.eu/sites/default/files/artificial-intelligence-osh-summary_en.pdf
- [2] EU-OSHA. (2025). Safer workers and stronger OSH compliance through digitalisation.
<https://osha.europa.eu/en/oshnews/safer-workers-and-stronger-osh-compliance-through-digitalisation>
- [3] International Labour Organization. (2025). Revolutionising health and safety: The role of AI and digitalisation at work. ILO.
<https://industrialrelationsnews.ioe-emp.org/fr/news/article/revolutionising-health-and-safety-the-role-of-ai-and-digitalisation>
- [4] OSHWIKI – EU-OSHA. (2022). Better safety at work through participative approaches.
<https://oshwiki.osha.europa.eu/sites/oshwiki/files/2022-03/sm03.pdf>
- [5] Vocoli. (n.d.). Employee suggestion program.
<https://www.vocoli.com/employee-suggestion-program/>

The effectiveness of health and safety training in the office environment remains one of the more complex challenges of modern prevention. The traditional approach – consisting of passively listening to a lecture, completing a test and signing an attendance list – does not lead to lasting behavioural change. The Ebbinghaus forgetting curve, replicated under controlled conditions (Murre & Dros, 2015), shows that without active repetition up to 70% of new information is lost within 24 hours, and retention may fall below 20% within a month – highlighting the need for engaging, repeated forms of training. By contrast, emotional engagement, active participation, feedback and repetition are essential conditions for changing attitudes and health-related behaviours.

What experts are satisfied with

The practices highly rated by experts included instructional videos covering first aid, ergonomics and remote work, as well as reminders about the availability of resources, accessible via an online platform at a time and place convenient for employees.

A particularly advanced solution is the ErgoPoint software for ergonomics self-assessment: employees assess their own workstations, and the report is automatically sent to their supervisor. The system combines education, engagement and accountability. Participation is mandatory for all employees.

The Gamfii system, which supports job-specific training for new employees during recruitment and provides reminders for supervisors regarding key training points, contributes to the standardisation of onboarding.

Open ergonomics sessions (1 hour) conducted by teams were also recognised, including the collection of employee ideas during these sessions and the evaluation of their effectiveness using a 1:5 method combined with a satisfaction survey.

Barriers and challenges

Experts identified the primary cultural challenge as employees' negative initial attitude, reflected in the widespread perception that "health and safety is boring". Excessive internal communication and difficulties in reaching all employees (particularly in dispersed structures) lead to information overload. The cost of specialised software (ErgoPoint, e-learning platforms) constitutes a financial barrier, while the implementation of additional IT tools places a burden on infrastructure and staff. The lack of feedback from employees following training prevents the assessment of its effectiveness and the introduction of improvements.

Best practice

A model solution identified by experts is the combination of post-training feedback (surveys) with the regular development of short video tutorials. Dedicated programmes (e.g. Ergo) build ergonomic awareness on an ongoing basis. Regular short training sessions (microlearning) are better than infrequent, lengthy sessions, as confirmed by research on attention and knowledge retention. Particular value is attributed to scenario-based exercises (evacuation drills, various emergency scenarios), which combine learning with team integration and foster emotional engagement.

Proposed regulatory changes

Experts call for a revision of requirements concerning health and safety training in three key areas: reducing the required duration of periodic training while increasing its frequency (time vs. interval), adapting the subjects to the specifics of office work (as current requirements largely reflect industrial settings), and changing the format by recognising new technologies as fully valid training tools.



Expert commentary:
Krzysztof Wojtyra,
Kaufland Polska Markety Sp. z o.o. Sp. j.

Health and safety is not inherently boring, but it becomes so when it is reduced to a “tick-box exercise”, attendance lists and the role of the “health and safety enforcer” or “health and safety archivist”.

The problem lies not in the regulations or the subject of safety itself, but in how training is designed – often disconnected from employees’ real behaviours and from the principles of adult learning. Modern health and safety should move from compliance to experience: it should be concise, practical, digital and embedded in everyday work.

Gamification, nudging, virtual reality (VR), data and safety champions can strengthen employees’ sense of agency. The key is to move away from measuring training time towards measuring real outcomes: safe habits, accountability and quality of working life.

Bibliography:

- [1] Murre, J. M. J., & Dros, J. (2015). Replication and analysis of Ebbinghaus' forgetting curve. PLOS ONE, 10(7), e0120644. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0120644>
- [2] Briotix Health. (n.d.). Office ergonomics software. <https://www.briotix.com/office-ergonomics-software>
- [3] ErgoGlobal. (2025). Top 6 ergonomic assessment software solutions 2025. <https://ergoglobal.com/top-6-ergonomic-assessment-software-solutions>
- [4] Rising Workplace. (n.d.). Online ergonomic self-assessment tool. <https://www.risingworkplace.com/ergonomic-self-assessment-software>
- [5] SafetyCulture. (2026). Top ergonomic assessment software of 2025. <https://safetyculture.com/apps/ergonomic-assessment-software>
- [6] Zhang, S., et al. (2025). Effectiveness of physical activity-led workplace health interventions. PubMed Central, PMC12154417. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12154417/>

A manager in a modern organisation plays a key role in the system of health and safety management – not as an administrator of requirements, but as a champion of a safety culture and a healthy way of working. Research on transformational leadership in health and safety clearly shows that the engagement of management translates into safer employee behaviours, higher levels of near-miss events reporting, and lower accident rates. Meanwhile, in many organisations, managers treat health and safety as the domain of specialists, distancing themselves from responsibility for the health of their own teams.

What experts are satisfied with

Practitioners expressed strong appreciation for short, recurring workplace and health and safety briefings delivered in a hybrid format (manager + employee) as a means of building relationships, identifying risks and fostering a culture of dialogue. Providing a tool for submitting topics and educational issues enables employees to co-create the training programme.

E-learning training enhanced with VR elements (virtual reality headsets) received positive user satisfaction ratings, and research confirms that VR increases safety awareness by 30%, improves risk perception and strengthens confidence in making safety-related decisions.

The Teams platform integrates training materials, communication and regular in-person meetings. Experts particularly value pre-scheduled in-person sessions as a guarantee of continuity and predictability in the learning process.

Self-learning tools (LEX, intranet, AI platforms) complement the offering, giving managers greater autonomy in developing their competencies.

Barriers and challenges

The list of challenges in this area is particularly extensive.

Experts pointed to:

- dispersed organisational structures creating tension between global and local responsibilities;
- a lack of managerial engagement in health and safety processes;
- insufficient knowledge of labour law and health and safety requirements among management;
- challenges arising from the hybrid work model (managers rarely see employees);
- passive participation in training;
- low quality of available training;
- gaps in interpersonal communication (soft skills);
- language and cultural barriers in international organisations;
- limited visibility of the health and safety function and its staff, outdated requirements, and budget constraints.

Best practice

Model solutions identified by experts include: regular, pre-scheduled meetings (eliminating improvisation), easy access to legal tools (LEX) and intranet materials, the implementation of AI tools supporting communication and managerial preparedness, and above all, a visible health and safety function acting as an active partner to management. A good practice means that managers do not need to know every requirement, but must know where to quickly obtain reliable information.

Proposed regulatory changes

Experts point to the outdated nature of health and safety requirements with regard to the information obligations of management – the provisions are general in nature and do not reflect the specifics of modern organisations.

They call for aligning managerial training with the company's strategic objectives and for establishing minimum health and safety competence standards for management in the form of binding requirements.



Expert commentary: Anna Szala, KRUK S.A.

The effectiveness of the health and safety system depends on the attitude and competencies of line managers. Even the best procedures will not be effective without genuine engagement of management in everyday dialogue on safety.

A key shift is moving away from “tick-box” training towards short, regular forms of communication that strengthen relationships and enable rapid identification of risks. Effective practices include regular meetings during which hazards and near-miss reports from different locations are discussed.

Short health and safety briefings conducted at team level, including in a hybrid format, strengthen a sense of responsibility and shared standards. Access to consistent communication and knowledge tools enables managers to make coherent and safe decisions, regardless of where their teams are based.

Complementing these activities with e-learning and VR simulations increases risk awareness and supports managers in making sound safety-related decisions.

Bibliography:

- [1] Ciekanski, Z. (2025). The role of a leader in shaping the safety culture of an organization. *Ergonomics and Safety Review*, 4(2), 45–67.
<https://ersj.eu/journal/3923/download/The+Role+of+a+Leader+in+Shaping+the+Safety+Culture+of+an+Organization.pdf>
- [2] NIST Global. (2025). Safety culture transformation in organizational leadership.
<https://nistglobal.com/blog/2025/08/safety-culture-transformation-organizational-leadership/>
- [3] Seo, R., et al. (2025). Exploring the effectiveness of virtual reality-based training for occupational safety. PubMed Central, PMC12331925.
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12331925/>
- [4] SBN Software. (2025). What role does leadership play in workplace safety culture?
<https://sbnsoftware.com/blog/what-role-does-leadership-play-in-workplace-safety-culture/>
- [5] Wrocław University of Economics and Business. (2024). The use of virtual reality technology in employee safety and health training. *Econjournals SGH*, 4539.
<https://econjournals.sgh.waw.pl/EEiM/article/view/4539>

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered a lasting transformation of work models: hybrid and remote work have become the norm. EU-OSHA, in its 2024 report, indicates that while flexible work arrangements offer tangible benefits (autonomy, flexibility, reduced commuting time), they also introduce new categories of risks: ergonomic, psychosocial and organisational.

Studies show that 65-70% of remote workers reported new or increased musculoskeletal complaints after transitioning to working from home, with over 40% directly linking them to inadequate workstation setups.

What experts are satisfied with

Experts positively assess: flexible start times (7:00–9:00) as a tool for reducing stress and improving work–life balance; scheduling team meetings exclusively within the working hours of the entire team (to prevent time fragmentation); taking into account individual ergonomic needs (adjustable seating, desks, additional monitors); hybrid working arrangements with the possibility of flexible extension in urgent situations; and internal agreements on remote working days ensuring fair access for all.

Bonding initiatives are also valued, including social events, exchange of views, first aid training as an opportunity to bring together field employees, and even online escape rooms as a form of team building. Chill-out rooms and office massages support recovery.

Barriers and challenges

Experts identified a wide range of issues: lack of adherence to ergonomic principles by employees at home, misuse of remote work for private purposes, workaholism and poor work hygiene (blurring the boundaries between work and rest), inability to provide first aid in a dispersed environment, lack of employer oversight over employees' activities in real time, insufficient preparation of managers to lead remote teams, the stereotype of remote work as “not doing anything”, and a fundamental lack of remote work culture in many organisations. Insufficient standards for managing these models also remain a challenge.

Best practice

Experts recommend that employers develop a “decatalogue” of good practices for remote work (covering ergonomic principles, boundaries of availability and digital hygiene), as well as establish frameworks for active team-building (training sessions, workshops, interest groups and initiatives that strengthen team spirit).

In-person health and safety training serves a dual purpose: fostering education and integration, particularly for geographically dispersed employees. Studies confirm that ergonomic risk management programmes in hybrid environments should combine clear procedures, ergonomic support and effective documentation.

Proposed regulatory changes

Experts call for the regular updating of Polish regulations on remote work (which remain too static in the face of dynamic organisational changes), greater legal awareness of the rights and obligations of remote workers, and urgent regulation of psychosocial factors in the context of remote and hybrid work. The current legal framework does not keep pace with organisational reality.



Joanna Kudyba,
Credit Agricole

In our organisation, we redefine the right to monitor health and safety in remote work as a tool for support rather than supervision.

Already at the training stage, we equip employees with practical skills and tools related to ergonomics and maintaining their well-being. This approach is followed up with individual meetings that replace traditional inspections. These meetings are educational and supportive in nature – we discuss breaks, physical activity, work hygiene and employee challenges. In this model, the employee becomes a partner and the manager of their own well-being, capable of managing their resources effectively.



Aleksandra Kozyra,
Credit Agricole

The role of the leader is also evolving – from a supervisor to a mentor. Key to this shift are new competencies, such as empathy and attentiveness, which enable leaders to recognise the needs of their teams, sometimes even through a computer screen.

Bibliography:

- [1] <https://jhrlmc.com/index.php/home/article/view/1892>
- [2] <https://www.occupationaljournal.com/archives/2025/vol1issue2/PartA/2-1-6-512.pdf>
- [3] Finch Consulting. (2025). Managing the emerging risks from remote and hybrid working. <https://www.finch-consulting.com/managing-the-emerging-risks-of-remote-and-hybrid-working>
- [4] IMA Corp. (2026). The evolving ergonomic landscape of remote and hybrid work. <https://imacorp.com/insights/insurance-insights-the-evolving-ergonomic-landscape-of-remote-and-hybrid-work>
- [5] Longdom Publishing. (2025). The future of workplace ergonomics in the era of hybrid work. *Journal of Ergonomics*, 15(4). <https://www.longdom.org/open-access/the-future-of-workplace-ergonomics-in-the-era-of-hybrid-work-1102526.html>
- [6] Vzd MDDSZ. (n.d.). Hybrid work: Ergonomic risks in hybrid/remote workplaces [PDF]. https://vzd.mddsz.gov.si/uploads/gradiva/18_HibridnoDelo/6_EmmanuelleBrun.pdf

The digitalisation of health and safety processes is no longer a trend but an operational necessity. The ILO report from 2025 confirms that digital technologies, including AI and cloud-based systems, offer organisations unprecedented opportunities in risk monitoring, process standardisation and the efficiency of safety management.

EU-OSHA indicates that digitalisation enables more effective oversight, streamlines data collection and supports communication between employers and labour inspection authorities. At the same time, digital transformation generates new challenges: data protection issues, competence gaps and regulatory barriers.

What experts are satisfied with

Participants in the expert session identified a range of digital solutions they view positively.

The digitalisation of periodic training records with barcode-based workflows eliminates paperwork, accelerates archiving and enables real-time tracking of training status.

An employee portal with electronic requests for remote work simplifies administrative procedures.

The digitalisation of the incident management process – from reporting and investigation to registration – improves root cause analysis and reduces the risk of human error.

An electronic register of recommendations and complaints of the Social Labour Inspector ensures access to documentation regardless of the user's location.

Training in AI tools, such as Copilot (Microsoft AI), supports employees and health and safety specialists in everyday tasks, including content generation, document processing and the retrieval of legal information.

Barriers and challenges

Experts pointed to the absence of clear and sufficient rules governing the digitalisation of health and safety documentation – this gap creates legal uncertainty during implementation. The cost of qualified electronic signatures constitutes a significant financial barrier to large-scale digitalisation of document workflows. Limited availability of resources – time, funding and qualified staff – slows down the transformation.

Experts also highlight challenges in cooperation with trade unions when implementing digital systems, while emphasising the key role of social dialogue as a safeguard when requirements prove insufficient. Compliance with GDPR in the processing of accident-related and health data requires precise procedures and appropriate technical safeguards.

Best practice

The most important good practices identified by experts include the integration of HR processes and data with health and safety (eliminating information silos), building partnership with trade unions in the context of digital implementations, effective employee consultation at every stage, and the strategic use of AI for data analysis, identification of accident trends and the standardisation of documentation. GDPR and AI-related requirements should be seen not as barriers, but as a framework for responsible implementation. Research confirms that digitalisation significantly reduces errors, shortens document processing times and increases compliance with laws and regulations.

Proposed regulatory changes

Experts call for four key regulatory changes:

1. Adapting requirements to current technological capabilities, including recognising fully electronic documentation as legally equivalent to paper-based records;
2. Simplifying and reducing the cost of electronic signatures;
3. Introducing clear rules for the use of AI in health and safety, including requirements for algorithm transparency;
4. Establishing standards for the integration of HR and health and safety data in compliance with GDPR.




Expert commentary:
Michał Kowalski, BNP Paribas

The workshops were conducted prior to the announcement of amendments facilitating the submission of documents in electronic form and enabled the exchange of experiences related to the lack of updates in the applicable requirements. The brainstorming sessions on preparing for the upcoming changes and proposals for implementing specific, proven solutions provided enormous practical value.

The workshops highlighted the importance of digitalisation and optimisation of health and safety processes, which contribute to more effective risk management, enable in-depth analysis of collected data, and enhance training effectiveness through the use of modern tools.

This is the right direction to demonstrate that health and safety can be a modern, business-supporting system delivering tangible savings.



Challenges of modern health and safety: practical expert advice



Łukasz Podgórski,
Generative Artificial
Intelligence Domain
Expert,
Erste Bank Polska

We live in a time when access to artificial intelligence-based tools is more widespread than ever before. ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot – anyone can use them, often without any technical background. In the context of the health and safety field, this creates both significant opportunities and real risks.

A tool, not an oracle

The key point I would like to make at the outset is simple: artificial intelligence is a tool – just as Excel once became a tool for accountants. It will not replace a health and safety inspector, just as a calculator did not replace a mathematician. However, it can significantly relieve their workload, accelerate their work and help them focus on tasks that genuinely require human judgement.

Unfortunately, I observe a concerning trend – people increasingly rely on algorithms instead of exercising independent judgement. Yet in a field where human life and health are at stake, critical thinking is absolutely irreplaceable. AI can generate training materials. AI cannot – and should not – make decisions regarding an employee's fitness to work.

Know your tool

To use AI responsibly, it is essential to understand how it works. There are three aspects that anyone using these technologies in their daily work should be familiar with.

First – hallucinations. Language models can generate information that sounds convincing but is entirely false. This is not intentional – it results from the very nature of how they operate. Examples of the costly consequences of this phenomenon can already be found both internationally and in Poland. In one widely reported case, a large consulting firm had to reimburse a government client for a report containing AI-generated, fabricated court rulings.

In the Polish context, an expert assessing an application for a multi-million grant based a negative decision on data about competing products that simply did not exist – relying on AI that had effectively fabricated them. Such errors rarely become public, which may create the misleading impression that the problem is marginal. It is not.

Second – cut-off dates and data bias. Models have knowledge limited to a specific point in time, and what they have learned depends on the training data. If a particular narrative dominated in that data, the model will tend to reproduce it. AI responses are also influenced by how a question is phrased – different prompts produce different outputs, which means the model is susceptible to manipulation.

Third – non-determinism. Unlike traditional algorithms or rule-based automation, generative AI does not always return the same result. In situations where certainty and repeatability are required, it may not be the most appropriate choice. Many processes can be handled equally well – and often more safely – by standard rule-based automation.

Where AI truly adds value

Despite these limitations, there are many valuable use cases. In the area of health and safety, it is worth considering, among others:

Document processing and analysis – rapid review of incident reports, automated monitoring of compliance with requirements, and intelligent management of job-specific instructions.

Generation of training materials – creating presentations, infographics, illustrations for procedures, and even short tutorials using tools such as Canva, Gamma or video generators.

Transcription and meeting notes – Speech-to-Text tools allow users to focus on the discussion rather than note-taking, while integration with platforms such as Microsoft Teams provides accurate meeting summaries with a clear breakdown of tasks.

Adapting the language of communication – AI performs very well in simplifying complex legal and procedural content into language that is understandable for all employees, which is of key importance for the actual effectiveness of training.

RAG (Retrieval-Augmented Generation) – enriching the model with internal procedures and company documents ensures that responses are aligned with organisational policies and local requirements, rather than based solely on general model knowledge.

This must, however, be implemented in a well-considered manner. There is no single “ideal” RAG system that can simply be filled with knowledge and unstructured documents and then treated as a “crystal ball”.

Strategy instead of enthusiasm

The key is for organisations to approach AI implementation strategically, rather than on the basis of “everyone is doing it, so we should too.” Forcing the introduction of artificial intelligence may create more problems than benefits. It is worth appointing dedicated roles at the intersection of business and IT to help assess where AI genuinely delivers value and where a simple, reliable tool will suffice.

It is also important to recognise that AI is here to stay. An increasing number of organisations – including hospitals – are implementing it in areas that, until recently, seemed reserved exclusively for humans. In hospital emergency wards, systems transcribe conversations between doctors and patients, allowing doctors to focus fully on the patient. This is a good example of responsible application: AI supports, while humans make the decisions.

Three principles to conclude

I would return to three simple principles that should form the foundation for the use of AI in the work of a health and safety specialist:

First – AI supports, it does not replace. Humans still think; AI only provides guidance.

Second – know your tool. Before you start using it, understand its capabilities, limitations and where potential risks may arise.

Third – common sense comes first. Every AI-generated response requires verification – especially those that sound too good or too certain.

Let us not be afraid of artificial intelligence – let us learn to use it consciously.



Zuzanna Kowalik,
University of Warsaw,
Institute for Structural
Research

The Polish labour market is changing before our eyes. According to projections, the working-age population will decrease by 2–3 million by 2040. Fewer young people are entering the labour market, while older employees are remaining active for longer. At the same time, the pandemic has blurred the boundary between the office and the home in a way that many organisations are still struggling to address. This is compounded by a generational shift in expectations: younger cohorts enter the workforce with a clear belief that organisational culture matters, and that they are not willing to stay in workplaces that are detrimental to their well-being. Employees are leaving organisations not only because of pay, but increasingly because of how work is organised and how it affects them.

In this new reality, one thing is certain: we cannot afford to lose people due to poor psychosocial working conditions.

If that is the case, it is time to start talking about them more precisely.

What exactly are psychosocial risks?

This is not a soft issue, nor a private matter. Psychosocial risks in the workplace are concrete, measurable characteristics of the working environment that arise from how work is organised and managed. They are not about who you are, but about the conditions in which you work.

What does it look like in practice? You have twelve patients instead of eight because there is no one available to hire. You stay on Slack until 10 p.m. because the organisational culture does not allow silence. Your schedule changes the day before your shift. You receive conflicting instructions from two supervisors. The company has laid off dozens of employees “because of AI”, yet, somehow, part of their workload has been assigned to you, and you now have too much to handle. Each of these examples is a risk that can be identified, measured and mitigated.

Researchers have been documenting the effects of these conditions for decades. The outcomes go beyond mental health issues – they also include cardiovascular diseases. The European Trade Union Institute has estimated the economic costs of five major psychosocial risks: excessive workload, job insecurity, effort–reward imbalance, long working hours and workplace bullying. The costs of heart diseases associated with these factors alone amount to billions of euros annually. Across the European Union, nearly one in three workers report that their stress, depression and anxiety are caused or exacerbated by work. In Poland, this proportion is even higher.

When mindfulness is not enough

Imagine you have back-to-back meetings throughout the entire day, with no breaks in between – to the point where you quite literally have no time to go to the bathroom. Your manager sends emails after 21:00. Your team has consisted of three people instead of five for months because “recruitment is ongoing.” And at that very moment, the company offers you a mindfulness workshop or a yoga pass.

Will it help? To some extent, probably. But it is a bit like mopping the floor instead of fixing a leaking pipe. Experts in this field distinguish between two levels of intervention: primary and secondary prevention.

Primary prevention refers to measures that minimise the risk of exposure itself – that is, changes in work organisation before a problem arises. This includes ensuring that employees do not have back-to-back meetings, monitoring actual workload, providing adequate staffing levels, and defining clear roles and responsibilities.

Secondary prevention refers to actions targeted at individuals who are already experiencing difficulties – stress management training, psychological support, and well-being programmes.

Both have value. The problem is that, in most organisations, there is a disproportionate emphasis on secondary prevention, that is, on providing support to those who are already experiencing strain. Meanwhile, experts emphasise that without primary-level interventions – without changing the working environment itself – employees return from stress management training to exactly the same conditions that caused the problem in the first place. This addresses the symptoms, not the root cause.

This is not a matter of mental health. This is a matter of health and safety.

At this point, an important distinction emerges, one that is often blurred in public debate. When we talk about “mental health”, we open the door to framing it as a multifactorial, individual issue, difficult to attribute to a single cause. And that is true – mental health depends on genetics, life history, relationships, financial circumstances and many other factors. However, psychosocial risks at work are a different matter: they are risks that can be addressed using the same logic as noise, hazardous substances or shift work.

The fact that an employee smokes at home does not relieve the employer of the obligation to provide a smoke-free workplace. No one says, “since you smoke anyway, what difference does it make?”. The employer’s responsibility is independent of what happens outside the workplace. The same could be said of work-related stress. Yes, people have different levels of tolerance to stress, and not everyone will suffer a heart attack after years of doing the work of two people. But not every miner develops pneumoconiosis either – and yet coal dust is still treated as a hazard that must be controlled. In the case of physical hazards, the employer is required to assess the risk associated with a given role, minimise exposure and monitor outcomes. The same logic is proposed for psychosocial risks.

What is happening at the European level?

At the level of the European Union, this debate is gaining momentum – although the path towards binding requirements has proved exceptionally long. As early as 2004, European social partners signed a framework agreement on work-related stress, recognising it as a key health risk factor. At the time, some believed that binding legislation would be introduced shortly. However, more than twenty years have passed, and a directive specifically addressing psychosocial risks has still not been adopted – while EU law regulates in detail exposure to noise, vibration, asbestos, and the use of sharp instruments at work.

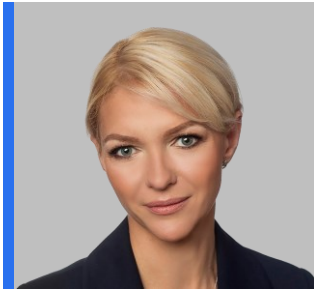
The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) has unanimously adopted a resolution calling for a directive that would oblige employers at least to assess workplace exposure to psychosocial risks. In 2024, for the first time in a decade, the issue was formally placed on the agenda of EU institutions. The Belgian Presidency initiated discussions, and in February 2025, a working group of the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work was established with the aim of reaching a consensus on this issue.

Will the directive be adopted? And will it make any difference? It is worth taking a cautiously optimistic view here. Law is a tool – but one that requires effective enforcement. Experience shows that regulations can remain merely on paper. What will be crucial is whether labour inspectorates receive the resources and instruments needed to verify not only whether a company has implemented a psychosocial risk assessment procedure, but whether that assessment translates into tangible action. At the same time, even a change in terminology is meaningful: once the law defines work-related stress as a workplace hazard, it becomes more difficult to treat it as an employee's personal weakness.

What follows from this?

There is no need to wait for the directive. A shift in approach can begin within any organisation – by asking a simple question: do we understand the actual workload of our people? Do we rely on data, rather than intuition? Do the well-being measures we implement address root causes, or merely symptoms?

Psychosocial risks are a matter that should be placed at the centre of occupational safety and health management – alongside noise, ergonomics and hazardous substances. That is where they belong.



Karolina Kanclerz,
Attorney-at-Law,
Partner at Paruch
Chruściel Stępień
Kanclerz

Until recently, health and safety was associated almost exclusively with physical hazards in the workplace. Today, however, the management of psychosocial risks in the working environment is becoming one of the key areas of a modern health and safety approach.

Stress, time pressure and interpersonal conflicts can be just as harmful as physical factors. For employers, therefore, ensuring psychological safety at work is no longer merely a matter of meeting regulatory requirements, but increasingly a strategic tool influencing organisational performance. Companies that treat psychosocial risks as an element of their management strategy achieve greater team stability, reduced sickness absence, higher levels of engagement and productivity, which translate into tangible cost savings and improved business outcomes. Among the key areas that employers should focus on are the following:

Workplace bullying – an organisational, not an individual issue

One of the most serious psychosocial hazards is the risk related to workplace bullying. It is no longer treated as an “interpersonal issue”, but as a genuine occupational risk, which employers are required to actively prevent. Currently, efforts are underway to redefine not only the concept of workplace bullying, but also to expand the scope of employers’ obligations and areas of responsibility.

Key point: Employers will not only be required to implement preventive measures, but also to identify cases of workplace bullying, respond appropriately, take corrective action, and provide support to those affected.

These measures should be structured and clearly defined; for this reason, employers will be required to set out, in their internal regulations, specific rules, procedures and the frequency of actions aimed at preventing violations. This represents a true shift in the understanding of employers’ obligations towards employees’ mental health. In this context, health and safety becomes a system for safeguarding employee well-being.

Continuous availability – a new risk of the digital era

Another important issue requiring attention is the so-called “always-on” culture. An increasing number of employees report feeling pressure to remain constantly available and to respond to emails in the evenings and on weekends. From a labour law perspective, this may constitute a risk of breaching working time regulations. From a health and safety perspective, it creates a sustained mental burden.

Key point: An employer who does not introduce rules for “digital rest” (the right to disconnect outside working hours) may unintentionally contribute to chronic stress among employees. This, in turn, may give rise to claims against the employer if expectations of constant availability outside working hours take on the character of harassment.

Stress as a cause of workplace accidents

Work-related stress, pressure and excessive workload are generally not considered, in themselves, an external cause of workplace accidents, as they are inherent to the nature of work. However, in certain cases they may constitute a significant contributing factor which, in combination with other causes, can lead to a workplace accident, such as a heart attack, and may give rise to employer liability.

Key point: Workplace stress, when excessive and prolonged, becomes a real risk to health.

Inspiration and good practice

The most significant shift currently taking place in the approach to health and safety is the transition from reacting to problems to preventing them.

In the area of psychosocial risks, this means that employers should:

- regularly monitor risks and employee workload;
- implement solutions and policies that support employee well-being;
- train management in the prevention of psychosocial risks.

From a purely business perspective, mental well-being is not a cost – it is an investment. Employees who feel emotionally safe are more engaged and more committed to the organisation. A modern employer is therefore one who responds to early warning signs and actively addresses them. This approach delivers tangible benefits, including financial ones.



Agnieszka Krawczyk-Dąbrowska, psychogerontologist, intergenerational communication specialist

Health and safety in an ageing labour market

The Polish labour market is ageing. The number of people of working age is decreasing, while the share of older individuals in the population is growing. In this context, employees aged 50+ are becoming an increasingly valuable resource. At the same time, this means that more and more organisations will need to address a question they have avoided for years: how to design a working environment that is safe, accessible and supportive for people at different stages of their careers – not just at the start. This question lies at the heart of modern health and safety.

What is not visible in accident statistics

In organisational practice, health and safety is still often associated primarily with workplace accidents, occupational diseases, and physical or technical hazards. However, an ageing workforce shows that workplace safety must be understood more broadly – as conditions that allow individuals to maintain their ability to work, their health and well-being, and their continued participation in working life. Employees aged 50+ are not always a focus of the health and safety function – especially when the challenges they face are not visible or easily measurable. It is no longer only about working with machinery, noise, dust or the risk of injury. Increasingly important are also cognitive overload, the pace of technological change (“techno-stress”), shift work, lack of control over work organisation, prolonged stress, and a sense of misalignment with organisational culture.

Psychogerontology shows that ageing in the workplace is a multidimensional process. It is not only vision, hearing, reaction time, physical strength or recovery rate that change. Needs related to learning, information processing, responding to change and coping with workload also evolve. At the same time, older employees often possess what cannot be quickly replaced: contextual knowledge, experience, responsibility, organisational awareness and greater emotional stability. Therefore, it is a mistake to view age solely in terms of deficits – but it is equally mistaken to pretend that age does not matter.

Inclusive health and safety – what does it mean in practice?

Modern health and safety should take age diversity into account in the same way it considers other factors affecting employee safety and well-being. Respect for age cannot stop at declarations – it must be reflected in concrete design, organisational and training decisions. In practice, this means, among other things, adapting workstation ergonomics to changing needs, ensuring good lighting, reducing unnecessary strain, enabling recovery, planning working time responsibly, and paying attention to the impact of shift work. It also means designing training in a way that is accessible to people with different levels of experience, different learning speeds, and varying degrees of confidence in using new technologies. Inclusive health and safety is also about language and organisational culture. Employees aged 50+ should be treated neither as a “problem to be managed” nor as individuals whose professional development has come to an end. Lifelong learning should be a permanent element of organisational policy and should include all employees, regardless of age. Professional maturity can be a valuable organisational asset – but only if it is recognised, articulated and embedded in practice. A good example is intergenerational mentoring, which may also take the form of reverse mentoring. Older employees share organisational knowledge, experience and contextual understanding, while younger colleagues support them, for example, in the use of new technologies or communication tools. This is not about a symbolic gesture, but a real mechanism for retaining knowledge within the organisation and building cooperation between generations.

An invisible risk: the sense of invisibility

One of the less recognised psychosocial risks among employees aged 50+ is the sense of invisibility. It may arise when older employees are overlooked in development projects, less frequently invited to new initiatives, excluded from communication designed primarily with younger employees in mind, or treated as if their further development were no longer needed by the organisation. Another risk is the unspoken pressure to withdraw earlier from professional activity. It does not always take the form of explicit discrimination. Sometimes it manifests in jokes, stereotypes, a lack of feedback, being passed over for promotion, or assumptions that older employees “will not be interested” or “will not be able to cope”.

Such factors rarely appear in accident registers or formal complaints about discrimination, yet they have a real impact on health, motivation and engagement. They can increase stress, reduce the sense of purpose at work, and reinforce decisions to leave the organisation earlier. This is why modern health and safety must also be able to recognise psychosocial and organisational sources of risk.

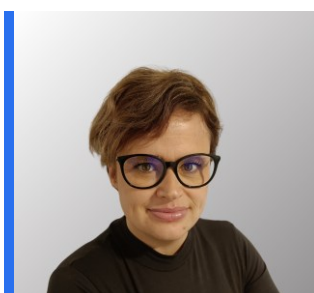
An investment, not a cost

Organisations that design the working environment with employees aged 50+ in mind are not investing in a single age group – they are investing in the resilience of the entire system.

A workplace that supports older generations is typically better for everyone: more predictable, better organised, less strenuous, and more attuned to people's real capabilities.

This is particularly important at a time when organisations are increasingly facing labour shortages, knowledge loss, and the need to sustain workforce participation across different age groups. The experience of employees aged 50+ represents potential, not a burden, provided that organisations are able to create conditions in which this potential can be fully realised.

Modern health and safety cannot be limited to accident prevention. It must become part of a broader way of thinking about work – about health, well-being, learning, relationships, and ageing with dignity in the work environment.



Karolina
Pawłowska-
Cyprysiak,
Assistant, Head of
the Laboratory of
Physiology and
Occupational
Hygiene, CIOP-PIB
(Central Institute
for Labour
Protection –
National Research
Institute)

The contemporary labour market is characterised by dynamic changes across many areas, largely driven by the ongoing automation of work processes. It is a market that requires – and will continue to require – employees to continuously update their competencies. This is due both to the obsolescence of knowledge acquired at successive stages of education and to changes in the methods and tools used in work. These transformations also provide the basis for discussions on “future competencies”, which are essential for the continued development of the labour market.

Future competencies

According to the approach presented in the Report on empirical research on future competencies and occupations, future competencies are understood as a specific combination of knowledge, experience, skills and employee engagement, the importance of which for the development and success of organisations will increase over time. Research into such competencies is predictive in nature – the conclusions drawn are based on the analysis of past and current trends. While this approach does not account for the possibility of unforeseen changes, it helps to raise awareness of the need for lifelong learning and supports the effective design of education and training processes.

Which competencies can be considered future competencies?

In 2023, at the Central Institute for Labour Protection – National Research Institute (CIOP-PIB), as part of the project Digital Competencies of Persons with Disabilities in the Context of the Requirements of the Contemporary Labour Market, implemented under Phase VI of the multiannual Government Programme for the Improvement of Safety and Working Conditions, financed in the area of scientific research and development by the National Centre for Research and Development, we conducted a study among 319 employers representing a wide range of sectors (according to the Polish Classification of Activities [PKD]), including large, medium, small and micro enterprises.

They were asked which competencies they consider to be future competencies in relation to three groups: technical, soft and personnel management competencies. What specific competencies did employers identify within these areas?

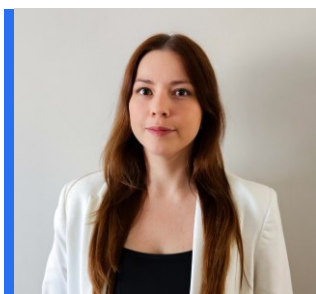
The top three future competencies in the area of soft skills were identified as creativity (71.2%), flexible problem-solving (53.6%) and fast learning (51.4%).

The top three future competencies in the area of personnel management were identified as crisis management skills (51.1%), knowledge transfer skills (48%) and communication skills (44.8%).

The top three future competencies in the area of technical skills were identified as digital competencies (69%), the ability to analyse data and develop data-driven concepts (64.4%), and the use of new media (63.9%).

The changing world of work today requires a deliberate development of relevant competencies. These include not only digital skills, which enable effective functioning in an increasingly digitalised environment, but also soft skills – transferable across industries and roles – such as communication, adaptability and critical thinking. Continuous upskilling and the acquisition of new competencies are becoming one of the key trends in the modern labour market, which is why it is essential to invest in training and in education in its broadest sense.

**Health and safety
is a genuine
requirement
arising from
regulations, needs
and trends.
Practical guidance**



Agata Sucharska,
Attorney-at-Law,
Erste Bank Polska

Actions aimed at improving safety are a legal requirement, regulated even at the constitutional level, and non-compliance may result in legal sanctions. The protection of employees' life and health is one of the statutory obligations of the employer, and its effective implementation depends to a significant extent on the knowledge and skills of managers.

From the perspective of defining the boundaries of managerial responsibility, the direction of recent legislative changes in labour law is particularly relevant. Increasingly, these changes place employees and their well-being – understood as both physical and psychological safety – at the forefront.

Current legislative trends aim to formalise such areas as:

- workplace ergonomics;
- support for parenthood;
- ensuring work–life balance;
- broadly understood health prevention;
- prevention of psychosocial risks, including undesirable behaviours in the workplace (workplace bullying and unequal treatment).

Legislators are also increasingly focusing on the employee's right to reliable information. One example is the amendment to the Labour Code regulating the rules for remote work. The requirement for employees to independently organise their remote workstations has been offset by a range of information obligations imposed on employers.

Guideline 1. EU requirements, directives, the Constitution and legislation – the manager’s role in promoting modern health and safety

A modern manager remains responsible not only for achieving business objectives, but also for the working conditions of employees, and the scope of their responsibilities in this area is evolving due to technological progress and the resulting changes in workplace risks.

Awareness of these risks and the ability to mitigate them are essential for effectively protecting employees’ health. The direction of current legislative developments indicates that the role of managers – who are legally obliged to ensure that employees comply with health and safety requirements and rules – will continue to gain importance.



Michał Wróblewski,
Senior Specialist in
Sustainability and ESG,
Erste Bank Polska

Health and safety in a modern organisation is becoming an integral element of management and a tangible indicator of an organisation's responsibility and maturity. The requirements of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the ESRS S1 (European Sustainability Reporting Standards) shift the focus from general declarations to measurable data and the obligation to report them. This applies in particular to areas such as working conditions and ergonomics, employee health and well-being, transparent procedures, risk management, training, and the reporting of accident metrics.

For investors, clients and other stakeholders, organisational resilience is key. Well-designed health and safety practices reduce costs (absences, turnover, reduced efficiency, operational errors), mitigate risks and strengthen the employer's reputation. For example, fewer accidents and lower absenteeism translate into business continuity; improved employee well-being leads to higher productivity, while higher-quality data enhances credibility among business partners.

Digitalisation and AI are now becoming some of the most important tools for optimising health and safety. These include digital incident reporting systems, tools for analysing absence and workload pressures, e-learning platforms, and solutions for analysing HR data, which also provide additional value in the context of sustainability. They ensure high-quality data, which is essential for reliable reporting.

It is worth noting that policies and procedures alone are no longer sufficient without evidence of implementation in practice. Credibility is built consistently through clear objectives and transparent metrics. The long-term consistency of implemented solutions is equally important. In this way, health and safety becomes not an add-on to ESG, but its foundation – well-designed and measurable.



Olga Biczal,
Employee Experience
Specialist,
Erste Bank Polska

A sense of safety – both psychological and physical – is one of the foundations of Employee Experience (EX), understood as the overall experience of an employee within an organisation. Without it, it is difficult to speak of effectiveness, engagement, motivation, a sense of purpose or loyalty.

Since, according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, safety is one of the fundamental human needs, it serves as the starting point for designing experience-based strategies. It is not possible to build higher levels of EX maturity without first securing these foundations.

At our Employee Experience Competence Centre, we know that in the working environment, a sense of psychological safety is a prerequisite for activating engaged behaviours.

Research by Professor Amy Edmondson of Harvard University, which we apply in our project teams – for example in the Hot Spot “I can effectively manage my work and take care of my well-being” and “Take a step to better appreciate and feel appreciated” – shows that psychological safety fosters:

- speaking up and sharing ideas;
- asking questions and expressing one's needs;

Such attitudes translate into:

- greater accountability;
- a willingness to introduce improvements;
- increased innovation;
- stronger team relationships;
- trust in leaders and a sense of purpose at work;
- as well as reduced stress and a lower risk of burnout.

Our activities are based on regular employee voice surveys conducted under the “Your Voice” programme. We measure indicators such as eNPS, as well as employees' sense of well-being and safety, and whether they feel able to be themselves in the working environment. We then work with the survey results in dedicated working groups, addressing the topics identified by participants.

Guideline 3. A sense of safety as the foundation of Employee Experience

Physical safety covers working conditions – from ergonomics to health protection. While psychological safety “opens the mind”, physical safety enables employees to come to work without concerns about their health. These two dimensions come together in a sense of long-term comfort and well-being. Only when both are addressed as fundamental employee needs can organisations design the full spectrum of experiences within an employee experience strategy.

Mature organisations treat safety as an experience in its own right – for example, through consciously designed health and safety training that enhances positive employee experience, or through initiatives that demonstrate that health and safety can be “reframed” and presented in a more human way – as an element of well-being, everyday comfort and care for health, with people at the centre of the experience. This requires employee voice surveys, which we actively conduct.

In addition, our Competence Centre develops tools that support the co-creation of solutions together with employees – including those related to health and safety and well-being. Our co-creation platform, KOLAB, provides a space where employees can jointly develop solutions and actively shape their own experience.



Celina Prinz,
Head of the Culture
and Talent Acquisition
Office,
Erste Bank Polska

In an era of increasing competition for talent, the Employee Value Proposition is a strategic contract between employer and employee – a set of values, experiences and commitments that an organisation genuinely delivers in return for engagement and competencies. According to Gartner, companies with an effective EVP can reduce annual employee turnover by up to 69% and increase the engagement of new hires by 29%. Yet only 31% of employees say that their organisation offers a truly exceptional work experience.

The H&S → EX → Business value chain shows that physical and psychological safety is not an item on a list of benefits – it is the foundation of the entire EVP. An employee who feels protected, understood and treated “as a person, not a resource” (Modern Health and Safety Manifesto: People first) becomes an ambassador of the employer brand.

Research shows that organisations with strong well-being initiatives achieve employee retention rates that are 31% higher than those of organisations that do not prioritise this area. Building an EVP grounded in health and safety requires three steps.

First – authenticity: investments beyond the legal minimum (Mental Health Champions, oncological prevention, ergonomic programmes) must be a real practice.

Second – tailored communication: Gen Z expects flexibility and psychological health, while employees aged 50+ expect respect for experience and ergonomics (Manifesto: Respect for age and diversity).

Third – measurability: EVP without KPIs is just a slogan. Indicators such as employee engagement levels (eNPS), employee survey results, sickness absence and accident metrics should be regularly reported to the management board as evidence of the business value of health and safety.

Building a genuine EVP is not about what the employee can do for the organisation, but whether they feel safe, cared for and seen. The answer to this question determines everything that follows.

Guideline 4. EVP rooted in safety – how health and safety becomes an employer promise

Bibliography:

- [1] <https://wellbeingpolska.pl/wellbeing-a-retencja-pracownikow-rola-w-employer-branding/13> Inspiring Employee Value Proposition Examples To Attract Great Talent”, Gartner Research, <https://vervoe.com/employee-value-proposition/>
- [2] Deloitte: "Employee Value Proposition: Creating a Human-Centered and Experience-Driven Organisation", <https://www.deloitte.com/uk/en/services/consulting/blogs/2025/employee-value-proposition-creating-a-human-centred-and-experience-driven-organisation.html>
- [3] "The EVP Delivery Gap: Why Organizations Are Failing to Meet Employee Expectations." <https://employerbranding.news/evp-delivery-gap-why-organizations-are-failing/>

Guideline 5. Building a culture of care for health and safety – when health and safety becomes a mindset, not a procedure



Małgorzata Furtak,
Head of the Health
and Safety and
Wellbeing Office,
Erste Bank Polska

Regulations, ESG, Employee Experience and EVP are four pillars on which an organisation can build a solid foundation for safety. However, pillars alone do not make a house. It is organisational culture that acts as the roof, holding everything together and ensuring that the system works even when no one is watching. Ultimately, it is culture that determines whether health and safety becomes a genuine value – alive, tangible and embedded in everyday decision-making at every level of the organisation.

At Erste Bank Polska, we start from a simple assumption: safety and health must be present simultaneously in two dimensions. The first includes audits of all units, health and safety education for employees and managers, advisory support, and the reporting of accidents and occupational diseases. The second encompasses physical health, mental health, healthy relationships and employees' financial health. These are not separate worlds. They are two sides of the same commitment to the person who comes to work and deserves to return home in full physical and mental well-being.

The Be Healthy programme is a tangible expression of this philosophy. Physical health includes education, prevention and real access to healthcare. Mental health is support in times of crisis, access to psychological support and open conversations about difficult issues. Healthy relationships mean consciously preventing isolation and the breakdown of social bonds, which the pandemic exposed across the organisation. Financial health is an area that rarely features in health and safety discussions, yet financial stress is one of the most significant psychosocial risk factors. A mature safety culture takes a holistic view of the individual.

A healthy and safe working environment culture is built in layers.

1. Prevention, promotion and crisis management – acting before a problem escalates to a scale that the organisation can no longer control.
2. Organisational culture, development activities and health-promoting initiatives – strengthening everyday habits and transforming one-off actions into lasting behaviours.

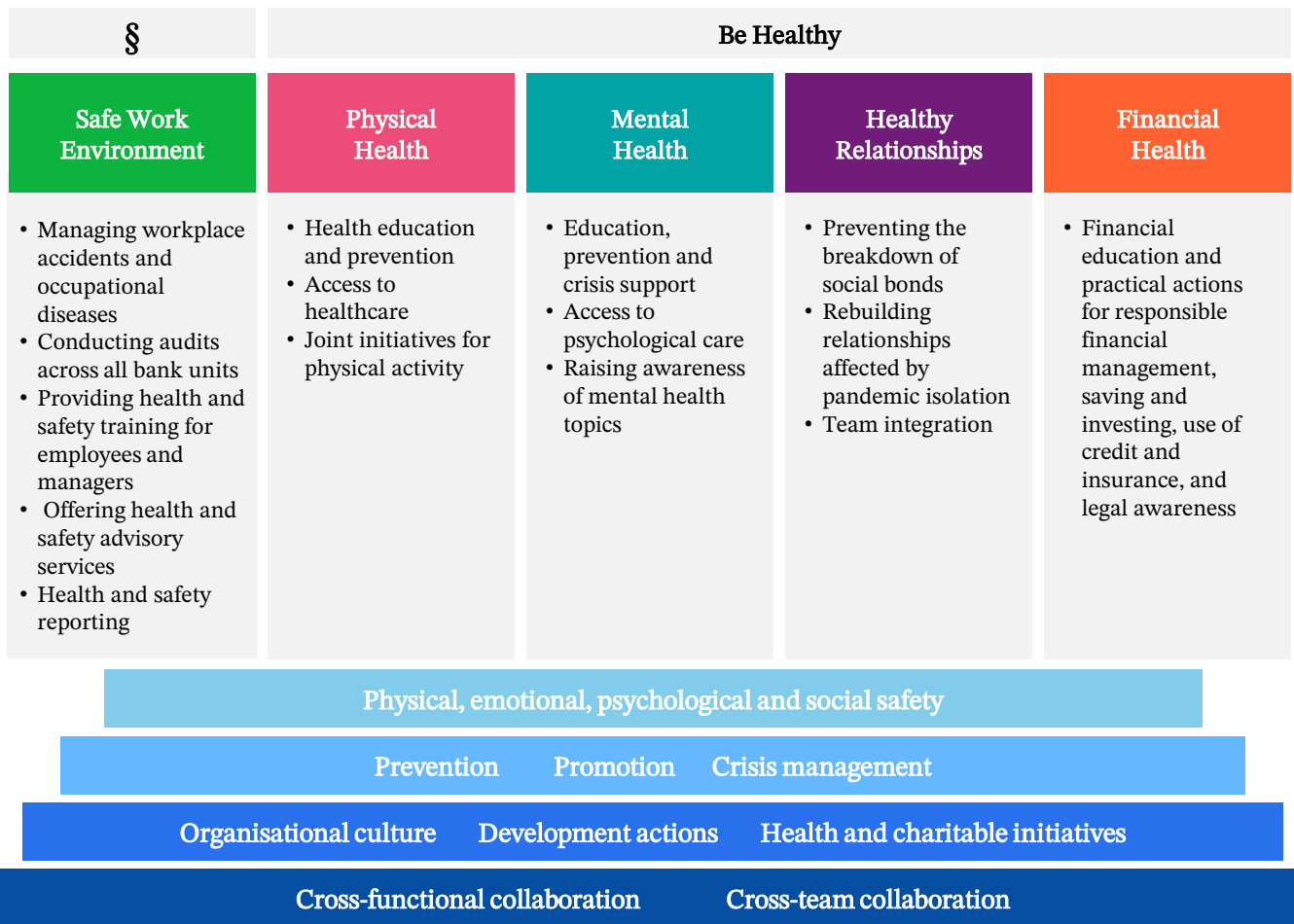
Guideline 5. Building a culture of care for health and safety – when health and safety becomes a mindset, not a procedure

3. Cross-functional actions – health and safety is no longer the responsibility of a single department, but a shared accountability connecting HR, communication, trade unions, leaders and employees themselves. When everyone speaks with one voice about health and safety, it becomes a natural part of everyday work.

For business, this means one thing: an organisation that has built such a culture does not need to “enforce” safety – it simply becomes part of daily operations. Managers do not ask whether they need to hold a conversation about team well-being; they ask how to do it well. Employees do not report ergonomic issues because procedures require it – they do so because they know someone will respond.

This is what culture truly is – an invisible framework that holds the entire structure together. And this is the real, long-term return on investment in modern health and safety.

Culture of a Healthy and Safe Work Environment



Report summary and market context



Ewa Ulicz
sociologist, GrowSPACE
Foundation

Summary and European context: market trends in health and safety

The European and Polish health and safety landscape is currently undergoing a transformation of a scale unprecedented since the adoption of the Framework Directive 89/391/EEC – a document that, for over three decades, has set the standard for managing occupational safety across the European Union. That directive defined employers' obligations in relation to physical hazards. Today, the debate focuses on how to extend this logic to psychosocial, digital and demographic risks.

What the data shows

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), in its report *Psychosocial risks and mental health at work (2026)*, confirms that stress, anxiety and depression constitute the second most common work-related health problem affecting European workers. Nearly 45% of them are exposed to psychosocial risk factors. At the same time, only one in four organisations in the EU has a formal procedure for managing this type of risk.

In Poland, the picture is similar, though compounded by additional structural challenges. The Interreg Baltic report *Mental Health at Work: Needed Improvements in Poland (2025)* points to low levels of employer engagement, insufficient competencies of health and safety specialists in the psychosocial domain, and the absence of national standards that would make risk management systemic rather than discretionary.

Data from the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS) consistently shows that sickness absence related to mental health disorders and diseases of the nervous system is increasing year on year – and is one of the fastest-growing components of labour costs in Poland.

EU-OSHA Strategy 2023–2025: implications

The EU strategic framework on health and safety at work for 2021–2027, published by the European Commission, sets out three priorities:

1. preventing work-related diseases;
2. anticipating and managing change (digitalisation, ageing workforce, remote work);
3. promoting the Vision Zero approach – striving to eliminate fatal accidents and serious occupational diseases.

Of particular importance is the planned review of the Framework Directive 89/391/EEC, which is expected to address new categories of risk: psychosocial risks, ergonomic risks in the context of remote work, and those arising from the use of algorithms and AI in work management.

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) has unanimously adopted a resolution calling for a dedicated directive on psychosocial risks. In February 2025, a working group of the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work was established – marking the first formal step in this direction in over a decade.

Projects worth noting

At the European level, the EU-OSHA Healthy Workplaces Campaign offers particularly strong practical value. It is implemented cyclically under changing themes. The 2023–2025 edition focused on safe and healthy work in the digital age, providing concrete tools for employers available on the OSHwiki platform.

In Poland, it is worth following the work of the Central Institute for Labour Protection – National Research Institute (CIOP-PIB), which runs a long-term research programme on future competencies, the ergonomics of hybrid work and psychosocial risks. The findings of CIOP-PIB are increasingly feeding directly into the legislative work of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy.

Particular attention should also be paid to the Interreg Baltic Sea Region “PSR-Baltic” project, which maps regulatory gaps in the area of psychosocial risks across Baltic countries, including Poland, and formulates recommendations for policymakers. It is one of the few initiatives that combines a research perspective with a direct impact on public policy.

What employees want

Eurobarometer studies and national surveys on working conditions consistently point to rising employee expectations towards employers in three key areas.

First – flexibility: remote and hybrid work are no longer seen as a benefit, but as an expected standard, particularly among office workers. Second – care for mental health: according to a 2025 Hays Poland study, as many as 67% of Polish employees state that organisational culture and the approach to mental well-being have a significant impact on their decision to stay with or leave a company. Third – authenticity: employees are increasingly able to distinguish real actions from “well-being marketing” and reward with loyalty those employers who invest in safety beyond the legal minimum.

In place of a conclusion

This report is evidence that change in Polish health and safety is already underway – from the ground up, in organisations that do not wait for regulation.

The Modern Health and Safety Manifesto, the October 2025 expert session, and the voices of practitioners brought together in the following chapters paint a picture of an environment that is becoming more mature and understands that safety is not a procedure, but a culture. It also shows that health is a single whole. And there is a person behind every metric.

The European context provides legitimacy and a framework for this process. But the real impulse must come from organisations themselves. This report is an invitation – to reflect, to act and to join the conversation on the kind of health and safety we all deserve.

Bibliography:

- [1] Centralny Instytut Ochrony Pracy – Państwowy Instytut Badawczy. (2024). Rządowy Program Poprawy Bezpieczeństwa i Warunków Pracy. Wyniki badań etapu VI. CIOP-PIB. <https://www.ciop.pl>
- [2] European Commission. (2021). EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021–2027. Publications Office of the European Union. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0323>
- [3] EU-OSHA. (2026). Psychosocial risks and mental health at work. European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. <https://osha.europa.eu/en/themes/psychosocial-risks-and-mental-health>
- [4] EU-OSHA. (2025). Safer workers and stronger OSH compliance through digitalisation. <https://osha.europa.eu/en/oshnews/safer-workers-and-stronger-osh-compliance-through-digitalisation>
- [5] EU-OSHA. (2023). Healthy workplaces campaign 2023–2025: Safe and healthy work in the digital age. https://www.eiga.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/ELSLER-Healthy-Workplaces-Campaign-2023-25_-Safe-and-healthy-work-in-the-digital-age_FINAL.pdf
- [6] European Trade Union Confederation. (2023). Resolution on psychosocial risks at work. ETUC. <https://www.etuc.org>
- [7] Hays Poland. (2025). Raport płacowy i rynku pracy 2025. Hays. <https://www.hays.pl>
- [8] Interreg Baltic Sea Region. (2025). Mental health at work: Needed improvements in Poland. https://interreg-baltic.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Poland_Longlist-of-needed-improvements_FINAL.pdf
- [9] Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych. (2025). Absencja chorobowa w Polsce w 2024 roku. ZUS. [Absencja chorobowa - ZUS](#)



SUPPLEMENT

National Labour Inspectorate: Psychosocial risks as the missing pillar of a modern labour protection system



Marcin Stanecki,
Chief Labour Inspector

The traditional understanding of occupational health and safety, shaped during the period of intensive industrial development, focused for decades on eliminating measurable physical and chemical environmental hazards, such as the technical condition of machinery, noise or dust.

However, the contemporary labour market – dominated by a knowledge-based economy, digital transformation and flexible forms of employment – poses challenges of a fundamentally different nature, elevating psychosocial issues to the level of a public health crisis and a global economic concern.

In light of these realities, the National Labour Inspectorate recognises the urgent need to reassess traditional paradigms and shift inspection priorities, so that a formally safe or ergonomic workstation is no longer the sole point of reference, as it does not guarantee the protection of employees' health or life if they operate in an environment permeated by a toxic atmosphere, workplace bullying, discrimination or constant pressure.

These factors have a profoundly detrimental impact on employees' mental health and generate millions of days of sickness absence annually. At the global and macroeconomic level, this is clearly illustrated by the latest 2026 report of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which indicates that psychosocial risks – led by long working hours and psychological violence affecting 18% of workers – account each year for over 840,000 cardiovascular and mental health-related deaths worldwide, as well as the loss of nearly 45 million disability-adjusted life years (DALYs).

These rapid changes therefore compel labour protection systems to move away from a technocratic approach towards a holistic perspective, in which mental and physical well-being are treated as an inseparable whole. In this model, the shared and mandatory responsibility of supervisory authorities, management and health and safety services is to proactively eliminate such risks before they lead to irreversible harm to employees' health or to human tragedies revealed in the course of legal consultations provided by inspectors.

To manage such risks effectively, it is essential to define them precisely, drawing on the established doctrine of the ILO and the latest guidelines of the Senior Labour Inspectors' Committee (SLIC) of March 2026. According to these guidelines, the psychosocial work environment encompasses dynamic interactions between job design, organisational structure and management practices, and the individual predispositions and needs of employees.

From a systemic perspective, these factors should be analysed across three complementary levels:

- the content, variety and alignment of tasks;
- management practices, including decision-making autonomy, role clarity and the quality of social support;
- as well as broader corporate procedures governing forms of employment, performance evaluation systems and a culture of equal treatment.

Properly designed elements across these areas, grounded in organisational justice and trust, foster engagement. By contrast, their dysfunctional forms become a direct source of chronic pathophysiological stress, the vector of which has shifted significantly as a result of the technological revolution.

Mass digitalisation, algorithmic management, artificial intelligence systems, and the widespread adoption of remote and hybrid work models have given rise to the phenomenon of hyper-connectivity. By blurring the boundaries between professional and private life, this leads to chronic overstimulation and prevents full physical and psychological recovery. Real-time digital performance monitoring significantly reduces autonomy, intensifying job insecurity and depersonalisation of relationships. As a result, in poorly managed structures, technology becomes a tool of extreme algorithmic control and mechanical standardisation of human work, driving burnout rates to unprecedented levels.

For occupational safety specialists, it is also crucial to recognise that these mental burdens interact in a destructive synergy with physical strain on the musculoskeletal system (MSDs) associated with sedentary work, significantly accelerating the overall deterioration of employees' health.

To date, labour protection practices in Poland in the area of mental well-being – largely based on voluntary approaches, programmes of the National Labour Inspectorate (such as “Employer – organiser of safe work”), and the promotion of the National Labour Inspectorate’s Code of Good Practice – have delivered strong and measurable results in raising awareness. However, due to their voluntary nature, they also face clear structural limitations that hinder their widespread impact across the entire labour market.

Although large enterprises implement these guidelines for reputational purposes, in the small and medium-sized enterprise sector awareness of the issue remains low, and preventive measures are often ad hoc or merely superficial.

The main structural barrier lies in the current shape of the legal framework. While the Labour Code imposes general obligations on employers to prevent workplace bullying and discrimination, the system lacks precise implementing instruments that would require proactive management of these risks. The supervisory context is further complicated by the fact that the concept of workplace bullying is often misused by employees to describe standard – albeit uncomfortable – workplace management practices, without due consideration of the rights and legitimate objectives of the other party to the employment relationship.

In light of these conditions, the National Labour Inspectorate has undertaken formal legislative action, submitting proposals to the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy for a comprehensive revision of the regulations in two key areas.

The first concerns amendments to the Labour Code in the area of preventing undesirable behaviours, through clarifying the definition of workplace bullying and recognising internal anti-bullying procedures as mandatory in all workplaces, while at the same time introducing penalties for their absence as a new offence against employee rights.

The second proposal concerns supplementing the definition of the working environment in the general health and safety regulations to include psychosocial risks. Through an amendment to the relevant regulation, this would impose a legal obligation on employers to incorporate stress factors – such as workplace bullying, discrimination, work overload and underload, role ambiguity, and similar issues – into the mandatory occupational risk assessment. The introduction of these proposals into the legal system would fundamentally transform the institutional role of the labour inspector, providing a clear and robust basis for assessing management structures and work organisation in terms of their potential to generate chronic stress. It would also redefine the responsibilities of the health and safety function, requiring organisations to treat psychosocial factors as integral and fundamental elements of the entire system of employee health protection.

Such a regulatory reform would ultimately align Polish legislation with EU standards, SLIC guidelines, and the principles of ILO Convention No. 190 on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work, thereby creating a modern legal framework resilient to contemporary challenges.

The introduction of legislative changes also requires equipping employers – supported by health and safety services – with objective, repeatable and scientifically validated diagnostic tools. Occupational risk assessment in the psychosocial domain cannot be based on intuition or the subjective perceptions of management; rather, it must constitute a structured, systemic and evidence-based analytical process.

The modern methodology recommended by SLIC in its 2026 guidelines imposes on employers the obligation to integrate three fundamental approaches:

- the HTO (Human-Technology-Organisation) framework;
- the hierarchy of controls;
- the TOP (Technology-Organisation-Person) strategy.

The implementation of these principles within organisational structures requires employers to adopt an integrated analytical and implementation strategy, in which priority is given to risk assessment within the HTO framework (Human–Technology–Organisation).

In this process, organisations – supported by the health and safety function – must move away from focusing solely on individual employee characteristics and instead concentrate on technological and organisational factors, including management structures, workload, the culture of social relations and communication.

To map these variables, employers should use standardised tools, such as the international COPSOQ (Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire), which assesses quantitative demands, role clarity, autonomy and leadership quality in a fully measurable and anonymous manner.

The next stage involves the design of corrective measures by management in line with the hierarchy of risk controls. When determining preventive measures, employers – working in cooperation with health and safety specialists – are required to follow a strict sequence of actions, starting with elimination (the complete removal of the organisational stressor), followed by minimisation to reduce exposure to risk, and ultimately the implementation of formal control measures, such as mandatory anti-bullying procedures.

The final element of the process is the implementation of measures by the organisation's decision-making bodies in accordance with the TOP (Technology–Organisation–Person) strategy, which defines both the vector and sequence of corrective actions, placing absolute priority on systemic and technological solutions over individual-level interventions. Measures aimed directly at the individual – such as assertiveness training, mindfulness courses or psychological support packages – should be treated as strictly complementary. Providing counselling support to employees in a context where organisational structures and management culture remain fundamentally flawed and overload-inducing constitutes a serious methodological error and is ultimately ineffective.

The challenges associated with the psychosocial work environment require an immediate shift away from inaction. The mental health status of the Polish working population, reflected in millions of days of sickness absence, poses a threat to the country's economic stability and the well-being of its citizens. The National Labour Inspectorate is rising to this challenge, striving for systemic legislative reforms that will provide the tools necessary for effective oversight and enforcement of organisational standards within companies.

However, legal change alone will not be sufficient unless it is accompanied by professional and substantive preparation within the community of practitioners. I firmly believe that we have the capacity to achieve a historic shift in paradigm in this area. At the macroeconomic level, Poland is rapidly closing the gap and steadily strengthening its position as one of the driving forces and economic leaders of the European Union. For this reason, I am committed to ensuring that Poland also becomes a European leader and pioneer in implementing modern, human-centred approaches to the protection of mental health in the workplace.

I make a direct appeal to employers, health and safety professionals, occupational physicians, managers and representatives of the social partners: become the vanguard of this change within your organisations. Do not wait for the final entry into force of the regulation. Act now – initiate reviews of work organisation, begin using objective tools for assessing psychosocial risks, such as the HTO framework and COPSOQ, and build an organisational culture grounded in respect, dialogue and psychological safety. Every day, let us ask employees the fundamental question formulated by the ILO: “How is work going?” Ask it with attention and responsibility, creating a space in which the answer can be honest – and will be taken seriously.

Modern health and safety must be understood broadly – capable of protecting employees not only from physical accidents, but also from burnout. Together, we must create a working environment in which human dignity and mental health are absolute priorities, not subject to compromise in the face of market pressures.

Bibliography:

- [1] International Labour Organization. The psychosocial working environment: Global developments and pathways for action. Geneva 2026 (Polish edition: CIOP-PIB, Warsaw, 2026).
- [2] Główny Inspektor Pracy (Chief Labour Inspector). Synergy between employees' physical and mental health. Address delivered on the occasion of the International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers. Rzeszów, 28 April 2026.
- [3] Pejtersen J.H., Kristensen T.S., Borg V., Bjorner J.B.: The second version of the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire. *Scand. J. Public Health* 2010; 38, Supl. 3:8–24
- [4] Stanecki M. “Wypalenie zawodowe pod lupą PIP” [Occupational burnout under the scrutiny of the National Labour Inspectorate], Polish Radio Lublin, May 2026.
- [5] Act of 26 June 1974 – the Labour Code (Journal of Laws 2024, item 1416, as amended).
- [6] Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 26 September 1997 on General Health and Safety Regulations (Journal of Laws 2003, No. 169, item 1650, as amended).

The future of occupational safety: how CIOP-PIB's free tools help organisations build modern health and safety



Agnieszka Szczygielska,
Director of the Central Institute
for Labour Protection – National
Research Institute (CIOP-PIB)

The future of occupational safety: how CIOP-PIB's free tools help organisations build modern health and safety

Health and safety at work should not be viewed solely through the lens of professional obligations or legal requirements. They represent values that matter every day – both in the workplace and in private life. Awareness of risks, the ability to assess them, and care for one's own health support better decision-making, help protect oneself and others, and contribute to building a culture of responsibility.

Within organisations, attention to workplace safety translates into greater stability, higher quality of work, stronger employee engagement and reduced costs associated with accidents, absence and turnover. At the same time, it shapes behaviours that extend beyond the workplace – during travel, sports activities, household chores and everyday responsibilities.

This is why a modern approach to health and safety goes beyond mere compliance with procedures. It is an investment in people and their well-being, as well as in building habits that enhance safety across all areas of life. In this process, the knowledge, solutions and tools provided by CIOP-PIB can serve as valuable support for employers, employees and anyone seeking to take a more informed approach to health and safety.

Companies today operate in a context of rapid technological, demographic and social change. Automation, artificial intelligence, hybrid work, population ageing, mental health challenges, and emerging biological and chemical risks are making occupational safety an increasingly important element of organisational management and stability. Modern health and safety not only helps to reduce the number of accidents, but also supports productivity, lowers absenteeism and employee turnover, strengthens team engagement, and enhances the image of a responsible employer. As a result, it is increasingly seen as an investment in organisational development.

For over 75 years, CIOP-PIB has supported organisations in creating safe and healthy working conditions. The Institute's research has resulted in free tools, knowledge bases and educational materials that help companies manage health and safety more effectively. Below is an overview of selected challenges currently faced in health and safety, along with tools that can help address them.

Five challenges of modern health and safety

1. Reducing occupational risk effectively

Occupational risk assessment remains the foundation of every health and safety system. However, it should not be treated solely as a formal obligation. When conducted properly, it enables the identification of hazards, supports the planning of preventive measures, and facilitates better organisational decision-making. Companies and professionals can take advantage of two free tools developed by CIOP-PIB, which help structure the risk assessment process and make it easier to meet legal requirements:

- **IRYS** – a system supporting occupational risk assessment across various sectors [\[link\]](#);
- **Risk Score** – a tool for the assessment and documentation of occupational risk using the Risk Score method. It allows users to describe the work area, identify collective and personal protective measures, and generate a report summarising the assessment [\[link\]](#).

2. Reducing employee absenteeism and overload

Musculoskeletal disorders are among the most common work-related health issues today. They affect not only employees in production, warehousing and transport, but also those working at computers. Back pain, limb strain and poorly designed workstations contribute to increased absenteeism, reduced productivity and higher operating costs. In such cases, the INTERGON programme can be a valuable tool. It enables the assessment of the risk of musculoskeletal disorders and provides guidance on measures to reduce these risks. [\[link to the programme\]](#).

3. Taking care of employees' mental health

Modern health and safety covers not only physical safety, but also psychosocial working conditions. Chronic stress, information overload, time pressure, conflicts and uncertainty related to technological change can lead to reduced performance, increased absenteeism and burnout.

CIOP-PIB provides the Stress at Work platform, which includes practical materials and diagnostic tools, such as the Psychosocial Working Conditions Questionnaire [\[link to the platform\]](#).

These solutions help employers identify the root causes of problems and create a working environment that supports employee well-being.

4. Effective management of chemical and biological risks

In many sectors, chemical substances, dust and biological agents remain everyday challenges. Effective management of these risks requires access to up-to-date and reliable information.

Companies can make use of two specialised knowledge bases developed by CIOP-PIB, which serve as practical tools supporting the updating of risk assessments, the selection of protective measures, and the planning of preventive actions:

- **CHEMPYL** - a database providing information on chemical substances, dust, exposure limit values and risk assessment methods [\[link to the database\]](#);
- **BIOINFO** - a tool supporting the assessment of biological risks in the workplace [\[link to the database\]](#).

5. Preparing organisations for digitalisation and artificial intelligence

New technologies increase efficiency but also introduce new challenges. Remote work, algorithmic management, digital monitoring and information overload affect both mental health and workplace safety. For this reason, when implementing new technologies, organisations should assess not only their impact on business processes, but also on employees. As the National Focal Point of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), CIOP-PIB provides companies with knowledge and good practices for the safe implementation of new technologies. We also recommend our publication *Digitalisation of Work: People Come First* [\[link to the publication\]](#).

Health and safety as a source of competitive advantage

Health and safety at work is no longer seen solely as a regulatory obligation. Increasingly, it is becoming one of the key factors influencing organisational stability, the quality of processes, operational effectiveness, and the ability to attract and retain employees.

Organisations that invest in employee health and safety achieve tangible benefits. They reduce costs related to workplace accidents, sickness absence and staff turnover, while at the same time increasing employee engagement, improving work organisation and strengthening their reputation as responsible employers. In a competitive labour market, a safe and healthy working environment is becoming a key advantage in attracting talent and building team loyalty.

A strong focus on safety also fosters innovation and organisational resilience. Companies that effectively identify hazards and manage risk are better prepared for technological, demographic and organisational change. They adapt more easily to new conditions and minimise the risk of operational disruptions.

Modern health and safety is therefore not about introducing more procedures, but about consciously designing work to be safe, healthy and effective. It is an investment in people that translates into both employee well-being and the long-term development of the organisation. In this process, the knowledge, research and tools provided by CIOP-PIB can offer valuable support to organisations of all sizes, helping them build a culture of safety and responsibility.

List of additional free CIOP-PIB tools and resources developed for organisations and health and safety professionals:

Accident documentation

A set of forms and document templates supporting accident investigation procedures [\[link\]](#).

SINDBAD

A system integrating databases on risk factors and protective measures [\[link\]](#).

Free health and safety information materials

Materials developed based on the results of the Government Programme for the Improvement of Safety and Working Conditions [\[link\]](#).

Interactive Knowledge Base on Personal Protective Equipment

An online platform supporting employers and health and safety professionals in the selection, use and evaluation of the effectiveness of personal protective equipment, providing access to practical information, legal requirements, standards and industry materials.

<https://soi-info.ciop.lodz.pl/>

Health and safety knowledge bases

A central hub providing access to CIOP-PIB thematic databases and online resources [\[link\]](#).

CIOP-PIB mobile applications (Google Play) (applications supporting, among others, hydration, the selection of protective half-masks and recovery) [\[link\]](#).



Experts



Dorota Strojowska, Managing Director of the Business Partnership Division, Erste Bank Polska

She has over 20 years of experience in banking. For many years, she was associated with Bank Zachodni WBK and Santander Bank Polska (now Erste Bank Polska). Since 2017, she has been leading the Business Partnership Division at Erste Bank Polska, delivering a vision of empathetic and inclusive leadership. She holds degrees in Polish and Classical Philology from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, as well as postgraduate qualifications from the Poznań University of Economics and Business and Kozminski University. She has completed numerous training programmes in human resource management, coaching, strategic planning, financial management and business psychology, including Management Development Programme at Nottingham Trent University and the Advanced Leadership Program at ICAN Institute.



Agata Roziel, Director of the Strategic Partnership Department, Erste Bank Polska

An HR leader with over 20 years of experience in the banking sector. She currently serves as Director of the Strategic Partnership Department at Erste Bank Polska, where she is responsible for developing HR strategy that supports the organisation's business objectives. She works at the intersection of business, data and organisational culture, strengthening the strategic role of HR Business Partners and the impact of the HR function on organisational performance. Her responsibilities also include ethics and employee relations, including dialogue with employee representatives and trade unions. She combines business, financial and HR perspectives, focusing on simple and effective solutions in an environment of continuous change.



Nadia Winiarska, Deputy Director of the Labour Department, Lewiatan Confederation

A political scientist and expert in human resources, the labour market and the employment of foreign workers.



Beata Kubida, Manager of the Sustainability and ESG Team, Erste Bank Polska

She is responsible for the implementation and execution of the sustainability strategy, as well as overseeing the preparation of disclosures in line with the requirements of the CSRD directive and ESRS standards. She leads the work of the internal ESG Committee, ensuring the integration of environmental, social and governance aspects into the bank's operations and decision-making processes. She holds a postgraduate degree in sustainable finance and ESG from Kozminski University. She continuously develops her competencies, including through active participation in industry organisations and by maintaining certifications such as EFPA ESG Advisor and Sustainability and Climate Risk (SCR) awarded by the Global Association of Risk Professionals (GARP).



Kamila Włoszczak, Director of Strategic Leadership Department, Erste Bank Polska

An HR leader with nearly 20 years of experience. She is currently associated with Erste Bank Polska as Head of Strategic Leadership. She specialises in leadership development, the design of development programmes, and transforming approaches to talent management and learning towards solutions that genuinely support business needs. She has gained experience in this area at Budimex and PKO Bank Polski, where she was responsible for comprehensive development initiatives, training standards and the implementation of solutions enhancing organisational effectiveness. She combines business and HR perspectives, grounding her approach in listening closely to organisational needs and translating insights into actions. She supports leaders in improving the quality of management, strengthening engagement and building organisations ready to operate in conditions of continuous change.



Krzysztof Puchalski, sociologist, PhD, Assistant Professor at the National Centre for Workplace Health Promotion, Nofer Institute of Occupational Medicine

He specialises in public health awareness and culture, as well as in the organisation and evaluation of health education and health promotion projects. His research focuses on the transformation and determinants of enterprise engagement in promoting employee health and well-being. He also advises on the implementation of workplace and community-based health promotion strategies and programmes. In 2009, he received (together with his team) a World Health Organization (WHO) award for outstanding contributions to research on workplace health promotion. He is the author and co-author of numerous scientific publications and expert reports, as well as guides for managers and tools for social diagnostics. He is an academic lecturer, social researcher, trainer of social change leaders, and an expert involved in health promotion projects and policies.



Beata Jędrecka, Chief Health and Safety Specialist, Erste Bank Polska

Health and Safety Specialist with many years of experience. She focuses on combining legal requirements with a practical approach to creating a healthy and safe working environment. She simplifies complex regulations by translating them into concrete actions that support the organisation. In the areas of ergonomics and remote work, she develops solutions that have a real impact on employees' comfort, health, and efficiency.



Katarzyna Sobieraj, Director of the Development Office, Erste Bank Polska

An organisational psychologist with extensive experience in designing and implementing development strategies that support business priorities. In her work, she relies on data, enabling her to effectively deliver initiatives that drive the organisation's strategic objectives. She leads development programmes that strengthen leadership culture, enhance managerial effectiveness and support employee engagement. She operates effectively in multicultural environments and actively promotes diversity and the advancement of women in leadership.



Diana Żochowska, Health Business Development Director, Ringier Axel Springer Polska

A digital health expert whose mission is to build a healthier and more informed society. For over 15 years, she has been creating and developing media ecosystems (including Medonet and abcZdrowie), designing and implementing unique B2C and B2B platforms (including the National Health Test and the Medonet Health Congress), and actively shaping the direction of change in health marketing by sharing her knowledge and experience at key industry events. A strategist of innovative business solutions targeted at consumers, patients, medical professionals and decision-makers.



Anna Walaszczyk, Organisational Culture Expert, Erste Bank Polska

An expert with many years of experience in designing and implementing initiatives in the field of organisational culture and leadership development. Currently, as an Organisational Culture Expert at Erste Bank Polska, she focuses on activities supporting diversity, equality and inclusion.



Daniel Trybus, Senior Health and Safety Specialist, Erste Bank Polska

Senior Health and Safety Specialist at Erste Bank Polska with over 10 years of experience in the field of health and safety and in building a values-based safety culture. In his work, he focuses on moving away from a command-and-control approach towards engaging employees through awareness, dialogue and intrinsic motivation. He believes that sustainable safety in an organisation emerges when health and safety becomes a natural part of everyday decision-making, rather than merely a set of procedures.



Mateusz Starke, Health and Safety Expert, Erste Bank Polska

Health and Safety Expert at Erste Bank Polska. He specialises in coordinating occupational safety areas – from accident analysis and audits to workplace design and layout. He creates and develops sports and well-being initiatives that effectively support employees' health, integration and engagement. In his work, he combines an analytical approach with creativity, delivering solutions that are not only compliant with regulations but, above all, practical and effective.



Izabela Laskowska, Rossmann

Head of Health and Safety, an expert in health prevention with 18 years of experience in developing a culture of health and safety within organisations. She passionately promotes a healthy and safe lifestyle by initiating and implementing numerous health-promoting initiatives that effectively support employee well-being and a culture of safety in the workplace.



Agnieszka Zawadzka-Jablonowska, Leon Kozminski Academy

A business psychologist, mentor and trainer in leadership, mental resilience and well-being. An HR consultant, and an individual, team and group coach. Owner of Well-being Partner – a company supporting organisations, leaders and teams in building resilient, safe and sustainable work environments.



Edyta Paduch, Luxmed

Head of Health and Safety in an international medical company, a nurse and a healthcare expert, and a graduate of ESG studies. She specialises in occupational safety in medical environments, combining clinical experience with safety management in organisations operating to high standards of quality and responsibility.



Krzysztof Wojtyra, Kaufland Polska Markety Sp. z o.o. Sp. j.

An expert with nearly 30 years of experience in health and safety, for the past 11 years serving as Head of Health and Safety at Kaufland Polska Markety. Previously, for 16 years, he shaped safety standards at Volvo Polska. An advocate of a human-centred approach to safety management. He specialises in building safety cultures based on trust, education and practical preparation of employees for workplace challenges. Together with cross-functional teams, he develops onboarding programmes that place employee well-being and safety at the centre.



Anna Szala, KRUK S.A.

Head of Health and Safety. She specialises in safety culture, training and the systemic implementation of health and safety solutions in modern and dispersed organisations.



Joanna Kudyba and Aleksandra Kozyra, health and safety and well-being specialists, Credit Agricole

Passionate advocates of modern health and safety at Credit Agricole, combining a focus on safety culture with a commitment to employee well-being. They specialise in building an engaging, healthy and supportive working environment. They prioritise authentic relationships and support employees in developing healthy habits.



Michał Kowalski, BNP Paribas

Manager of the Health and Safety Team at BNP Paribas Bank Polska S.A. An expert in occupational health and safety and fire protection, with over 13 years of experience across the manufacturing, logistics, hospitality, high-risk industrial, and critical infrastructure sectors. Currently working in the financial sector. He is committed to reshaping the perception of health and safety, moving away from its image as a relic of a bygone era.



Łukasz Podgórski, Generative Artificial Intelligence Domain Expert, Erste Bank Polska

An expert in Generative AI with over 15 years of experience in the IT sector. His career has progressed step by step – from developer, through system administrator, to business roles – which enables him to combine technical and strategic perspectives. He specialises in the implementation of AI solutions and process automation, with a particular focus on their practical value, safety and measurable outcomes. He has delivered over 100 technology projects for companies across various sectors.



Zuzanna Kowalik, labour market analyst, University of Warsaw, Institute for Structural Research

She is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Sociology at the University of Warsaw.

In her doctoral research, she analyses how new technologies are transforming the quality of work in the context of non-standard forms of employment, such as remote work and platform work. Her current research project focuses on social dialogue at the European Union level concerning emerging regulations on psychosocial risks in the workplace.



Karolina Kanclerz, Attorney-at-Law, Partner at PCS, Head of the Wrocław Office

For over 20 years, she has advised leading employers on labour law, supporting management boards and HR departments in strategic and highly complex projects. As a certified Compliance Officer, she leads the compliance practice, specialising in cases related to workplace bullying, discrimination, and issues at the intersection of labour law and compliance.

She is the author of the Dzień Dobry HR newsletter and a highly regarded speaker at conferences and training sessions. She is known for her ability to translate complex legal issues into practical business solutions.



Agnieszka Krawczyk-Dąbrowska, psychogerontologist, intergenerational communication specialist

A psychogerontologist and specialist in intergenerational communication. Member of the Polish Gerontological Society and of the Council for Women in the Labour Market at the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy; expert on age diversity at the GrowSpace Foundation. Lecturer, speaker and trainer. Author of the blog psychogerontologia.com



Karolina Pawłowska–Cyprysiak, Assistant, Head of the Laboratory of Physiology and Occupational Hygiene, CIOP-PIB (Central Institute for Labour Protection – National Research Institute)

A creative psychopedagogue and PhD in health sciences, Head of the Laboratory of Physiology and Occupational Hygiene at the Department of Ergonomics, CIOP-PIB. She has been affiliated with the Institute for 17 years. Her research focuses, among other areas, on the labour market activation of people with disabilities and its determinants, health education for different groups of employees, and supporting older workers in maintaining employment, including through lifelong learning and educational engagement.



Agata Sucharska, Attorney-at-Law, Erste Bank Polska

Attorney-at-Law at Erste Bank Polska S.A. She provides legal advisory and represents clients in employment law cases. She supports the implementation of strategic HR projects and initiatives at the intersection of labour law and compliance (in particular whistleblowing regulations).



Michał Wróblewski, Senior Specialist in Sustainability and ESG, Erste Bank Polska

Has 18 years of experience in banking, including since 2018 at Erste Bank Polska. In recent years, he has focused on sustainability and the role of banks in economic transition. He specialises in ESG communication. He completed postgraduate studies in sustainable finance and ESG at Kozminski University and at the Institute of Journalism and Political Science at the University of Warsaw.



Olga Biczel, Employee Experience Specialist, Erste Bank Polska

Employee Experience Specialist and champion at Erste Bank Polska, service designer and certified coach.

She combines data with empathy, helping to translate the employee voice into meaningful actions and a culture based on trust.



Celina Prinz, Head of the Culture and Talent Acquisition Office, Erste Bank Polska

A leader with experience in organisational culture, employer branding and talent strategies. For years, she has designed and delivered employer branding strategies and campaigns that support organisational growth and effectively attract candidates. She currently serves as Head of the Culture and Talent Acquisition Office at Erste Bank Polska, where she is responsible for employer branding, talent strategies and initiatives that strengthen organisational culture.



Małgorzata Furtak, Head of the Health and Safety and Wellbeing Office, Erste Bank Polska

A manager with extensive experience across multiple areas – from operations and customer service to health and safety and employee well-being. She holds degrees in Finance and Banking, Occupational Health and Safety, and Social Psychology. She is currently focused on a strategic approach to building a culture of health and care in an international environment. She develops pioneering solutions in the area of physical and psychological safety and actively shares her experience as a speaker at national and international events, as well as an author of articles in *Obiekty* magazine (Human-Centric series). She also serves as a mentor in development programmes.



Ewa Ulicz, sociologist, manager, co-founder of the GrowSPACE Foundation

An expert in diversity, communication and management.



Marcin Stanecki – Chief Labour Inspector

A graduate of the Faculty of Law and Administration at the University of Łódź, as well as postgraduate studies in European Law at the same university.

He holds qualifications as a health and safety specialist and has completed pedagogical training. He also completed postgraduate studies in occupational health and safety at Lodz University of Technology and pedagogical studies at the University of Economics and Humanities in Łódź.

Professional experience and specialisation

For many years, he has specialised in the practical aspects of labour law. This is supported by nearly 20 years of experience at the National Labour Inspectorate, where – alongside supervisory and inspection duties as a first-instance administrative authority – he acted as a public prosecutor and represented employees before courts of first and second instance. He also practised as an attorney-at-law for many years.

He has lectured in postgraduate programmes in occupational health and safety at the University of Economics and Humanities in Skierniewice.

He also served as a municipal consumer rights ombudsman in Skierniewice. He is the author of articles on labour law and health and safety published in Dziennik Gazeta Prawna, Rzeczpospolita and on the INFOR.pl platform.

As Director of the Labour Law Department at the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (2021–2024), he was ranked among the most influential lawyers in Poland – in the prestigious Dziennik Gazeta Prawna ranking, he placed 23rd in 2022 and rose to 16th in 2023.

On 15 June 2024, he was appointed Chief Labour Inspector by the Marshal of the Sejm, Szymon Hołownia.



Agnieszka Szczygielska, Director of the Central Institute for Labour Protection – National Research Institute (CIOP-PIB)

An expert in occupational safety, employee health and modern approaches to work environment management.

For many years, she has been involved in research, development and implementation activities aimed at improving working conditions in Poland.

She leads the country's largest research institute dedicated to labour protection, responsible for developing innovative solutions that support employee safety, health and well-being, as well as the competitiveness of enterprises.

She promotes a modern approach to health and safety, in which workplace safety is not only a legal requirement, but also an integral element of business strategy, organisational culture and sustainable development. She places particular emphasis on challenges related to labour market transformation, mental health, age diversity management, the implementation of new technologies, and the impact of artificial intelligence on the work environment.

She actively participates in national and international initiatives aimed at creating safe, healthy and human-centred workplaces of the future. In her work, she combines the perspectives of research, practice and social dialogue, supporting the development of a modern safety culture in Poland.

She serves as Chair of the Interministerial Commission for Maximum Admissible Concentrations and Intensities of Harmful Agents in the Working Environment, and is a member of: the Labour Protection Council at the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, the Sheffield Group, the PEROSH Steering Committee, the Stakeholder Council of the Faculty of Arts at Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, the Chief Labour Inspector's Council for Young People in the Labour Market, the Council for Women in the Labour Market, and the Congress of Women Association.