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Alcohol policy at the workplace- investment with high return

Abstenteeism from work, presenteesim during work, drinking during working hours, accidents at the workplace, all have negative impact on work performance, competitiveness and productivity. Although in the times of the economic crises alcohol policy at the workplace might not be on the top of the employers list, there are many reasons why it should.

On 22nd November, the European Workplace and Alcohol project will be holding its final conference in the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels). EWA has developed, implemented and evaluated innovative, evidence-based alcohol interventions in 55 workplaces targeted to more than 11,000 employees across 11 European countries. Experts from the project will present the main results and policy recommendations and the core messages from the tool kit which is aimed at helping employers understanding better how to introduce effective policies on alcohol at the workplace. The project partners will also share pitfalls to avoid.

'Introducing health promoting policies at the workplace is definitely one of the best investments into our future' commented Mariann Skar, Secretary General of European Alcohol Policy Alliance.

"The majority of European employees support the introduction of alcohol policies at the workplace and having a workplace alcohol policy in place to help change the corporate culture around alcohol. In addition, implementing alcohol preventive actions in the workplace can raise awareness and reduce risky drinking and more importantly can grow support for the introduction of workplace alcohol policies" commented Joan Colom, Director of the Program on Substance Abuse of the Public Health Agency of the Government of Catalonia and coordinator of the EWA project".

Risky and heavy drinking can incur costs at the workplace through increased absenteeism and reduced productivity on the job, damaging relationships between employees, affecting staff morale, and leading to accidents and injuries at work.

Often forgotten is the impact of drinkers on the productivity of people other than the drinker. Moreover, about 20 to 25% of all accidents at work involve intoxicated people injuring themselves and other victims, including co-workers.

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EUROCARE (The European Alcohol Policy Alliance) is an alliance of non-governmental and public health organisations with around 50 member organisations across 23 European countries advocating the prevention and reduction of alcohol related harm in Europe.

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