



## TOP STORY

## 2016 Results: Risk of work accidents drops

### Number of fatal work and commuting accidents declines

In June, the DGUV published the 2016 annual figures for the German social accident insurance institutions for the public and private sectors. Whereas the risk of having an accident at work declined, cases of officially recognised occupational diseases increased significantly. The average contribution paid to the social accident insurance institutions for the private sector fell by a further 1.3 percent in 2016. Companies in the private sector only had to pay on average 1.18 percent of payroll subject to contributions for insurance against workplace accidents and occupational diseases.

Statistically speaking, it has become somewhat less likely to have an accident at work. Although the number of work accidents increased last year by 1.3 percent to 877,071, the accident rate in relation to the number of hours worked dropped by 0.4 percent. This means that for every 1000 full-time workers, around 22 had an accident that was required to be reported last year. The number of fatal work and commuting accidents also fell: 424 people died as a result of a workplace accident, 46 fewer than the previous year. 311 people died from a commuting accident, which is 37 fewer than in 2015. However, the total number of commuting accidents rose by 3.8 percent to 186,070. 'One particularly good piece of news is that fewer people died at work or on the way there than ever before', said

**'One particularly good piece of news is that fewer people died at work or on the way there than ever before.'**

Dr Joachim Breuer, Director General of the DGUV



Photograph: Wolfgang Bellwinkel / DGUV

Basal-cell and squamous-cell carcinomas were among the most common occupational diseases in 2016. Personal protective equipment helps to reduce exposure to ultraviolet radiation.

Dr Joachim Breuer, Director General of the DGUV. "Nevertheless, every accident is one accident too many. That's why we are committed to Vision Zero – a world without occupational accidents and work-related diseases." There were also changes in the number of occupational diseases compared to the previous year. There were 20,539 cases of an occupational disease being officially recognised. That is an increase of 22.2 percent over the previous year. One of the reasons for this is that basal-cell carcinoma due to UV radiation was added to the list of official occupational diseases in 2015. A study conducted by the Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of the German Social Accident Insurance (IFA) showed that exposure in various occupations that work outdoors can be significant. It is therefore imperative that employers take appropriate preventive measures based on individual risk assessments and that they make employees aware of the increased risk of skin cancer.

## FIGURES

## 2016 Results

Fewer fatal work and commuting accidents

**877 071**  
WORK ACCIDENTS

**424** ↓9.8%  
OF THEM FATAL

**186 070**  
COMMUTING ACCIDENTS

**311** ↓10.6%  
OF THEM FATAL

Web: [www.dguv.de](http://www.dguv.de)  
(Webcode dp1047137)



## Good results

Dear Reader,

We recently published the 2016 figures from the German social accident insurance institutions. Overall, the results were positive. The risk of having a work accident continues to decline and the number of fatal accidents has dropped further. However, every workplace accident is one too many! That's why we're committed to our Vision Zero: a world without occupational accidents and work-related diseases. And we're doing our best to achieve this, including the use of comprehensive preventive measures and through support and advice from our member companies. However, the number of occupational diseases has risen. Basal-cell carcinoma due to UV radiation, which was added to the list of officially recognised occupational diseases in January 2015, has been a major contributor to this increase. This disease is generally on the rise and is a problem which is not just restricted to the world of work. However, it's possible to protect yourself by avoiding UV radiation wherever possible or by using effective sun protection. But one thing is clear; climate change means that the problem will continue to grow and we are all called upon to find solutions and to raise awareness across the whole of society.

With this in mind, enjoy your summer – but always use sun protection!

**Dr Joachim Breuer**  
Director General of the DGUV

# 'I advocate clear role divisions'

On 1 March the European Commission presented its White Paper on the future of Europe. In conjunction with the White Paper, the Commission will also publish five reflection papers. The first of these on Europe's social dimension was published at the end of April. DGUV Kompakt spoke with Dr Joachim Breuer about the scenarios described in the paper for how the EU and the Member States can work together in the social field.

**The reflection paper on the social dimension describes three possible scenarios for how the EU can work with the Member States in the social field. In your opinion, are all three scenarios real options?**

Let's start the other way around: which scenario isn't an option? Clearly the first. It only focuses on the Single Market. That is, it only looks at how economic integration can be driven forward. This would jeopardise the achievements already made in social protection. For example, common European specifications on minimum requirements in occupational safety and health would fall to the wayside and no longer be developed. In my opinion, that isn't an option for the future. It would be actually be a step backward.

**The second scenario focuses on more intensive cooperation between the 'willing'. That sounds reasonable – only those who want to get involved do so?**

This scenario is already being talked about in different contexts as 'flexible integration', 'a Europe of multiple speeds' and 'the coalition of the willing'. Anyone who believes there is added value in social cooperation can get in touch with other Member States and decide on bilateral cooperation programmes. Basically, the proposal has the advantage that it's based on voluntary participation. This is particularly welcome for social security because the way this is organised is a national matter. The Commission announced in the re-

flexion paper that its proposals should be closely linked with its recommendations for an economic and monetary union. The Commission considers that a 'coalition of the willing' could firstly focus on the euro area countries. But we're still to see any concrete proposals.

**The aim of the third scenario 'deepen the social dimension together' is to achieve convergence, that is, to harmonise the development of social policy. Is this the first step towards a common European social state?**

This scenario clearly goes in the direction of 'more Europe'. Some observers believe the goal of this is to create a European federal state. But you can also take other ideas away from the proposal. In terms of the question of who can deal with the future challenges for social security in Europe, it's difficult to imagine that either the EU on its own or the Member States on their own can do this. I think, and this is what we wrote in our comments for the consultation on the Pillar of Social Rights, it's easier to find answers and solutions when we work together and through the exchange of knowledge and experiences than on our own. It's a matter of better cooperation between all stakeholders. This is a great opportunity. But I advocate clear role divisions. The know-how and experience in organising social security is found

within the institutions responsible for social security systems in the Member States and it should be used accordingly. This also means taking into consideration na-

**'Common action should be based on common beliefs.'**

**Dr Joachim Breuer,  
Director General of the DGUV**



Photograph: psdesign1 / Fotolia

The EU Commission's 'White Paper on the future of Europe' discusses the major challenges and opportunities for Europe over the next ten years.

tional specificities and traditions at all times. Therefore, it's all the more important that the relevant institutions be involved from the very beginning in these type of issues and processes.

#### **That means working together but without harmonisation in all areas?**

Common action should be based on common beliefs. I doubt that consensus could be reached on proposals such as a single European social security number or a uniform European retirement age. Implementing a uniform retirement age, as suggested in the reflection paper, would be particularly dependent on the financial viability of the social security systems. This is where European action is clearly limited. The financial sustainability of the social security systems must not be jeopardised. To stress the point once more: a clear 'yes' to joint action but the fundamental division of competences as set out in the European Treaties must not be called into question.

#### **FYI White Paper on the future of Europe**

The EU is looking ahead and thinking about the vision of its future with the 27 Member States. The 'White Paper on the future of Europe' addresses how Europe will change over the next ten years. It discusses issues such as the impact of new technologies on society and the labour force, concerns about globalisation, safety issues, and the increase in populism. The White Paper covers topics such as new technologies, climate change and migration. It also deals with demographic issues such as the ageing European population. The paper outlines five scenarios of where the Union could stand in 2025, depending on which path it takes or which vision it wants to see for its future with the 27 Member States.

**More information on the White Paper including a PDF download of the whole document can be found online [here](#).**

#### **TOPIC**

## **Five new occupational diseases**

At the start of July, the Bundesrat approved a change to the German Occupational Diseases Ordinance (BKV). As a result, five diseases have been added to Appendix 1 of the BKV. The change occurred because of new scientific understanding from the medical world based on scientific recommendations by the Medical Advisory Committee for Occupational Diseases (ÄSVB) which is part of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS). The changes to the Ordinance are expected to enter into force on 1 August 2017.

The new diseases added to the list are: Chronic myeloid or chronic lymphatic leukaemia caused by 1,3-Butadiene, a colourless gas which is used in the production of various types of synthetic rubbers as well as in the plastics industry. The second disease is bladder cancer caused by polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). PAHs in the working environment are mainly found in coking plants, tar refineries, in the electrographite industry, in road construction and when cleaning chimneys. Focal dystonia was also added; this is a disease of the central nervous system found in musicians who play a musical instrument which requires high intensity fine-motor skills. In addition, two occupational diseases were expanded: Occupational Disease No 4113 (lung cancer caused by PAH) now includes laryngeal cancer and Occupational Disease No 4104 (lung cancer or laryngeal cancer in connection with asbestos) now includes ovarian cancer.

Occupational diseases only include diseases which, according to findings from medical science, are caused by specific effects that certain groups of people are significantly more exposed to through their work than the rest of the population. In the case of an occupational disease, the primary goal of German statutory accident insurance is to use all appropriate means to mitigate the effects of the disease and to prevent it worsening.

## RECOMMENDED

# OSH is everybody's business



Making it easier to implement OSH measures is the goal of a new guide published by the EU Commission – 'Health and safety at work is everybody's business - Practical guidance for employers'. Over 27 pages, it provides not only an overview of the most important legal obligations but also practical tips for applying OSH regulations. For example, the guide covers the most important steps needed to conduct a risk assessment, the importance of prevention and protection measures, and OSH training. The latest evaluation of EU legislation on OSH showed that there is still a great deal of potential regarding its implementation. This requires more and better information in all companies. The aim of the guide is to assist these companies.

**Web:** The guide "Health and safety at work is everybody's business - Practical guidance for employers" is available for download [here](#).

## NEWS IN BRIEF

# Preventing skin cancer

The number of skin cancers being treated in hospitals increased by 17.1 percent between 2010 and 2015. According to the Federal Statistical Office, a total of 100,400 patients were treated for this disease in hospitals in 2015. One of the reasons for this trend is the climate and climate change. In the opinion of the UV Protection Alliance, a body of experts brought together by the Federal Office for Radiation Protection (BfS), climate and climate change will have a significant impact on people's health in the future. Heat stress will increase and experts predict a rise in the risk of skin cancer because people will spend more time outside due to the rise in the number of sunny days. High levels of sun exposure happen in many everyday places including the workplace, the schoolyard, day-care centre playgrounds, in the park or on the football field. The UV Protection Alliance is calling for nationwide setting-based preventive



Photograph: AlexanderRaths / Fotolia

measures to be put in place. 'Our living and working environment should be designed in such a way that everyone staying outdoors is able to avoid exposure to high UV radiation', said Dr Cornelia Baldermann, Coordinator of the BfS UV Protection Alliance. This preventive work includes design measures for creating shade or the greening of cities. The DGUV is a member of the Protection Alliance along with 19 other bodies. The aim is to establish measures which, over the long term, help reduce the number of new cases of skin cancer and other health problems caused by UV radiation.

**Web:** More information about the UV Protection Alliance [here](#).



## 'Wind and Weather' Risk Check

The aim of a new 'Risk Check' initiative from the German social accident institutions and the German Road Safety Council (DVR) is for road users to be much better aware of the risks of dangerous weather conditions.

**Web:** [www.risiko-check-wetter.de](http://www.risiko-check-wetter.de) (German only)

## IMPORTANT DATES

**5 September 2017**  
**BGW forum 2017 – Services for the disabled and OSH**  
**HAMBURG**  
[www.bgw-online.de](http://www.bgw-online.de) > [BGW forum](#)

**14-15 September 2017**  
**Training Event in Social Medicine and Social Law**  
**HEIDELBERG**  
[www.heidelberger-gespraech.de](http://www.heidelberger-gespraech.de)

**18-20 September 2017**  
**5<sup>th</sup> University Conference: Vision Zero**  
**DRESDEN**  
[www.dguv.de](http://www.dguv.de) > [Veranstaltungen](#)

**4-7 October 2017**  
**REHACARE**  
**DÜSSELDORF**  
[www.rehacare.de](http://www.rehacare.de)

## NUMBER OF THE MONTH

# 2,451

people ...

... died in 2016 because of an occupational disease. The main cause involved diseases as a result of inorganic dust particles, especially asbestos.

## LEGAL INFORMATION

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