



TOP STORY

Focusing on healthy work

The German social accident insurance institutions advocate sustainable long-term care

The coalition agreement between the CDU/CSU and the SPD provides for far-reaching changes in the long-term care of the elderly. Among other things, a fast-track programme aims to alleviate the shortage of staff in long-term care facilities by creating an additional 8,000 specialist staff positions. For the first time, there will also be mandatory tools for allocating personnel. The German social accident insurance institutions welcome these plans and are in favour of making more resources available for maintaining the health of workers in the long-term care sector.

It was one of the defining moments of the last federal election campaign. In a live TV debate, young caregiver Alexander Jorde confronted Chancellor Angela Merkel with the shortage of skilled workers in healthcare and old-age care. Half a year later it is clear that there will be changes in the long-term care sector. In their coalition agreement, the CDU/CSU and the SPD have agreed on various measures to improve the situation in the care sector, including more personnel.

‘It’s important that something be done in the care sector’, said Professor Stephan Brandenburg, Director General of the German Social Accident Insurance Institution for the Health and Welfare Services (BGW). He also recommends looking at how to improve working conditions for employees. ‘Additional jobs are an opportunity to have more time for occupational safety and health measures – and that includes leadership.’

Scientific studies have repeatedly shown that leadership plays a key role in maintaining the health of employees. This has also been taken up by the German social accident insurance institutions in their current **kommmitmensch** prevention campaign. ‘However, in order for managers to embrace this role, they need time; for example, time



Photo: Gina Sanders – Fotolia

Employing more specialist staff is the first step. In addition, more resources must be made available for the health of caregivers.

for one-on-one or group discussions and to prepare these’, said Brandenburg. ‘The BGW offers a wide range of support services - including seminars, coaching sessions and organisational consulting.’ Anyone who does not sufficiently take into account health-promoting leadership when assessing staffing levels neglects a significant factor for healthy and satisfying care work. It is also advisable to include employee health as a separate indicator in the management guidelines of care facilities and in the quality assurance of care. Furthermore, healthy ways of working should be taught and encouraged during vocational training. ‘A change in long-term care is possible’, said Brandenburg, ‘but this requires framework conditions that set the health of employees in their daily work as a core value and take it into account accordingly.’

Web: www.bgw-online.de/positionspapier-pflege
(German only)

FYI

kommmitmensch

The **kommmitmensch** campaign promotes a culture of prevention. The six action areas focus on:

- Leadership
- Communication
- Participation
- Error-management culture
- Working climate
- Safety and health as core values

For more on the campaign:
www.kommmitmensch.de
(German only)

What's the benefit of a European Social Security Number?



Photo: finecki - stock.adobe.com

As part of his State of the Union speech in Autumn 2017, EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker presented the Commission's work programme until the end of 2018. In addition to establishing a European Labour Authority, he also proposed the introduction of a single European Social Security Number (ESSN). According to the EU Commission, an ESSN would make it possible to unequivocally identify people across borders and supplement existing instruments such as the upcoming European Exchange of Social Security Information (EESSI) system.

The European Commission expects a great deal from the ESSN. It should make it possible to effectively exchange information between national authorities as a means of combating fraud and making it easier for citizens when dealing with administrative procedures. The initiative is being hotly discussed by the Member States, by European bodies and amongst national social security institutions. These discussions may well have contributed to the decision to postpone the proposals announced by the EU Commission as part of its Social Fairness Package from March until later in the year.

In joint comments made as part of the public consultation on the initiative, the umbrella associations of Germany's social insurance system were generally welcoming of the initiative. However, they

also pointed out some existing obstacles such as the issue of its legal basis and the situation in the German legal system, particularly with regards to data protection and privacy. The value added by introducing an ESSN was assessed differently by the social insurance institutions. In DGUV Kompakt, the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Funds (GKV-Spitzenverband), the German Federal Pension Insurance (DRV Bund) and the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV) put forward their position.

Public consultation on a European Labour Authority and an ESSN

Comments by the German Social Insurance from 4 January 2018

Web: <http://dsv-europa.de> > Positionspapiere (German only)

'This is an important and fitting discussion'

The recent discussion over a European Social Security Number is important and fitting. The European legislator would use the ESSN to administratively and technically reconstruct what many EU citizens already take for granted: mobility within EU borders. An ESSN would not only make it easier for citizens to communicate with authorities, it would also make it faster to identify people and their entitlements to social benefits. The statutory health insurance funds are calling for an ESSN in addition to existing national insurance numbers and a transitional period for its implementation. Without this transition-

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Dr Doris Pfeiffer

al period, unnecessary costs would be incurred because a new European insurance card would have to be produced for over 70 million insured persons. It is also imperative to ensure that existing infrastructures (e.g. telematics, EESSI or a European e-health infrastructure) are included and duplicate structures are avoided. There is added value for statutory health insurance if insured persons and insurance funds benefit from technical solutions. This is the direction that statutory health insurance will take as it advises the European Commission on further steps.

Photo: Tom Maelisa/GKV



Dr Doris Pfeiffer
Chair of the Board, National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Funds

'An ESSN has potential'

Labour mobility is halting increasingly less at national borders within the European internal market. Workers are looking for new jobs in other EU Member States or are posted there by their employer for a certain period of time. Coordination of the social security systems is becoming increasingly important. There is also a push from digitalisation. As such, the EESSI project is an important milestone. In the future, Germany will exchange information with our European partners digitally. However, insured persons are still being identified with a myriad of national insurance numbers.

'A single ESSN could help to avoid mistakes and delays. It is also conceivable to check insurance status electronically. At the moment, posted workers still use paper certificates to verify their social insurance coverage in their country of origin.'

Gundula Roßbach

A single ESSN could help to avoid mistakes and delays. It is also conceivable to check insurance status electronically. At the moment, posted workers still use paper certificates to verify their social insurance coverage in their country of origin. There are many ideas for how to use an ESSN. However, existing insurance numbers cannot be replaced because they are a fixed element of national processes and procedures. It is important to us to make procedures efficient and customer-friendly. The Commission's initiative is an important launch pad.



Gundula Roßbach
President of the German
Federal Pension Insurance

Photo: DRV/Bund

'It's the "how" that matters!'

The introduction of a European Social Security Number is a proposal with potential. For example, the ESSN or a 'digital identifier' could be used to quickly check social security status beyond a country's borders. For Germany's statutory accident insurance, it could be helpful, for example, in the event of workplace accidents to use the number to quickly determine where a posted worker in the construction or hospitality sector is insured in order to contact the competent authorities. However, when it comes to procedures such as granting benefits in cross-border cases, it is possible to identify a person using the EESSI system, even with-

'Under the heading "digitalisation of administration", the ESSN could play a major role. It would simplify communication between authorities and make it more secure.'

Dr Joachim Breuer

out a European Social Security Number. The objective of speeding up the process could only be achieved with an online request for insurance coverage or benefits. In this context and under the heading 'digitalisation of administration', the ESSN could play a major role. It would simplify communication between authorities and make it more secure. This would also provide many benefits to insured persons. However, this major accomplishment requires access to the (social) data of the various branches of social insurance and this is not yet congruent with the existing legal situation.



Dr Joachim Breuer
Director General of the DGUV

Photo: Bellwinkel/DGUV

TOPIC

Study: Violence towards first responders

A drunk person resisting help or family members blocking the way to the ambulance - these are not isolated cases when first responders are obstructed or insulted on duty. In order to determine how dangerous this is, the German Social Accident Insurance Institution for the Public Sector in North Rhine-Westphalia (Unfallkasse NRW), together with other partners, commissioned the Ruhr University Bochum to conduct a qualitative study on violence against paramedics. The conclusion: paramedics feel that they are insufficiently prepared for conflicts and are often overwhelmed by the situation. They want more targeted training.

Being fended off, pushed away or spat on – these are examples of typical aggressive behaviour towards first responders. They are not criminal offences. 59% of respondents stated that they had experienced at least one of these types of attacks. 27% of respondents had been the victim of a physical, criminal offence in the previous 12 months. 98% of paramedics in North Rhine-Westphalia had been verbally abused in this period.

The aim of the study was to provide a scientific basis for targeted prevention and for the protection of workers in rescue services. The study makes it clear that more than half of the first responders surveyed are not prepared for verbal or violent attacks. Therefore, the research team recommends that prospective first responders be given training on de-escalation and 'minimal interaction' defence techniques, starting with their initial training. There should also be an increase in ongoing training seminars. Rescue services should also develop and establish post-care concepts following violent attacks and psychologically stressful events.

Web: www.unfallkasse-nrw.de
> Webcode: N1254
(German only)

RECOMMENDED

'topeins' the magazine for managers



How can managers organise work to be healthy and safe for their employees and for themselves? What obligations do they have to fulfil? Which responsibilities and tasks can they delegate? Occupational health and safety is a topic that covers many different aspects. The new management magazine 'topeins' from the German Social Accident Insurance helps managers to understand the big picture. With a mix of specialist articles, interviews and reports, the magazine looks at practical topics that support executives with healthy and safe leadership across all sectors. The aim is to establish a sustainable culture of prevention in all companies and institutions. The magazine is published six times a year and is offered by some of the social accident insurance institutions to their member companies. The magazine is also available online free of charge.

Web: [www.https://topeins.dguv.de](https://topeins.dguv.de)
(German only)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Better prospects through social security

The study 'Social Security as an Alternative to Migration' conducted by Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences and the Institute for Political Science and Sociology at the University of Bonn examined how a country's social security influences the decision to flee or migrate. The study clearly shows that social security can both encourage and inhibit migration. The design and capacity of social security systems in the countries of origin play a particularly important role. Access to social and health services, the extent and scope of social security and the level of government spending are closely linked to the rate of emigration. The study commissioned by the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV) and supported by the Society for Insurance Science and



Photo: FiledIMAGE/stock.adobe.com

A social security net can provide fundamental stability in countries of origin.

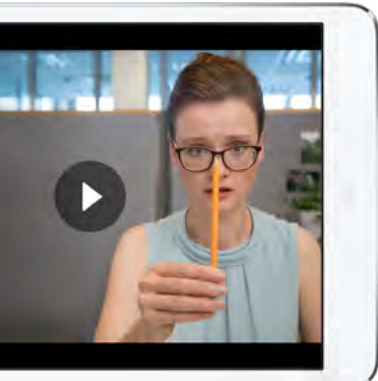
Design (GVG) therefore recommends strategically integrating social security as a core area of possible measures into development policy. 'Social security can help prevent migration in the long term. It is the foundation of stable societies, which in turn make it possible to build well-functioning countries', said Dr Gregor Kemper, Head of International Relations, DGUV.

Web: www.gvg.org > Positionen und Termine
> Schriftenreihe (German only)

'Flipping out is so 90s'

Nobody needs a hot-tempered boss who loses it because of a broken pencil. Working together towards a no-blame error culture! That's the message of the new social media video 'The Pencil' (Der Bleistift) from the **kommmit**mensch prevention campaign.

Web: www.kommmitmensch.de (German only)



IMPORTANT DATES

17 – 18 April 2018

**International Symposium: OSH
inspection in times of Vision Zero
HAMBURG**
www.visionzero.global

25 April 2018

**Kick-off for the campaign 'Healthy
Workplace – recognising and
handling hazardous substances'
DORTMUND**
www.baua.de > Alle Veranstaltungen

29 April – 4 May 2018

**The 32nd International Congress on
Occupational Health
DUBLIN, IRELAND**
www.osha.europa.eu

NUMBER OF THE MONTH

27124 ...

... reportable student accidents on the road involved bicycles in 2016. At 45 percent, bicycle accidents were the most frequent road accidents covered by student accident insurance in the reporting year.

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