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From Awareness to Action

How H.A.R.M.O.N.Y. is Shaping the Future of Workplace Mental Health in Europe

Mental health and psychosocial risks are increasingly recognised as strategic challenges for organisations across Europe, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Through research, stakeholder engagement, digital innovation, and the development of ethical AI-based solutions, the H.A.R.M.O.N.Y. project is working to support a more preventive and human-centred approach to workplace wellbeing. As the project progresses, its emerging tools and resources offer valuable insights for occupational safety and health professionals seeking practical ways to strengthen mental health management in the workplace.



H.A.R.M.O.N.Y.

Across Europe, organisations are facing growing challenges linked to work-related stress, anxiety, burnout, and other psychosocial risks. While awareness of mental health issues has increased significantly in recent years, many workplaces still struggle to move beyond reactive approaches that address problems only after they have become severe.

This challenge is particularly evident among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which often lack the specialised resources, expertise, and structured support systems available to larger organisations. As a result, employers and occupational safety and health (OSH) professionals are increasingly seeking practical, scalable solutions capable of strengthening prevention and promoting healthier working environments.

The Erasmus+ H.A.R.M.O.N.Y. project was established to address precisely this need. Bringing together partners from across Europe, the project aims to support SMEs, vocational education and training (VET) providers, higher education institutions, and workplace stakeholders in addressing psychosocial risks through research, training, collaboration, and innovative digital solutions.

A central theme emerging from the project's recent activities is the need to shift from a reactive model of mental health management towards a preventive approach. Rather than waiting until employees experience significant distress, organisations can ben-

efit from tools and practices that help identify risk factors earlier, encourage self-awareness and support timely intervention.

Recent H.A.R.M.O.N.Y. research has explored how artificial intelligence (AI) may contribute to this transition. Importantly, the project does not view AI as a replacement for healthcare professionals or organisational responsibility. Instead, AI is being examined as a supportive technology that can help individuals better understand their wellbeing while providing organisations with aggregated insights into psychosocial risks.

The project's recent international webinar on AI and workplace mental health highlighted several areas where digital tools may offer practical value. These include self-monitoring of stress and workload patterns, personalised learning resources, guided wellbeing support, and the identification of trends that may indicate increasing psychosocial strain. Such tools have the potential to encourage earlier action and greater engagement with mental health support mechanisms.

However, the discussions also reinforced a critical principle: technological innovation must be accompanied by strong ethical safeguards. Trust remains a decisive factor in the successful adoption of workplace wellbeing technologies. Employees must feel confident that their data is protected, participation remains voluntary and digital tools are designed to support rather than monitor or evaluate them. For this reason, H.A.R.M.O.N.Y. is placing significant emphasis on the development of an ethical and human-centred AI framework. Key principles under consideration include transparency, explainability, user control over personal data, low-burden interaction and guaranteed human oversight. The project's approach recognises that effective mental health support depends not only on technological capability but also on respect for privacy, dignity, and organisational trust. Alongside its work on AI, the project is making significant progress in the development of the H.A.R.M.O.N.Y. digital platform. Designed as a collaborative environment for learning and knowledge exchange, the platform aims to provide a single

access point for training materials, practical guidance, project outputs, good practices, and stakeholder engagement opportunities.

The platform is being developed to support a wide range of users, including SMEs, OSH professionals, educators, researchers, and policy stakeholders. By bringing together resources, training opportunities and collaborative activities within a single digital environment, the platform seeks to strengthen capacity building and facilitate the exchange of knowledge across sectors and countries.

From an OSH perspective, this integrated approach is particularly relevant. Managing psychosocial risks effectively requires more than awareness-raising alone. Organisations need accessible resources, practical guidance, and opportunities to learn from the experiences of others. The H.A.R.M.O.N.Y. platform aims to contribute to this objective by supporting both individual learning and wider stakeholder collaboration.

Looking ahead, the project is entering a crucial phase. Ongoing activities include the refinement of the platform architecture, the development of governance structures, the creation of training resources and the preparation of pilot activities within SMEs. These next steps will help transform research findings and conceptual models into practical tools that can be tested and evaluated in real workplace environments. For OSH professionals, the experience of H.A.R.M.O.N.Y. offers an important reminder that the future of workplace wellbeing will not be shaped by technology alone. Sustainable progress will depend on the ability to combine innovation with ethics, prevention with participation and digital solutions with human expertise.

As organisations continue to navigate digital transformation, changing workforce expectations and increasing attention to mental health, projects such as H.A.R.M.O.N.Y. demonstrate how collaborative European initiatives can contribute to building healthier, safer, and more resilient workplaces. By integrating research, training, stakeholder engagement and responsible innovation, the project is helping to move the conversation from awareness to action.