



Standards Related to Psychosocial Risks at Work

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1. Introduction

Standardisation is an integral part of the European Union (EU)'s strategy to achieve the Lisbon goals by carrying out better regulation, by simplifying legislation, by increasing competitiveness of enterprises and by removing barriers of trade at the international level (EC, 2002). In the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the role of European standardisation in the framework of European policies and legislation (EC, 2004), it was emphasised that the role of European standardisation in the international context and the visibility of its achievements in enhancing market access and competitiveness must be reinforced. It was also considered important to urge European industry, Member States and other parties concerned to reiterate their commitment to European standardisation.

A standard is defined by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) as a "document, established by consensus and approved by a recognised body that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context" (ISO, 2004). However, development of standards should be based on the consolidated results of science, technology and experience, and aimed at the promotion of optimum community benefits (BSI, 2005). Standardisation is defined as the "activity of establishing, with regard to actual or potential problems, provisions for common and repeated use, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context". In particular, this activity consists of the processes of formulating, issuing and implementing standards" (ISO, 2004). Important benefits of standardisation are improvement of the suitability of products (including services) and processes for their intended purposes, prevention of barriers to trade and facilitation of technological cooperation (BSI, 2005).

European standardisation is a voluntary activity performed by and on behalf of parties interested in establishing standards and other standardisation products in response to their needs. Albeit not playing an active role in the production of standards itself, the Commission deals with standardisation in relation to many Community policies, in particular with the Single market and Community external trade (EC, 2001). The role standards can play for market access and free movement of goods, and their potential for deregulation and for ensuring a high level of protection was outlined by the Community more than 15 years ago when the New Approach to technical

harmonisation and standardisation was introduced (EC, 1985). On the one hand, European standardisation contributes to the functioning and strengthening of the internal market, specifically due to the New Approach directives in the fields of health, safety and environmental and consumer protection, and to ensuring interoperability in fields such as transport. On the other hand, European standardisation helps to boost the competitiveness of enterprises by facilitating in particular the free movement of goods and services, network interoperability, means of communication, technological development and innovation in activities such as information technology (EC, 2006).

The main shortcoming of standardisation is that standards cannot replace governmental responsibility to safeguard a high level of protection concerning health, safety and the environment as stipulated by the Treaty establishing the European Community. In addition, the international standardisation process is lengthy, and sometimes does not achieve a sufficiently balanced consensus among the stakeholders and does not always meet the level of protection deemed appropriate by the Community. Nonetheless, voluntary standards can reduce the need for regulation and government intervention (EC, 1985). And, therefore, in their communication to the European Parliament and the Council on the broader use of standardisation in community policy, the Commission committed to continue making use of standardisation in the execution of existing policies and give due consideration to them when developing new policy initiatives (EC, 1995).

Primarily, the use of European standardisation in the area of occupational health and safety (OH&S) supports the competitiveness of firms, as a healthier workforce has a direct impact on the firm's competitiveness. Organisations of all kinds are increasingly concerned with achieving and demonstrating sound OH&S performance by controlling their OH&S risks, consistent with their OH&S policy and objectives. They do so in the context of increasingly stringent legislation, the development of economic policies and other measures that foster good OH&S practices, and of increased concern expressed by interested parties about OH&S issues (OHSAS, 2007). Many organisations undertake OH&S reviews/audits to assess their OH&S performance but many 'in-house' reviews/audits may not be sufficient to provide an organisation with the assurance that its performance not only meet, but will also continue to meet, its legal and policy requirements. Standards covering OH&S management are therefore intended to provide organisations with the elements of an effective OH&S management system that can be integrated with other management requirements and help organisations achieve OH&S and economic objectives. These standards, like other international standards, are not intended to be used to create non-tariff trade barriers or to increase or change an organisation's legal obligations (OHSAS, 2008). This chapter reviews existing standards in relation to OH&S management, focusing on psychosocial risk management and sets out to critically review existing developments in the area.

2. Key standards in the field of occupational health and safety referring to the concept of risk in general

Standards have been previously defined as "a universally agreed-upon set of guidelines for interoperability". Standards may also take the form of a specification, method of test, vocabulary, code of practice or guidance (BSI, 2005), as well as, legal regulations (such as EU directives), and other regulations (such as ILO conventions) developed by recognised national, European and international organisations. This section presents key OH&S standards with direct reference to the concept or 'risk'.

2.1. Council Directive 89/391/EEC on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work

According to the Directive, employers have "a duty to ensure the safety and health of workers in every aspect related to work." They have to develop "a coherent overall prevention policy." Some important principles are: "avoiding risks", "combating the risks at source", "adapting the work to the individual."

2.2. European Commission guidance on risk assessment at work

It states that "Risk assessment is the process of evaluating risks to workers' safety and health from workplace hazards". The five-step approach to risk assessment is promoted: (1) identifying hazards

and those at risk, (2) evaluating and prioritising risks, (3) deciding on preventive action, (4) taking action, (5) monitoring and reviewing.

2.3. ILO-OSH 2001 guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems

The document provides guidance on the development of occupational health and safety (OSH) management systems of both national and organisational levels. It states that OSH management systems should contain the following elements: policy, organising, planning and implementing, evaluation and action for improvements. An employer, in consultation with workers, should set out in writing an OSH policy. Hazards and risks to workers' safety and health should be identified and assessed on an ongoing basis. Preventive measures should be implemented in the following order of priority: eliminate the hazard/ risk, control hazard/risk at source, minimise the hazard/risk.

2.4. ILO Convention 187: convention concerning the promotional framework for occupational safety and health

"In formulating its national policy, each Member, (...) in consultation with the most representative organisations of employers and workers, shall promote basic principles such as assessing occupational risks or hazards; combating occupational risks or hazards at source; and developing a national preventative safety and health culture that includes information, consultation and training." "(...) the principle of prevention is accorded the highest priority."

2.5. The Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series (OHSAS)

An international standard on general OH&S management has been developed and implemented (by the BSI) in response to customer demand for a recognisable occupational health and safety management system standard against which their management systems can be assessed and certified, and for guidance on the implementation of such a standard. The Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series (18001, 18002 and 18004) is compatible with the ISO 9001:2008 (Quality) and ISO 14001:2004 (Environmental) management systems standards, in order to facilitate the integration of quality, environmental and occupational health and safety management systems by organisations, should they wish to do so.

The OHSAS 18001 specifies requirements for an OH&S management system to enable an organisation to develop and implement a policy and objectives which take into account legal requirements and information about OH&S risks. It is intended to apply to all types and sizes of organisations and to accommodate diverse geographical, cultural and social conditions. The success of the system depends on commitment from all levels and functions of the organisation, and especially from top management. A system of this kind enables an organisation to develop an OH&S policy, establish objectives and processes to achieve the policy commitments, take action as needed to improve its performance, and demonstrate the conformity of the system to the requirements of OHSAS 18001. The overall aim of OHSAS 18001 is to support and promote good OH&S practices, including self regulation, in balance with socio-economic needs. The OHSAS 18004 is a revision of the previous standard intended to replace it (Smith, 2008).

Although the OHSAS 18001 and its successor OHSAS 18004 and the ILO-OSH 2001 make specific reference to psychosocial hazards, they do not provide the necessary guidance to enable organisations (including SMEs) to successfully manage psychosocial risks successfully. This makes the case for developing a standard specifically to promote psychosocial risk management at work even more compelling.

3. The case for developing and implementing standards for psychosocial risk management

Despite data pointing to the high prevalence of psychosocial risks to workers' health and safety and the large scale of issues like work-related stress, workplace violence, harassment and bullying and their associated costs (see chapters 1 and 8), standards directly referring to the concept of psychosocial risk, and specific ones referring to the concepts of work-related stress, workplace

violence, harassment and bullying have only been formulated in very few countries. Also, only a small number of reviews summarising the current regulations and standards in the area of psychosocial risks have been published. Koukoulaki (2002) examined stress prevention in Europe and discussed three directives addressing stress at work: Framework Directive 89/391/EEC, Display Screen Directive 87/391/EEC and Organisation of Working Time Directive 93/104/EC. Kompier and Cooper (1999) discuss regulatory frameworks in 11 European countries. Wider explanation concerning standards on mental workload (EN ISO 10075) has been described by Nachreiner (2002). Schaufeli and Kompier (2001; 2002) provide a comprehensive review of the legal framework in the Netherlands. Similar articles examining the unique legal frameworks of other European countries can be found: for example, information on the Belgian system (D'Hertefeldt, 2002), and on the British system (Tudor, 2002 and in extended materials from the Health and Safety Executive). Reviews on legislation and standards addressing harassment and violence at work can also be found (Di Martino, Hoel & Cooper, 2003; Vogel, 2002; Lehto & Parnanen, 2007). Additionally, a comprehensive review of legislation in the field can be found in other languages such as in Polish (Chakowski, 2005) and French (Laflamme, 2008).

Levi (2002) highlighted three complementary European approaches to work stress and related ill health which have been outlined in three recent European documents: a) the European Commission's (CEC) Guidance on Work-Related Stress (2000); b) the European Standard (EN ISO 10075- 1&2) on Ergonomic Principles Related to Mental Work Load (CEN, 2000); and c) the European Commission's Green Paper on Promoting a European Framework for Corporate Social Responsibility (2001). These three approaches are based on different but related paradigms, which might lead to confusion and misinterpretation. The Psychosocial Risk Management European Framework, described in Chapter 1, can help to unify these approaches, which in turn can be used as the basis for developing a European standard for psychosocial risk management.

The duty of care placed on employers by legislation argues for research to find a practical way of assisting them. Companies need assistance in assessing the impact of issues and working out strategies for improvement. The need to broaden accountability via standards has been driven by the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) agenda (see chapter 6), leading to a wider base than profit-only reporting and including the environment and people (EC, 2002a). Standards following this work are desirable as currently the problem with reporting for most companies is that it is financially driven, concentrating purely on one aspect of the business. Recent moves by standard makers have been to 'roll this out' in order to give a more comprehensive overview of the situation (Beckett & Jonker, 2002). Examples of such standards include AA1000 – that focuses on securing the quality of social and ethical accounting and SA 8000 – the principles of this standard include nine fundamental aspects: child labour, forced labour, health and safety, freedom of association and right to collective bargaining, discrimination, disciplinary action, working time, compensation and management systems. Social Accountability International (SIA, 2008) developed this standard in 1997 (revised 2008) for workplace conditions and as a system for independently verifying factories' compliance. This standard draws from established business strategies of ensuring quality (e.g. ISO 9000) and adds several elements that international human rights experts have identified as essential to social auditing. The extension of standards into the psychosocial aspects of work will increase business accountability and allow uniformity to spread through stakeholders. The growing move towards tri-partite representation (government, business, civil society) is particularly applicable for occupational health and safety and over-locking the European CSR agenda. A continuation of this drive to improve employee conditions through developing and implementing occupational health standards would facilitate improvements in the area.

4. Current standards for managing psychosocial risks at work

The International Labour Office (ILO) defines psychosocial hazards as "interactions among job content, work organisation and management, and other environmental and organisational conditions, on the one hand, and employees' competencies and needs on the other. Psychosocial hazards are relevant to imbalances in the psychosocial arena and refer to those interactions that prove to have a hazardous influence over employees' health through their perceptions and experience" (ILO, 1986). Almost all social and organisational aspects of the work environment theoretically can have "a hazardous influence over employees' health". Consequently a large number of regulations dealing with the social aspects work to a certain degree address psychosocial risks. For example, at the ILO alone, by the end

of June 2007, 188 Conventions and 199 Recommendations dealing with different elements of social aspects of work had been adopted. Therefore, the current review although comprehensive is not exhaustive. An inclusion criterion was developed taking into account only aspects of social situations that are most often analysed in the psychological literature in the context of psychosocial risks. Further this review on standards is mapped onto the psychosocial risk indicator model, presented in chapter 2. The review is addressed to enterprises and social partners and indicates key reference points in terms of legislation and guidance that can be of help when undertaking actions aimed at preventing and managing psychosocial risks at the workplace.

4.1. Standards directly referring to the concepts of: psychosocial risk, stress, harassment and violence

4.1.1. European Commission guidance on work-related stress

This EC guidance defines stress as “a pattern of emotional, cognitive, behavioural and physiological reactions to adverse and noxious aspects of work content, work organisation and work environment.” The following are outlined among the main causes of stress: over and underload; no recognition, no opportunity to voice complaints; many responsibilities, but little authority; lack of a clear job description, uncooperative or unsupportive superiors, co-workers or subordinates; no control; job insecurity; exposure to prejudice regarding age, gender, etc.; exposure to violence, threats, or bullying; unpleasant or hazardous physical work conditions; no opportunity to utilise personal abilities. Organisational improvements ought to be considered in stress preventive measures, above all in the following areas: work schedule (to avoid work-life conflict), participation/control, workload (to ensure compatibility with the capabilities and resources of the worker), task content (to provide meaning, stimulation, an opportunity to use skills), roles (their clarity), social environment (to provide social support), future perspectives (to reduce job insecurity). The document outlines the following prevention steps:

- Identification of work-related stress factors, their causes and health consequences;
- Analysing the characteristics of exposures in relation to the outcomes found;
- Design and implementation of a package of interventions by stakeholders;
- Evaluation of short- and long-term outcomes of the interventions.

4.1.2. Framework agreement on work-related stress

The framework agreement on work-related stress that was concluded by the European social partners in 2004 defines stress as “a state, which is accompanied by physical, psychological or social complaints or dysfunctions and which results from individuals feeling unable to bridge a gap with the requirements or expectations placed on them.” The agreement does not provide an exhaustive list of potential stress indicators. It does point out, however, that “high absenteeism or staff turnover, frequent interpersonal conflicts or complaints by workers are some of the signs that may indicate a problem of work-related stress.” The agreement contains a reminder that “all employers have a legal obligation to protect the occupational safety and health of workers. This duty also applies to problems of work related stress in so far as they entail a risk to health and safety.” Examples of anti-stress measures are given in the document: “management and communication measures such as clarifying the company’s objectives and the role of individual workers, ensuring adequate management support for individuals and teams, matching responsibility and control over work, improving work organisation and processes, working conditions and environment; training managers and workers to raise awareness and understanding of stress; provision of information to and consultation with workers” (see chapter 7 for a more detailed description).

4.1.3. Framework agreement on harassment and violence at work

According to the framework agreement on harassment and violence at work that was concluded by the European social partners in 2007, “violence [at work] occurs when one or more worker or manager are assaulted in circumstances relating to work,” and “harassment [at work] occurs when one or more worker or manager are repeatedly and deliberately abused, threatened and/or humiliated in circumstances relating to work.” According to the agreement, raising awareness and appropriate

training of managers and workers can reduce the likelihood of harassment and violence at work. Preventive procedures should be underpinned by, but not confined to, the following:

- discretion to protect the dignity and privacy of all
- no disclosure of information to parties not involved in the case
- investigation and enactment upon complaints without undue delay
- backing up complaints by detailed information
- involvement of all parties to get an impartial hearing and fair treatment
- consultation with workers
- no toleration of false accusations that may result in disciplinary action
- external assistance as appropriate.

Chapter 7 provides a more detailed description.

4.1.4. Ergonomic principles related to mental workload (European standard: EN ISO 10075)

Mental stress is defined as: "The total of all assessable influences impinging upon a human being from external sources and affecting it mentally." Situational influences on mental stress include: task requirements (e.g. sustained concentration, responsibility for others), physical conditions (e.g. lighting, noise), social and organisational factors (e.g. control structure, communication structure, organisational environment), social factors, external to the organisation (e.g. economic situation). Mental strain is an immediate effect of mental stress. The impairing (short term) effects of mental strain are: mental fatigue and "fatigue-like states" (i.e.: monotony, reduced vigilance, and satiation). The document lists 29 task features that influence the intensity of mental workload and are sources of fatigue (e.g. ambiguity of task goals, complexity of task requirements, adequacy of information, ambiguity of information, signal discrimination).

4.1.5. Council Directive 90/270/EEC on the minimum safety and health requirements for work with display screen equipment

The Council Directive 90/270/EEC states that employers are obliged to perform an analysis of workstations in order to evaluate safety and health conditions, particularly as regards possible risks to eyesight, physical problems and problems of mental stress.

5. Review of standards related to psychosocial risks

This section presents in a comprehensive manner standards of relevance to psychosocial risk management (directly or indirectly) that should also be taken into consideration by stakeholders and include:

- Selected ILO Conventions
- Selected European Directives
- Framework agreement on work-related stress
- Framework agreement on harassment and violence at work
- The Finnish Occupational Safety and Health Act
- The Swedish Order on Victimization at Work
- The Belgium Law of 11 June 2002
- The German Work Constitution Act
- The HSE Management Standards
- The Dutch Working Conditions Act (WCA)
- Other examples of national regulations.

To ensure that the review of standards is compatible with the indicator model (chapter 2), the following categories of standards have been identified:

- Standards on terminology concerning basic concepts
- Standards covering exposure factors
- Standards covering outcomes
- Standards covering preventive actions
- Standards covering psychosocial risk assessment
- Standards covering administrative infrastructure of psychosocial risks assessment and prevention.

Table 3.1.: Standards on terminology concerning basic concepts

STANDARD CONTENT	TYPE OF DOCUMENT
<p>Psychosocial hazards = “interactions among job content, work organisation and management, and other environmental and organisational conditions, on the one hand, and employees’ competencies and needs on the other. Psychosocial hazards are relevant to imbalances in the psychosocial arena and refer to those interactions that prove to have a hazardous influences over employees’ health through their perceptions and experience”</p>	ILO, 1986
<p>Mental stress = “The total of all assessable influences impinging upon a human being from external sources and affecting it mentally” Mental stress is a source of mental strain (= “immediate effect of mental stress within individual (not the long-term effect) depending on his/her individual habitual and actual preconditions, including individual coping styles.”)</p>	ISO 10075:1991
<p>“Stress is a pattern of emotional, cognitive, behavioural and physiological reactions to adverse and noxious aspects of work content, work organisation and work environment. It is a state characterized by high levels of arousal and distress and often by feelings of not coping”</p>	EU Guidelines
<p>Violence at work occurs when one or more worker or manager are assaulted in circumstances relating to work</p> <p>Physical violence: The use of physical force against another person or group that results in physical, sexual or psychological harm Psychological violence: Intentional use of power against another person or group that can result in harm to physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development “Violence - a long-term, recurring bullying, oppression, degradation or other negative behaviour designed to make another person feel defenseless. It can be aimed at one or several individuals”.</p> <p>Violence - recurrent reprehensible or distinctly negative actions which are directed against individual employees in an offensive manner and can result in those employees being placed outside the workplace community”</p>	<p>European Framework Agreement on Harassment and Violence at Work WHO, ILO, 2000</p> <p>The Finish Occupational Safety and Health Act</p> <p>The Swedish Order on Victimization at Work</p>
<p>“Harassment at work occurs when one or more worker or manager are repeatedly and deliberately abused, threatened and/or humiliated in circumstances relating to work</p> <p>Harassment: “repeated acts of harassment aiming at or resulting in a deterioration of the employee’s rights and dignity, affect their physical health or compromise their professional future”.</p> <p>Harassment - repeated abusive behaviour of any origin, external, or internal to the company or institution, particularly made evident by unilateral behaviour, speech, intimidation, actions, gestures and written communications aiming at a worker’s personality, dignity or physical or psychological integrity, in the course of their job or create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment” Harassment - When a person methodically and over a long period of time is exposed to unpleasant an/or humiliating actions that are difficult to defend oneself against”</p>	<p>European Framework Agreement on Harassment and Violence at Work The French Law number 2002-73 of 17 January 2002 and Labour Laws- Art L. 122-49 The Belgian Law of 11 June 2002</p> <p>The Danish Equal Treatment for Men and Woman Act, 1977</p>

Table 3.2.: Standards covering exposure factors (standards that indicate what should be considered psychosocial risk factors, sources of job stress or strain)

STANDARD CONTENT	TYPE OF DOCUMENT
<p>“There are four main categories of sources of mental stress: task, equipment, physical environment, social environment”.</p>	<p>ISO 10075:1991</p>
<p>Sources of fatigue: intensity of mental workload and temporal distribution of mental workload. “The intensity of mental workload is affected by the following characteristics..”: 1. ambiguity of the task goals 2. complexity of task requirements 3. serving strategies 4. adequacy of information 5. ambiguity of information 6. signal discriminability 7. working memory load 8. long-term memory load 9. recognition vs. recall memory 10. decision support, 11-29 others Factors of temporal distribution of mental workload: 1. duration of working hours 2. time off between successive work days or shift 3. time of day 4. shift work 5. breaks and rest pauses 6. changes in task activities with different task demands or kinds of mental workload</p>	<p>ISO 10075-2:1996 (Design principle)</p>
<p>“Stress at work can be caused by(...): bad fit between a worker and his/her work” (1); “(...) a problem of work-relates stress can involve an analysis of factors such as: (...) match between workers skills and job requirements”(2)</p>	<p>- (1) EU Guidelines - (2) European Framework Agreement on work-related stress also: - Directive 94/33/EC on the protection of young people at work</p>
<p>“Stress at work can be caused by(...): conflict between roles at work and outside it”(1)</p>	<p>- (1) EU Guidelines also: - C 183 Maternity Protection Convention (ILO),2000 - Directive 92/85/EC on pregnant workers, woman who have recently given birth, or are breast-feeding - Directive 96/34/EC on parental leave</p>
<p>“Stress at work can be caused by(...): not having a reasonable degree of control over one’s own work and one’s own life”(1) “(..)a problem of work-relates stress can involve an analysis of an analysis of factors such as: (...) degree of autonomy”(2)</p>	<p>- (1) EU Guidelines - (2) European Framework Agreement on work-related stress</p>
<p>“Stress at work can be caused by (...): over- and underload”(1)</p>	<p>- (1) EU Guidelines (2) European</p>

<p>“(..) a problem of work-relates stress can involve an analysis of an analysis of factors such as:(...) workload”(2)</p>	<p>Framework Agreement on work-related stress also: - Directive 93/104/EC concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time - Directive 2003/88/EC concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time - Directive 2002/25/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2002 on the organisation of working time of persons performing mobile road transport activities - C175 Part-time Work Convention (ILO), 1994 - Directive 99/70/EC concerning the framework agreement on fixed-term work concluded by ETUC, UNICE and CEEP, - Directive 97/81/EC concerning the framework agreement on part-time working concluded by ETUC, UNICE and CEEP</p>
<p>“(..) a problem of work-relates stress can involve an analysis of an analysis of factors such as: (...) “working time arrangement”(1)</p>	<p>(1) European Framework Agreement on work-related stress also: - Directive 93/104/EC concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time - Directive 2003/88/EC concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time - Directive 2002/25/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2002 on the</p>

	<p>organisation of working time of persons performing mobile road transport activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - C175 Part-time Work Convention (ILO), 1994 - Directive 99/70/EC concerning the framework agreement on fixed-term work concluded by ETUC, UNICE and CEEP, - Directive 97/81/EC concerning the framework agreement on part-time working concluded by ETUC, UNICE and CEEP
<p>"Stress at work can be caused by (...): lack of a clear job description, or chain of command"(1)</p> <p>"(...) a problem of work-relates stress can involve an analysis of an analysis of factors such as: (...) uncertainty about what is expected at work"(2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (1) EU Guidelines - (2) European Framework Agreement on work-related stress
<p>"Stress at work can be caused by (...): inadequate time to complete our job to our own and others satisfaction"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Guidelines
<p>"Stress at work can be caused by (...): no recognition, or reward, for good job performance"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Guidelines
<p>"Stress at work can be caused by (...): no opportunity to voice complaints"(1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (1) EU Guidelines also: - Directive 2002/14/EC establishing general framework for informing and consulting employees in the European Community
<p>"Stress at work can be caused by (...): many responsibilities, but little authority or decision making capacity"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Guidelines
<p>"Stress at work can be caused by (...): uncooperative or unsupportive superiors, co-workers or subordinates"(1);</p> <p>"(...) a problem of work-relates stress can involve an analysis of an analysis of factors such as: (...) perceived lack of support"(2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (1) EU Guidelines - (2) European Framework Agreement on work-related stress
<p>"Stress at work can be caused by (...): no control, or pride, over the finished product of work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Guidelines
<p>"Stress at work can be caused by (...): job insecurity, no permanence of position"(1);</p> <p>"(...) a problem of work-relates stress can involve an analysis of factors such as: (...) employment prospects, or forthcoming change"(2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (1) EU Guidelines (2) European Framework Agreement on work-related stress
<p>"Stress at work can be caused by (...): exposure to prejudice regarding age (1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (1) EU Guidelines also: - Directive 2004/43/EC and 2000/78EC prohibiting direct or indirect discrimination

	<p>on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Directive 94/33/EC on the protection of young people at work
<p>“Stress at work can be caused by (...): exposure to prejudice regarding gender (1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (1) EU Guidelines also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Directive 2004/43/EC and 2000/78EC prohibiting direct or indirect discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, - Directive 76/207/EEC and – - Directive 2002/73/EC on equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion and working conditions - Directive 2006/54/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation
<p>“Stress at work can be caused by (...): exposure to prejudice regarding race, ethnicity, religion” (1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (1) EU Guidelines also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Directive 2004/43/EC and 2000/78EC prohibiting direct or indirect discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation
<p>“Stress at work can be caused by (...): exposure to violence, threats, or bullying”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Guidelines
<p>Sources of bullying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Unreasonable deadlines - Unreasonable workloads - Remove work tasks without initial information - Withholding of information which make it difficult to perform work tasks - Accusations about bad work performance - Excessive surveillance and control”(1) 	<p>(1)The Danish Equal Treatment for Men and Woman Act, 1977</p>

<p>Sources of bullying: “unilateral behaviour, speech, intimidation, actions, gestures and written communications aiming at a worker’s personality, dignity or physical or psychological integrity, in the course of their job” (2)</p> <p>Sources of bullying: “advanced behaviours aimed at harassing, persecuting, or discriminating a person and violate his/her dignity and health” (3)</p> <p>Sources of mobbing: “any actions or behaviour directed towards an employee that aim at long-lasting harassment or intimidation at an employee” (4)</p>	<p>(2) Belgian Law of 11 June 2002</p> <p>(3)The German Employment Protection Act</p> <p>The Polish No. 94, § 2 any-bullying provision of Labour Code (4)</p>
<p>“(…) a problem of work-relates stress can involve an analysis of factors such as: (…) emotional and social pressures”</p>	<p>European Framework Agreement on work-related stress</p>
<p>“Stress at work can be caused by (…)unpleasant or hazardous physical work conditions” (1)</p> <p>“(…) a problem of work-relates stress can involve an analysis of factors such as: (…) exposure to abusive behaviour, noise, heat, dangerous substances” (2)</p>	<p>- (1) EU Guidelines (2) European Framework Agreement on stress</p> <p>also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Directive 89/391 on Health and Safety at Work - Directive 89/654 on Workplaces - Directive 89/655 on the use of work equipment by workers at work, - Directive 89/656 on the use of personal protective equipment - Directive 90/269/EEC on the Manual handling of loads - Directive 90/270/EEC on work with visual display equipment
<p>“Stress at work can be caused by (…) no opportunity to utilize personal talents or abilities effectively”</p>	<p>- EU Guidelines</p>
<p>“Stress at work can be caused by (…) chances of a small error or momentary lapse of attention having serious or even disastrous consequences</p>	<p>- EU Guidelines</p>

Table 3.3.: Standards covering outcomes (standards that indicate what should be considered as outcomes of psychosocial risk factors, outcomes of job stress/strain)

STANDARD CONTENT	TYPE OF DOCUMENT
<p>Impairing (short term) effects of mental stress are: mental fatigue, and “fatigue-like states (i.e.: monotony, reduced vigilance, satiation)</p> <p>Mental fatigue = “temporary impairment of mental and physical functional efficiency, depending on the intensity, duration and temporal pattern of the preceding mental strain”.</p>	<p>ISO 10075:1991</p>

<p>Monotony = “slowly developing state of reduced activation which may occur during long, uniform, repetitive tasks or activities, and which is mainly associated with drowsiness, tiredness, decrease and fluctuations in performance, reduction in adaptability and responsiveness, as well as an increase in variability of heart rate”.</p> <p>Satiation = “state of nervously unsettled, strongly emotional rejection of repetitive task or situation in which the experience is of “marking time” or “not getting anywhere”, with additional symptoms of anger, decreased performance, and/or feelings of tiredness, and a tendency to withdraw”.</p>	
<p>“High absenteeism or staff turnover, frequent interpersonal conflicts or complaints by workers are some of the signs that may indicate a problem of work-related stress”</p>	European Framework Agreement on stress
<p>Outcomes of violence and bullying: “breach in worker’s personality, dignity or physical or psychological integrity”(1), “deterioration of the employee’s rights and dignity, affect their physical health or compromise their professional future”(2)</p> <p>“anxiety, loss of self-esteem, gastrointestinal ulcers, and depression”, “defenselessness”(3),</p> <p>“decreased performance, humiliation as well as isolation or exclusion of an employee from a team” (4)</p>	<p>(1) The Belgian Welfare at Work Act</p> <p>2)The French Law number 2002-73 of 17 January 2002 and Labour Laws- Art L. 122-49</p> <p>(3)The Spanish Royal Decree about Employee Status of 24 March 1995</p> <p>(4) The Polish No. 94, § 2 any-bullying provision of Labour Code</p>

Table 3.4.: Standards covering preventive actions (standards that indicate what should be done to reduce psychosocial risk factors, sources of job stress)

STANDARD CONTENT	TYPE OF DOCUMENT
<p>Employers have “a duty to ensure the safety and health of workers in every aspect related to work”. They have to develop “a coherent overall prevention policy”.</p> <p>Principles: “avoiding risks”, “combating the risks at source”, “adapting the work to the individual”</p>	The EU Framework Directive 89
<p>“In formulating its national policy, each Member (.....) in consultation with the most representative organisations of employers and workers, shall promote basic principles such as assessing occupational risks or hazards; combating occupational risks or hazards at source; and developing a national preventive safety and health culture that includes information, consultation and training”</p> <p>“the principle of prevention is accorded the highest priority”</p>	ILO Convention 187 (Convention concerning the promotional framework for occupational safety and health, 2006)
<p>“All employers have a legal obligation to protect the occupational safety and health of workers. This duty also applies to problems of work-related stress in so far as they entail a risk to health and safety”(1)</p>	<p>(1) European Framework Agreement on work-related stress</p> <p>also: United Nations treaty on disability rights, 2007 (promoting employment opportunities and career advancement for</p>

	persons with disabilities)
Employers should carry out an active policy to foster safety, health and well-being	WCA (Dutch)
Employer policy to foster safety, health and well-being must be based on thorough written and regularly conducted inventory and assessment of all work-related risk, including psychosocial risk factors.	WCA (Dutch)
The risk assessment should include a plan of action to reduce risks	WCA (Dutch)
Employers should engage experts from OHSSs to assist in approving out – or carrying out – the risk inventory and assessment as well as the plan of action	WCA (Dutch)
First step to prevent stress: to identify work-related stress, its causes and consequences by monitoring job content, working conditions, terms of employment, social relations at work, health, well-being and productivity	EU Guidelines
Recommended checklists and questionnaires can be used to identify work-related stress, its causes and consequences	EU Guidelines
Action should be taken to improve stress-inducing conditions in the workplace - organisational change by:	
- allowing adequate time for the worker to perform his or her work satisfactorily	EU Guidelines
- providing the worker with clear a clear job description	EU Guidelines
- rewarding the worker for good job performance	EU Guidelines
- providing ways for the worker to voice complaints and have them considered seriously and swiftly	EU Guidelines
- harmonizing the worker’s responsibility and authority	EU Guidelines
- clarifying the work organisation’s goals and values and adapting them to the worker’s own goals and values, when ether possible	EU Guidelines
- promoting the worker’s control, and pride, over the end product of his or her work	EU Guidelines
- promoting tolerance, security and justice at the workplace	EU Guidelines
- eliminating harmful physical exposure	EU Guidelines
- identifying failures, successes, and their causes and consequences in previous and future health action at the workplace	EU Guidelines
Considering organisational improvements to prevent work-related stress and ill health, with regard to the following (“managerial standards”):	EU Guidelines
- Work schedule. Design work schedules to avoid conflict with demands and responsibilities unrelated to the job. Schedules for rotating shifts should be stable and predictable, with rotation in a forward (morning-afternoon-night) direction. “Approaches to be considered include (..) flexible work schedule..”	- EU Guidelines - Directive 93/104/EC on working time - Directive 2003/88/EC concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time - C175 Part-time Work - Convention ILO, 1994 - C 183 Maternity Protection Convention ILO),2000 - Directive 92/85/EC on pregnant workers, woman who have recently given birth, or are breast-feeding - Directive 96/34/EC on parental leave
- Participation/control. Allow workers to take part in decisions or actions affecting their jobs.	- EU Guidelines - HSE (control)

<p>“Approaches to be considered include participative management”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Directive 2002/14/EC establishing general framework for informing and consulting employees in the European Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workload. Ensure assignments are compatible with capabilities and resources of the worker, and... ..allow for recovery from especially demanding physical or mental tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Guidelines - HSE (demands) - Directive 93/104/EC on working time - C175 Part-time Work - Directive 2003/88/EC concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time - Directive 94/33/EC on the protection of young people at work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content. Design tasks to provide meaning, stimulation, a sense of completeness and opportunity to use skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Guidelines - WCA (Dutch)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roles. Define work roles and responsibilities clearly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Guidelines - HSE (role)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social environment. Provide opportunities for social interaction, including emotional and social support and help between fellow workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Guidelines - HSE (support)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Future. Avoid ambiguity in matters of job security and career development; promote life-long learning and employability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Guidelines - Directive 99/70/EC concerning the framework agreement on fixed-term work concluded by ETUC, UNICE and CEEP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationship. Employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HSE (relationship) - Resolution on -- - Harassment at the workplace 2001/2339 - International Code to Prevent Mobbing at Workplace - The Swedish Order on Victimization at Work,/ 1993, - The French Modernization of Employment Act/2002 - The Belgian Welfare at Work Act /1996 - The English Protection from Harassment Act/1997
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change. Employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HSE (change) - Directive 2002/14/EC establishing general framework for informing and consulting employees in the European Community

<p>- workplace, working methods, tools, machines are in accordance with personal characteristics of the employees</p>	<p>- WCA (Dutch)</p>
<p>Requested steps of intervention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1st step: identify the incidence, prevalence, severity and trends of work-related stressor exposures and their causes and health consequences - 2nd step: characteristics of exposures as reflected in the content, organisations of work are analyzed in relation to the outcomes found - 3rd step: the stakeholders design an integrated package of interventions, and implement it - 4th step: the short- and long-term outcomes of interventions need to be evaluated, in terms of (a) stressor exposures (b) stress reactions (c) incidence and prevalence of ill health (d) indicators of well-being (e) productivity (f) costs and benefits in economic terms 	<p>- EU Guidelines</p>
<p>“The aim of the standard is not to reduce mental workload (or stress to the minimum possible (...), but to optimize it”; “What is really required is to avoid any kind of dysfunctional mental workload, and to provide for optimal mental workload which will avoid impairing effects and promote facilitating effects and the personal development of the worker”.</p>	<p>ISO 10075:1991</p>
<p>The specific design guidelines to optimize mental workload should take into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>effects</i> they are intended to influence (i.e.: fatigue, monotony, vigilance, satiation) - <i>the level of design</i> (task, equipment, environment, organisation) - <i>quality and intensity</i> of mental workload - <i>temporal organisation of work</i> (e.g. duration of working hours, time off between successive shifts, shift work, breaks and rest pauses, as well as changes in task activities) 	<p>ISO 10075:1991</p>
<p>Raising awareness and appropriate training of managers and workers can reduce the likelihood of harassment and violence at Work, A suitable procedure will be underpinned by but not confined to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it is in the interest of all parties to proceed with the necessary discretion to protect the dignity and privacy of all - no information should be disclosed to parties not involved in the case - complaints should be investigated and dealt with without undue delay - all parties involved should get an impartial hearing and fair treatment - complaints should be backed up by detailed information - false accusations should not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action - eternal assistance may help <p>If it is established that harassment and violence has occurred, appropriate measures will be taken in relation to the perpetrator(s). This may include disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. The victim(s) will receive support and, if necessary, help with reintegration.</p> <p>Employers, in consultation with workers and/or their representatives, will establish, review and monitor these procedures to ensure that they are effective both in preventing problems and dealing with issues as they arise.</p>	<p>European Framework Agreement on Harassment and Violence at Work</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the employer must adopt an explicit policy against victimization 	<p>The Swedish Work Environment Act</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - he must provide for an early detection of signs of and the rectification of “such unsatisfactory working conditions, problems of work organisation or deficiencies of cooperation” as can provide a basis for victimization, - he must take counter-measures if signs of victimization become apparent - he must provide support to the victim, and have specific procedures for that - he must provide to the management with the training related to victimization at work, its causes, prevention and legislation issues - he must engage all workers in improving working conditions in order to prevent victimization at work - the physical organisation of the working environment aimed at preventing violence, - quick and impartial investigation of cases of workplace violence, - listening to and assisting victims; - establishing proper assistance and support for the victim, the availability of an advisor on prevention and an complaint resolution officer - supporting and helping victims to return to work; - line management's obligations to prevent the situation envisaged; - provision of information and training to all workers on preventing stress; - informing the Committee for Prevention and Protection at work 	<p>Belgium Law of 11 July 2002</p>
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Table 3.5.: Standards covering psychosocial risk assessment (standards that indicate how to measure stress, its causes and consequences)

STANDARD CONTENT	TYPE OF DOCUMENT
<p>“it was decided not to standardize individual methods or instruments of mental workload but to prepare a standard on requirements for such methods or instruments”</p> <p>A choice of the most appropriate measurement instruments/procedures in a given situation must take into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the intended domain of measurement (assessing mental stress or mental strain or effects of mental strain - the quality of measurement (categorized into three levels: orienting level, screening level, precision measurements - measurement technique (ranging from job and task analysis through performance assessment and subjective scaling techniques to psycho-physiological measurements) 	<p>ISO 10075:1991</p>
<p>Measurement quality is defined via psychometric criteria: objectivity, reliability, validity, sensitivity , diagnosticity (<i>definitions of the above terms are given in the norm</i>)</p>	

Table 3.6.: Standards covering administrative infrastructure of psychosocial risks assessment and prevention (standards that indicate what systems enable/enforce psychosocial risk management)

STANDARD CONTENT	TYPE OF DOCUMENT
<p>Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns related to the Management Standards</p>	<p>HSE (Management standards)</p>
<p>Recommended low-cost approach to reduce noxious work-related stress: internal control (= self regulatory process carried out with close collaboration between stakeholders: in-house occupational health</p>	<p>EU Guidelines</p>

service, labour inspector, occupational or public health nurse, a social worker, a physiotherapist, personnel administrator)	
Independent commercial enterprises Occupational Health and Safety Services (OHSS) play a central role in psychosocial risk assessment and prevention. They sell services to companies.	WCA (Dutch)
OHSSs must be certified	WCA (Dutch)
Each OHSS must employ at least one certificated professional from each of the following four fields: (1) occupational medicine, (2) occupational safety, (3) occupational hygiene (4) work and organisation	WCA (Dutch)
The W&O experts' job is to advise management on policy issues to improve work organisation. His four key tasks are: (1) organisational advice and recommendation of measures (2) psychosocial risk assessment (3) implementation of organisation-based measures to reduce job stress and sickness absence rates (4) co-ordination and integration of measures – acting as a liaison between the company and the OHSS team Employer must have a prevention adviser with skills in the psychosocial aspects of work and violence at work, psychological harassment and sexual harassment on the staff of his company, prevention service. There must be a prevention advisor on the external prevention service used. This person must not be an occupational health doctor. All firms of every size therefore must have a specialized prevention adviser. Employers can also appoint one or more complaint resolution officers to act as a “first line” player to listen to what victims have to say and attempt an informal reconciliation. A range of procedures are available. Victims may take their complaints through company internal procedures via the complaint resolution officer or specialized prevention adviser. Or they can complain to the labour ministry's medical inspectorate either because company procedures have not worked or because the victim lacks confidence in them. If mediation does not work , redress can be sought through the courts either by the victim personally	WCA (Dutch) Belgium Law of 11 July 2002

6. Discussion

As can be seen from the review above, there are many European and international standards concerning workers' rights which refer to psychosocial risks, even though most of these standards do not use the term explicitly. As mentioned previously, the current review is not exhaustive and therefore does not cover all standards referring to, or addressing, psychosocial risks. Only those standards that concerned the content most frequently discussed in the context of psychosocial risks have been reviewed. Yet when reflecting upon the present situation of regulations in the area, we also have to consider the broad spectrum of social standards, which have been formulated in the recent years by international organisations; such as the International Labour Office, the World Health Organization, as well as the European Commission.

In fact, each Convention and Recommendation of the ILO concerns a certain aspect of the psychosocial and work environment. This includes the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998) that focuses on four basic laws: freedom of association, abolition of child labour, elimination of forced labour and discrimination. Additionally, the European directives deal with the social aspect of work. Other such standards – in relation to psychosocial aspects of work – constitute a few key European documents, for instance *the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (1950), *the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights* (2000), *the European Social Charter* (1961). Standards in this field are also being formulated within newer concepts; such CSR.

Although there are many general standards in the area of occupational health and safety, most of these are regulations concerning occupational safety and health, which obligate employers to evaluate and reduce risk at the workplace; therefore indirectly addressing psychosocial risks. But, their weakness lies in the fact that they do not always explicitly define what could be considered as risk factor (more specifically a psychosocial risk). Examples are such documents as the EU Framework

Directive 89/91 and the ILO 187 Convention – both deal with the topic of risk in a general manner and do not specify which forms of risk should be taken into account. Although research documents point out the relationship between psychosocial characteristics of work (such as, demands, social support, insecurity) and employees' health, and thereby psychosocial risk should be treated and examined as an important part of risk at the workplace, this is not always the case. Most stakeholders perceive workplace hazards as primarily relating to physical aspects of the work environment such as, noise, vibration, dust, and lifting excessively heavy loads. Thus, it should be considered that Framework Directives and such regulations (including national ones) should explicitly refer to psychosocial risk and thereby obligate more clearly the employer's responsibility of monitoring and preventing such risks.

The review has displayed interesting diversification of terminology used in the case of psychosocial risk standards. Different authors/institutions use different terms when referring to similar phenomena. On certain occasions they use the term "stress" or "work-related stress" (for example, EU Guidelines or the Framework agreement), whereas on different occasions the term "mental stress" is used (for example, Display Screen Directive 87/391/EEC), or the concept of "mental workload" (for example, ISO 10075), and also in certain cases the term "psychosocial risk" is applied more generally (for example, WCA – Dutch).

Moreover, the main notions are defined in different ways. For instance in the EU Guidelines "stress" is defined in terms of a reaction ("stress is a pattern of emotional, cognitive, behavioural and physiological reactions ..."; Levi, 2002, p. 93), and in the ISO Standards – in terms of stimulus ("the total of all assessable influences impinging..."; Nechreiner, 2002, p. 81). In the latter document, the term "mental strain" is being used to describe the stress reaction. It can be concluded, that the regulations on psychosocial risks should apply a unified system of notions.

It should be noticed that problems concerning violence, harassment and bullying are critically defined by legislative institutions in particular countries on more occasions than the terms of psychosocial risk and work-related stress. On the other hand, there are no homogenous, European standards in the area. Definitions used in different countries are similar, but are not identical.

The review (covering terminology, exposure factors, outcomes, preventive actions, etc.) further highlights that the group of standards concerning 'outcomes' is particularly small. This might be due to the fact that this area is difficult to regulate. The outcomes of psychosocial risk are non-specific: both the outcomes observed on the individual level (such as health deterioration in different areas: mental, cardiovascular, musculoskeletal) and the organisational level (absenteeism, decrease in productivity). It is difficult to formulate a standard that would state the most important effects of this particular form of risk. However, as employers are expected to evaluate the level of psychosocial risk in organisations by taking into account potential effects of this risk: both at the organisational and individual level, we can conclude that despite such difficulties, we should aspire to establish a standard which would specifically address psychosocial risks.

Only few countries have developed standards concerning the administrative infrastructure directed specifically at assessing and reducing psychosocial risks (e.g.: each Occupational Health and Safety Service in the Netherlands must employ at least one certificated work and organisational psychology expert who is responsible for psychosocial risk assessment and implementation of organisation-based measures to reduce job stress). These important initiatives should be critically monitored and described in order to assess their advantages and pitfalls (for example the pitfall of previously mentioned example is that in the Dutch system employers do not necessarily have to contract occupational health services). The best initiatives should become examples of best practice for new member states in the EU. Another area for future advancement concerns developing common standards for tools and interventions for psychosocial risk assessment. In the EU Member States there are many instruments being used currently. The principles of the PRIMA framework can prove useful in clarifying best practice components for the assessment of psychosocial risks. However, the least addressed area in current provisions is that of standards related to the psychosocial risk management process as a whole. This also relates to the lack of relevant indicators in this area as discussed in chapter 2.

7. Conclusions

This review highlighted a divergence in terminology used in existing standards of relevance to psychosocial risks. Various authors/institutions use different words to indicate what should be considered as a psychosocial risk factor and what should be done to reduce this risk. Examples of content resemblance in defining risks factors are statements such as “bad fit between a worker and his/her work” (the EU Guidelines) and “match between workers’ skills and job requirements” (European Framework Directive). There is divergence even in terms of preventive actions recommended for example – “providing the worker with clear job description” (EU Guidelines), “clarifying the company’s objectives and the role of individual workers” (European Framework Directive), “defining work roles and responsibilities clearly” (HSE, Management Standards). These differences in terminology and approaches might lead to confusion and misinterpretation and therefore it seems reasonable to develop a minimum set of standards using unified terminology for psychosocial risk management for all EU countries. PRIMA-EF can help to unify these approaches, which in turn can be used as the basis for developing a European standard for psychosocial risk management.

The following chapters explore the important issues of social dialogue and stakeholders’ perception as they relate to the management of psychosocial risks.

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