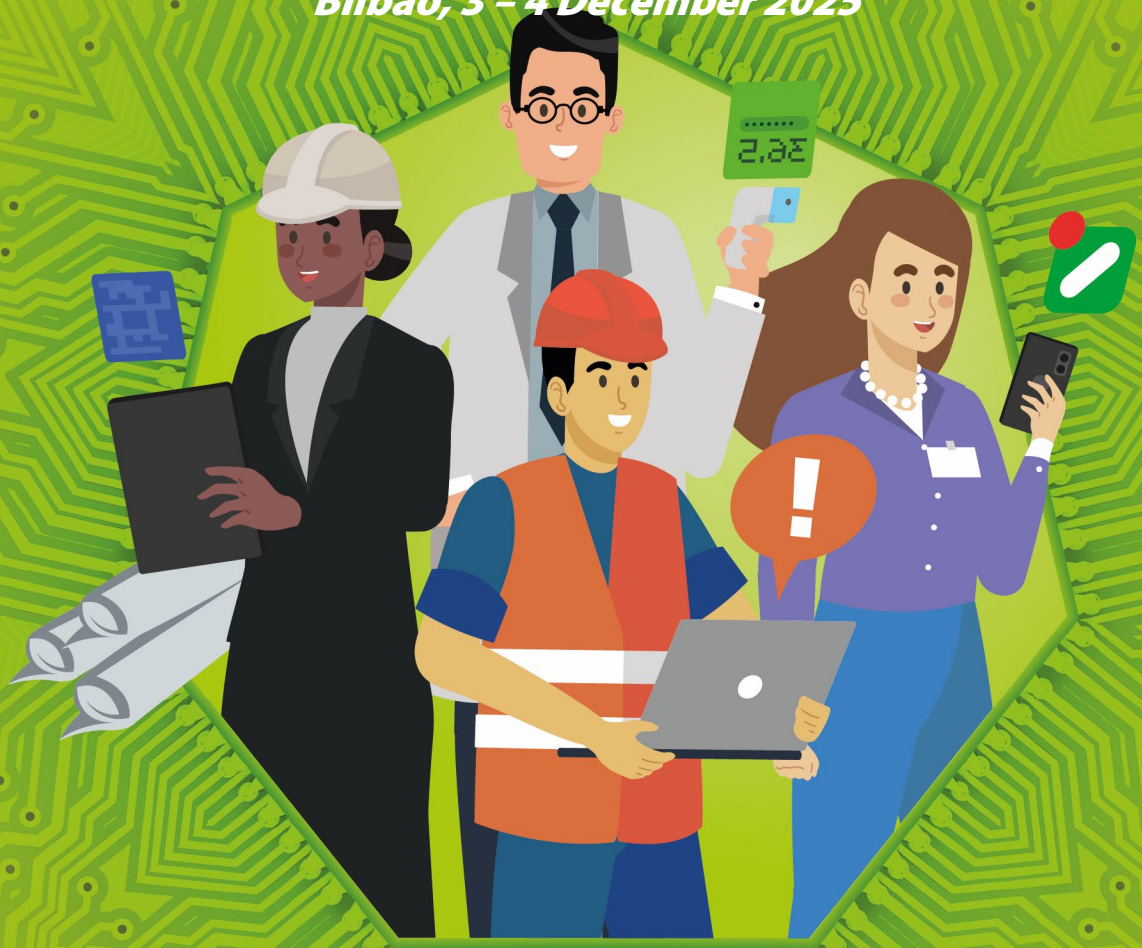
Healthy Workplaces Summit
‘Safe and healthy work in the digital age’

Bilbao, 3 – 4 December 2025



SUMMARY

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European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Healthy Workplaces

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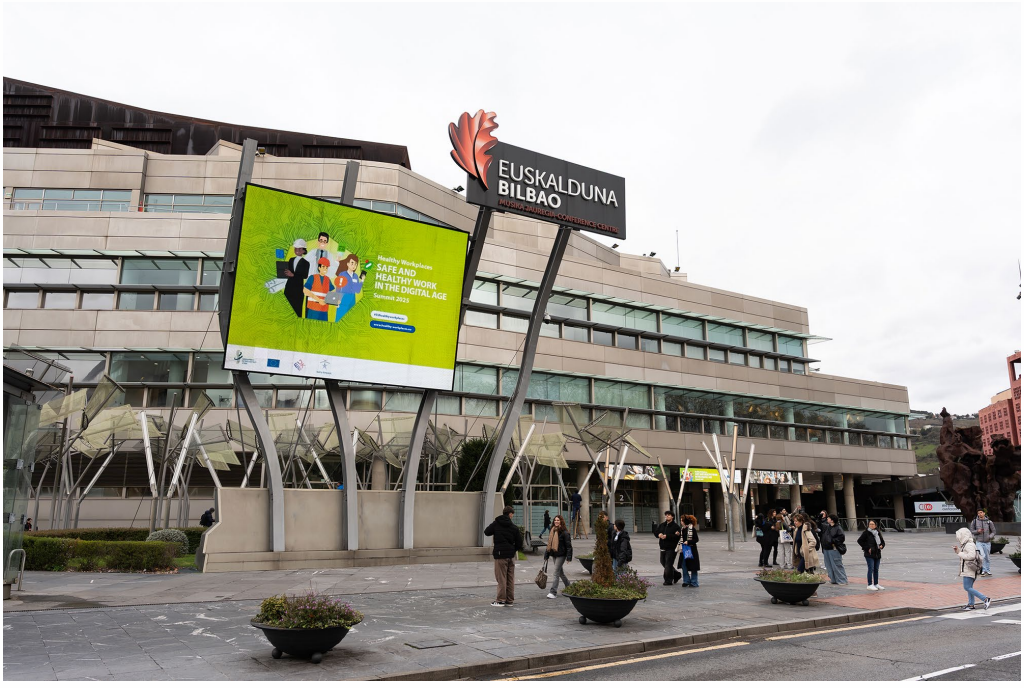
HEALTHY WORKPLACES SUMMIT 2025

Celebrating a flagship campaign for safe and healthy digital workplaces

As technology reshapes jobs across Europe, the Healthy Workplaces Summit 2025 explored how to keep workers safe, healthy and supported in a digital world. More than 400 occupational safety and health (OSH) professionals, policymakers, social partners and members of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) national Focal Point network came together to take stock of the achievements of the 2023-25 Healthy Workplaces Campaign 'Safe and Healthy Work in the Digital Age'.

Participants shared lessons learned and highlighted standout good practices from across Europe, while taking a close look at the digital workplace — **from AI and automation to telework and data-driven systems**. Participants examined both the opportunities technology offers and the risks it poses for workers' wellbeing when not carefully managed. One message came through clearly: **digital transformation must remain people-centred, inclusive, and protective of workers' safety and health every step of the way**.

Coordinated by the Agency and its national Focal Points, the campaign raised awareness, shared evidence-based practices, and **promoted practical solutions to ensure that digitalisation enhances, rather than undermines, workers' safety, health and wellbeing**.



The Summit, held on 3-4 December at the Euskalduna Conference Centre in Bilbao, Spain, featured a rich programme including **two plenary sessions and six parallel sessions**, which provided targeted discussions on a range of timely topics, including organisational risks in digitalised workplaces, worker participation in safe digitalisation, ethical considerations of technology use at work, and real-life strategies to prevent psychosocial risks and enhance wellbeing. The **Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards ceremony** was one of the highlights of the event, celebrating

inspiring projects from European organisations that leveraged digital tools to improve safety, wellbeing and the overall quality of work.

Looking ahead, participants explored the next **Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2026-28 'Together for Mental Health at Work'**, set to launch in October 2026. The discussions underscored the importance of social dialogue, evidence-based strategies, and collaborative action to tackle psychosocial risks and promote mental wellbeing, setting the stage for a new phase of EU-OSHA's work in shaping safer, healthier, and more supportive workplaces across Europe.

Opening session

Brenda O'Brien, Former Manager of EU-OSHA Brussels Liaison Office, opened the event by warmly greeting participants and speakers and giving a brief outline of the programme.

Successful campaign with a clear purpose

William Cockburn, Executive Director of EU-OSHA, acknowledged the presence of representatives from the Spanish and Basque governments, social partners, and campaign stakeholders. He highlighted the exceptional momentum behind the Healthy Workplaces Campaign, noting that discussions at the Agency's recent Management Board meeting confirmed *'clear passion and interest regarding the next future campaign.'*

Mr Cockburn emphasised that, although EU-OSHA is a relatively small agency, the **campaign serves as its most powerful vehicle to reach workplaces across Europe**. Through practical guidance, good practice examples and shared knowledge, the Agency supports prevention on the ground. Since their rollout in 2000, the Healthy Workplaces Campaigns have steadily grown in scale and impact, and the **current edition has been unprecedented**. *'This campaign is really record-breaking,'* he noted, pointing to the high level of participation and engagement.

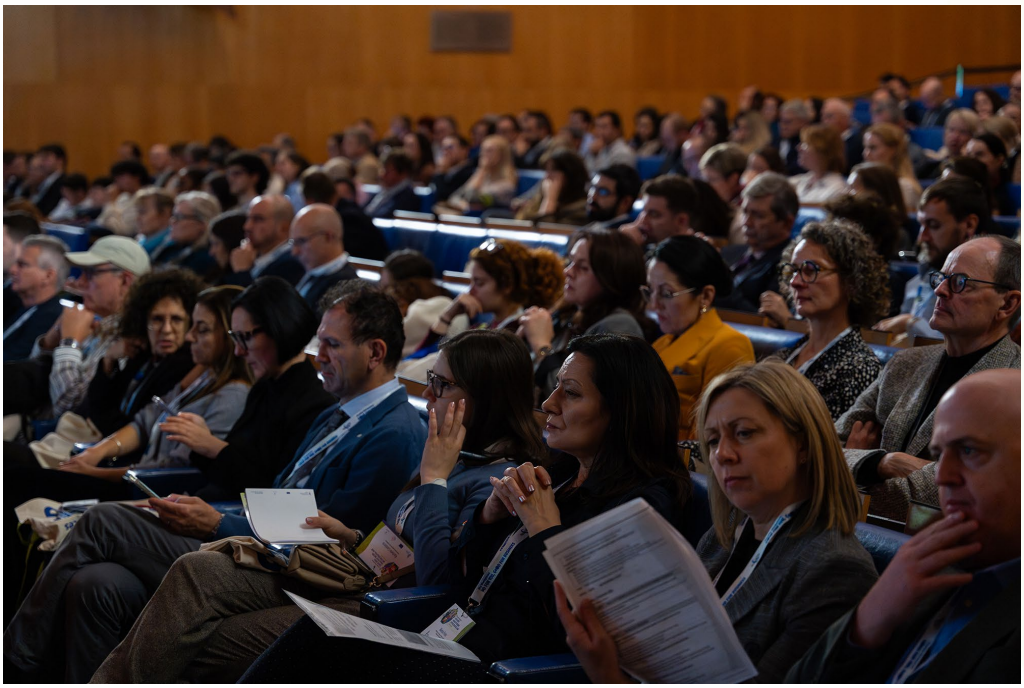
The **campaign's reach has been substantial**, with more than 900 events organised and around 40,000 people engaged. Against this backdrop, the Summit was designed as a moment to take stock: to assess where Europe stood three years ago, where it stands today, and where it is heading as technological change accelerates. It was also an opportunity to look ahead to the next campaign and to celebrate the achievements of official campaign partners, media partners, European social partners and a broad network of national Focal Points, whose collective work was showcased in a retrospective video. These stakeholders have enabled the Agency to deliver another edition of what is recognised as the largest occupational safety and health campaign in the world.

Digitalisation risks, opportunities and the need for prevention

Turning to the campaign's core theme, Mr Cockburn recalled that EU-OSHA has been analysing the relationship between digitalisation and OSH for more than a decade, starting with early work on crowdwork in 2011. Evidence from the Agency's OSH Pulse survey 2025 shows just **how deeply digital technologies have penetrated workplaces**. One in four workers reported that digital tools allocate their tasks or shifts, deliver instructions, or are used to supervise performance. Half said digitalisation has determined their pace of work, while others reported higher workloads and growing isolation.

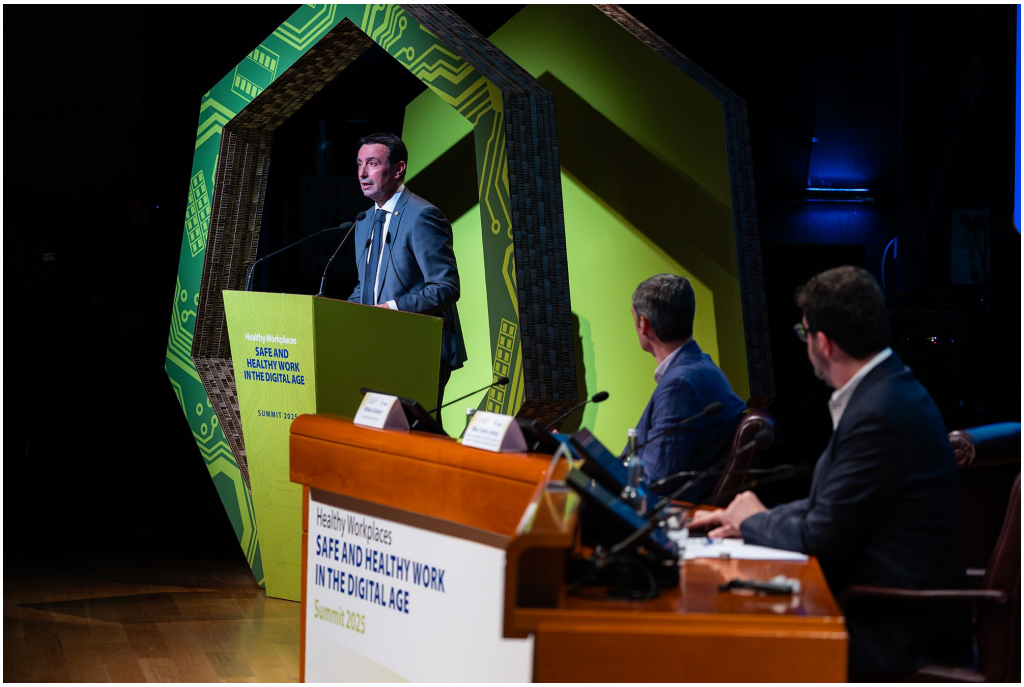
These findings, he explained, underline why the **campaign focuses on helping workplaces recognise risks, mitigate them and look for opportunities**. Encouragingly, enterprise-focused survey ESENER, has shown that more organisations are now including telework and digital technologies in their risk assessments. *'We can take encouragement from that,'* Mr Cockburn said, acknowledging that prevention is evolving alongside new challenges.

Over a 24-month period, the campaign addressed **five priority areas**, each opening up new discussions and reaching new audiences, including digital platform work, automation of tasks, worker management through AI, remote and hybrid work, and smart digital systems. Together, these areas reflect both the risks and the transformative potential of digitalisation.



Regional commitment to prevention as shared responsibility

Speaking on behalf of the Basque Government, **Mikel Torres Lorenzo**, Second Vice President and Minister of Economy, Labour and Employment, thanked EU-OSHA and all those involved for their dedication to workplace safety and health. He placed the Summit at a pivotal moment, as technological transitions reshape work and society. *'We are facing many challenges and many opportunities,'* he said, stressing the **shared goal of building healthy, sustainable and inclusive workplaces**.



He highlighted the **Basque Government's early and active involvement in the campaign**, working through its OSH institute and aligning awareness-raising efforts with European initiatives. Central to his message was the conviction that *'any job to be considered decent and proper has to*

be a safe occupation.' While **new technologies offer significant benefits**, reducing repetitive tasks and supporting workers through robotics and AI, **they also introduce psychosocial risks** such as loss of autonomy, increased workload and social isolation.

Mr Torres Lorenzo underlined the growing **importance of addressing stress, anxiety and mental health**, which feature prominently in the **Basque OSH strategy for 2021-2026**. Prevention, he argued, is the only viable response, and it must be urgent, shared and accessible. He highlighted recent **regional initiatives**, including a digital health calculator and campaigns promoting the right to disconnect. *'Technology is not an end in itself; it's a means,'* he concluded, calling for digital progress grounded in a strong preventive culture that prioritises quality of work and wellbeing.

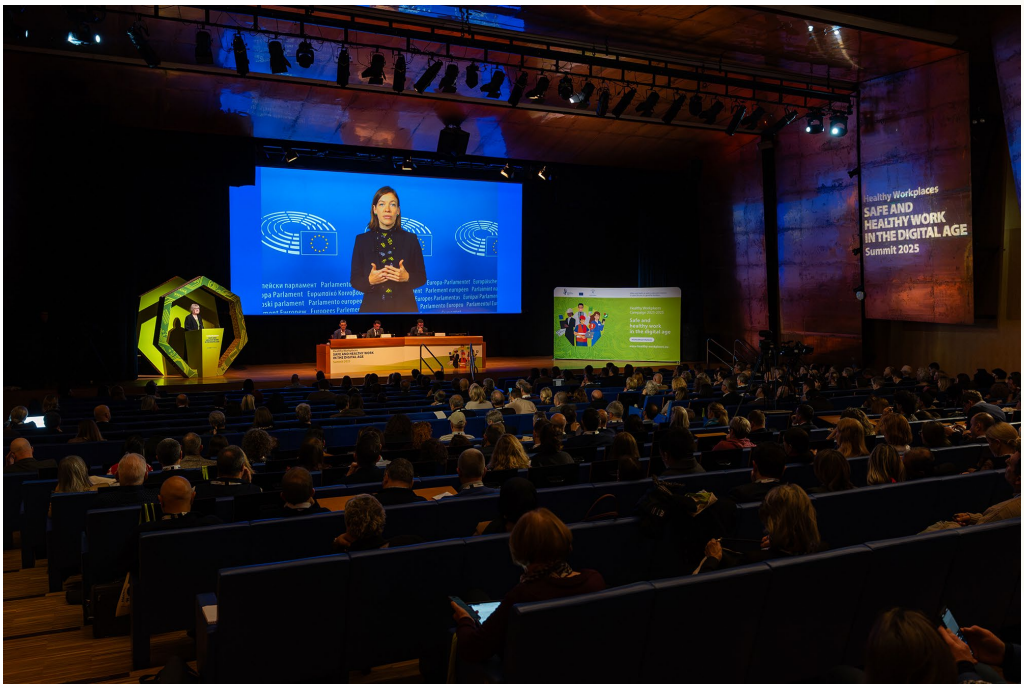
National perspective of safeguarding rights in times of workplace transition

Representing the Spanish Government, **Joaquín Pérez Rey**, Secretary of State for Employment, reinforced the **central role of Europe in advancing OSH**. He praised EU-level legislation and cooperation for making progress possible, while cautioning that discussions on **regulatory simplification must not undermine worker protection**. *'When Europe wants to lead, it has to be done always defending OSH,'* he emphasised.

Mr Pérez Rey described the **Healthy Workplaces Campaign as a clear success**, noting Spain's contribution of more than 60 activities. He stressed that **technology should be used to eliminate dangerous work**, while calling for **stronger action on emerging risks** such as hyperconnectivity and algorithmic management. Renewed efforts on the right to disconnect and algorithmic transparency, he argued, are essential to protect workers' health.

He also outlined **Spain's plans to update its 30-year-old law on the prevention of occupational risks**, incorporating digitalisation, climate change and gender perspectives, as well as extending protection to groups traditionally left out of OSH frameworks. The ultimate goal, he said, is simple but uncompromising: preventing workplace deaths. Losing one's life at work, he concluded, is *'something that we cannot afford.'*

European outlook towards regulating the future of work



In a video address, **Li Andersson**, Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, reaffirmed EU-OSHA's importance as a strategic partner. She highlighted the **dual challenge facing Europe**: persistent traditional risks alongside new psychosocial pressures linked to digitalisation. In Finland, she noted, mental health issues have overtaken musculoskeletal disorders as the leading cause of disability retirement.

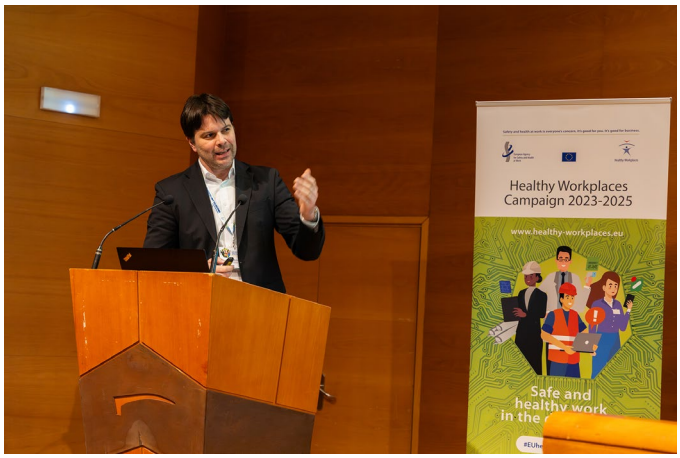
Ms Andersson stressed the **need for forward-looking legislation on AI and algorithmic management**, warning that although these technologies are still evolving, their impact on workers is already profound. *'We must create a regulatory environment that helps to minimise the risks while maximising the benefits of emerging technology,'* she said, calling this Summit a timely and necessary forum for debate.

Parallel sessions

Parallel Session 1 (Day 1): Work organisation and organisational risks in a digitalised workplace

Chaired by **Ioannis Anyfantis**, Research Project Manager at EU-OSHA, the session brought together research, policy and practice to examine both the opportunities and organisational risks emerging as work is increasingly reorganised through digital technologies.

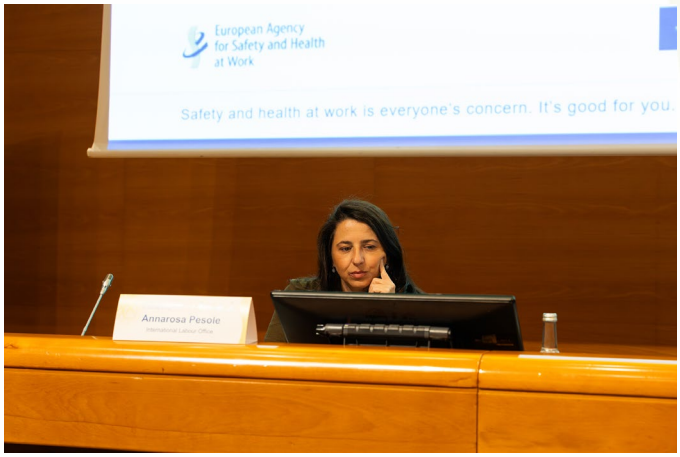
A key research perspective was provided by **Sascha Wischniewski**, Head of Unit Human Factors, Ergonomics at the German Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA). He emphasised that **OSH impacts** always depend on the task being performed. Drawing on an extensive literature review, he introduced a **task-based taxonomy** developed with EU-OSHA, demonstrating how impact can vary from physical, psychosocial and organisational dimensions, while technology replaces, supports or reshapes human work. Through concrete **case studies**, such as Advanced robotic systems for inspection and maintenance of gas and oil infrastructure and



Artificial intelligence - based vehicular automation fitted to excavators to automate trenching, he illustrated how advanced robotics can reduce exposure to dangerous tasks, while also introducing new challenges, including cognitive load and fear of job loss. *'If you have light, you have shadow,'* he remarked, underlining the need to address both sides of technological change.

Mr Wischniewski concluded with **practical lessons** learned: the early involvement of workers, clear communication during change processes, the application of established interaction design principles, and the integration of safety and health considerations from the outset. While the campaign may be ending, he noted, robotics and automation will continue to evolve, making these principles essential for future developments.

Complementing this, **Cesira Urzi-Brancati**, Research Officer, Employment Research Unit at Eurofound, presented preliminary findings from the 2024 European Working Conditions Survey, offering a **data-driven view** of how digitalisation is experienced by workers across Europe. The survey shows that while the use of generative AI remains relatively limited overall, digital tools are often used in combination, creating **distinct worker profiles**, from largely **analogue** roles to highly **'datafied'** ones subject to both collaboration tools and algorithmic control. Importantly, the findings suggest that the **impact of digitalisation** on job quality and wellbeing depends less on the technologies themselves and more on how much control they exert over workers. Those subject to high levels of monitoring and automated task allocation report higher stress, pointing to the consequences of a growing digital divide across sectors and regions.



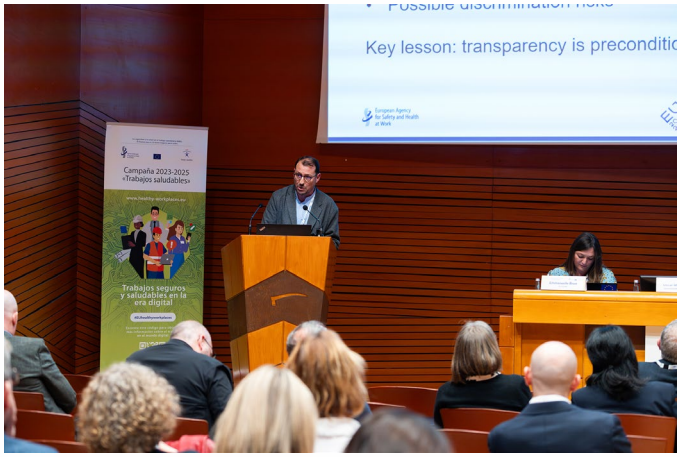
From a global policy perspective, **Annarosa Pesole**, Labour Market Specialist at the International Labour Organisation (ILO), examined **algorithmic management** and its implications for work organisation and OSH. She described how algorithms are increasingly used to plan, allocate, direct and monitor work, often with profound **effects on autonomy, pace of work and psychosocial health**. While digital tools can enhance prevention through real-time data and predictive analytics, they also pose risks linked to work intensification, surveillance and mental strain. Ms Pesole highlighted emerging **regulatory responses** at EU and national level, stressing the importance of safeguarding fundamental rights at work as algorithmic management expands.

The session concluded with a concrete example of **good practice** from **Giovanna Prandini**, President of Perla del Garda winery, one of the **Good Practice Award winners**. She showcased how **AI-based autonomous navigation systems** in vineyards have reduced physical and mental fatigue for tractor operators, improved safety and enhanced trust in technology. *'Our workers feel*

safer and more supported,' she explained, illustrating how digital innovation, when designed around people, can deliver tangible OSH benefits.

Parallel Session 2 (Day 1): Worker participation for a safe and healthy digitalisation of work

Chaired by **Emmanuelle Brun**, Senior Research Project Manager at EU-OSHA, the session explored worker participation as a decisive factor for safe and healthy workplace digitalisation, particularly in the context of AI-based worker/algorithmic management (AIWM) and platform work.



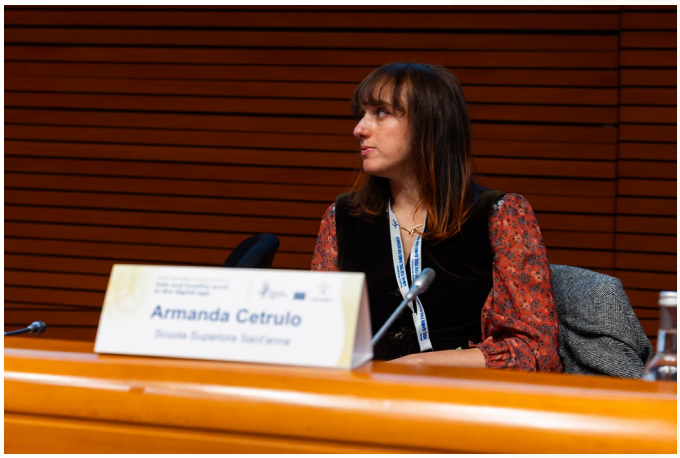
Oscar Molina, Associate Professor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, opened the session with findings from the EU-OSHA report Worker participation and representation: the impact on psychosocial risk prevention of AI worker-management systems. He defined **AIWM** as systems collecting **real-time data on workspace, workers, the work** they do, and the (digital) tools they use for work, which are then fed into an AI-based or algorithmic model that automate or support decisions, typically on task allocation, scheduling, productivity optimisation and/or performance evaluation, and possibly on OSH monitoring. He framed AIWM within the broader **'platformisation' of work**, now extending beyond traditional digital labour platforms into many conventional sectors. **AIWM's effects are ambivalent**: it can intensify psychosocial risks through loss of control, surveillance, opaque evaluations and work intensification but, if adequately designed, implemented and managed, it can also improve task allocation, and detect, prevent or reduce emerging risks, in particular psychosocial risks such as high workload or risks of bullying, or ergonomic risks and reduce physical strain.

Central to Professor Molina's analysis was that **institutional context and worker participation shape OSH outcomes**. Drawing on extensive literature, the research addressed three questions: identifying psychosocial risks linked to AIWM, analysing obstacles to worker representation, and examining regulatory and participatory responses.

He explained that AIWM systems generate **direct effects**, such as surveillance and performance pressure, and **indirect effects**, notably the erosion of worker voice, which weakens the collective capacity to prevent risks. Where industrial democracy and worker representation are weak, psychosocial risks are significantly amplified. Major obstacles to participation include lack of awareness of AIWM, algorithmic opacity, technical complexity, and power asymmetries, especially in SMEs and platform work. Professor Molina distinguished between **two main regulatory approaches: protective standards**, more focused on the *individual* dimension and addressing rights, transparency, safeguards: and **participatory standards**, more focused on the *collective* dimension and reinforcing worker participation mechanisms. EU-level regulatory frameworks such as the OSH Framework Directive, GDPR and AI Act, were mentioned as being rather protective standards.

Case studies from Denmark, Germany and Spain showed how transparency, early worker involvement and statutory participation mechanisms can mediate risks effectively. His conclusion

was clear: *'Worker participation, in any of its forms, is a decisive factor shaping OSH outcomes when AI-based or algorithmic worker management systems are implemented.'*

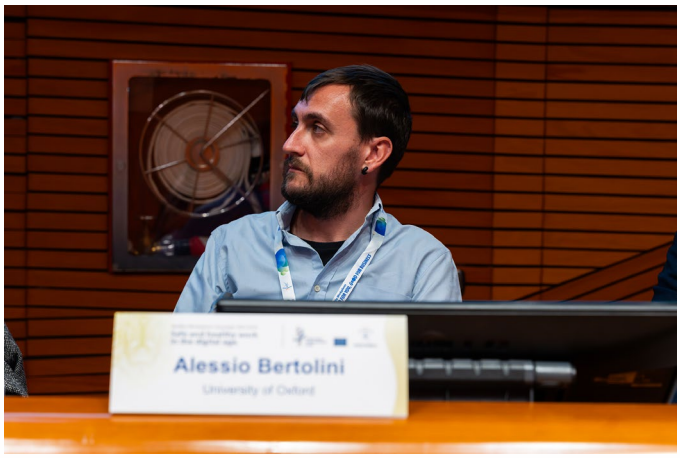


Building on this, **Armanda Cetrulo**, Researcher at the Sant'Anna Pisa Institute, presented an EU-OSHA report investigating the **implications of digital technologies and AIWM systems** for OSH through a comparative analysis of **case studies** at two automotive companies in a large Original Equipment Manufacturer in Belgium and a smaller Tier 1 supplier in Italy. In both cases, AIWM was used for task allocation, performance monitoring, quality and safety controls, maintenance planning and logistics management, supported by sensors and production software. The comparative study shed light on firm heterogeneities against a determinist perspective on technological change, underlining the **critical role of worker participation**. The Italian company implemented an extensive risk assessment process in collaboration with OSH specialists and with worker involvement, which led to a significant reduction of OSH risks. In this context, the adoption of AIWM led to significant improvements in further reducing ergonomic risks across all departments. Operators reported lower stress levels with more control over their work, improved workloads and reduced cognitive burden, although a potential degradation of cognitive skills were raised.

In contrast, the Belgian company prioritised productivity over OSH, resulting in no clear positive effect on ergonomic and physical risks but in high work intensity, limited workers' autonomy, conflict between efficiency and worker's safety and health, and a high turnover of workers. Ms Cetrulo concluded that **AIWM's impact depends on socio-technical characteristics of an organisation**: AIWM can foster greater worker autonomy and enhance job satisfaction, reducing stress, when workers remain in control over their tasks and are involved in the AIWM implementation process; but AIWM can also increase task fragmentation and work intensity, performance pressure and a loos of job control, at the expense of workers' safety and health. She called for a **human-centred, socially embedded OSH prevention strategy** grounded in transparency and worker empowerment allowing their participation in decision-making.

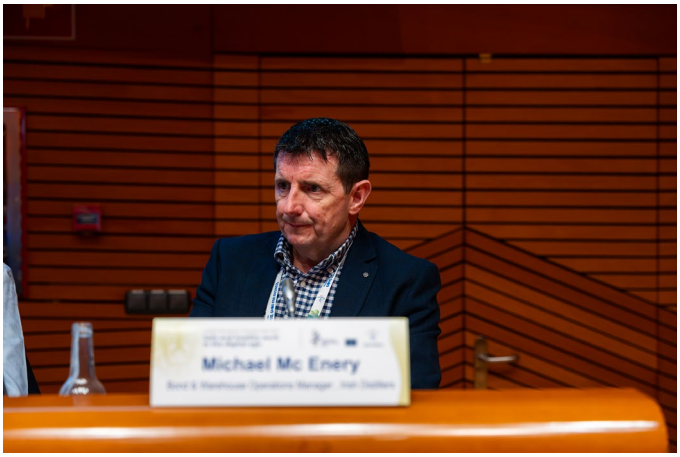
The session then turned to digital platform work. **Alessio Bertolini**, Researcher at the University of Oxford's Fairwork Project, presented key findings from EU-OSHA policy briefs regarding how regulation and policies, initiatives such as Fairwork, and different economic models of digital labour platforms contribute to safer and fairer conditions for platform workers. **Digital platform work** includes not only ride-hailing or delivery but also professionals such as nurses, cleaning workers and remote programmers. Digital platform workers may work on-site or on-line. The **OSH challenges** associated with these jobs in the traditional economy are exacerbated when performed within the digital platform economy, by misclassification of (self-) employment, limited OSH protections, algorithmic management and decision-making, lack of transparency, and barriers to collective representation.

Mr Bertolini reviewed the impacts that **regulatory developments** in the EU Member States and in particular the **EU Directive on Improving Working Conditions in Platform Work**, have had on employment classification, sub-contracting, working times, OSH and social protection, algorithmic



management, data protection and transparency, as well as collective representation. He highlighted **Fairwork initiative**, a project based at the Oxford Internet Institute and Berlin Social Science Centre, that has evaluated and scored over 700 platforms based on the working conditions, including OSH, that they provide, showing that most fail to meet basic standards on fair conditions and worker representation. The **cooperative platform economy** was presented as an alternative model, embedding OSH and worker participation at the core, though funding, scale and sustainability remain challenges.

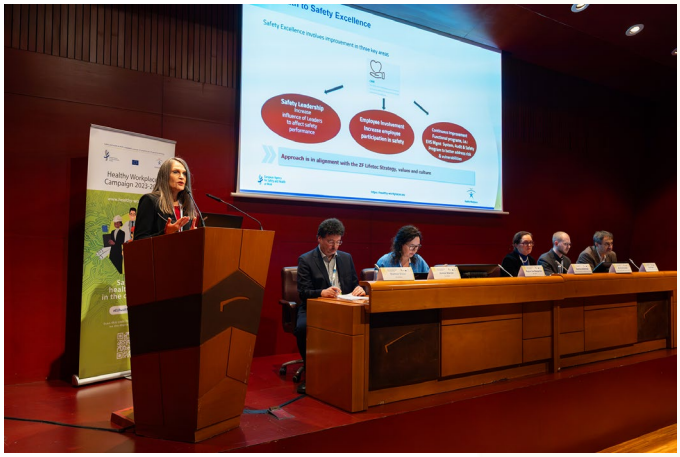
The session concluded with the **Good Practice Awards** winning case, presented by **Michael McEnery**, Bond & Warehouse Operations Manager at Irish Distillers. He described a **robotic cask unloading system** to reduce musculoskeletal risks from manually handling whiskey barrels. Through a multidisciplinary project involving safety, engineering, operations and technology partners as well as sound worker participation Irish Distillers introduced a tailor-made autonomous robotic solution with advanced vision and safety systems engineered to minimise manual intervention while maintaining a human-in-command approach. Since going live in January 2024, it has significantly reduced risks, minimised manual intervention and upskilled workers from manual handling to operating advanced robotics.



Parallel Session 3 (Day 1): OSH as a driver of safe and healthy digital technologies for work

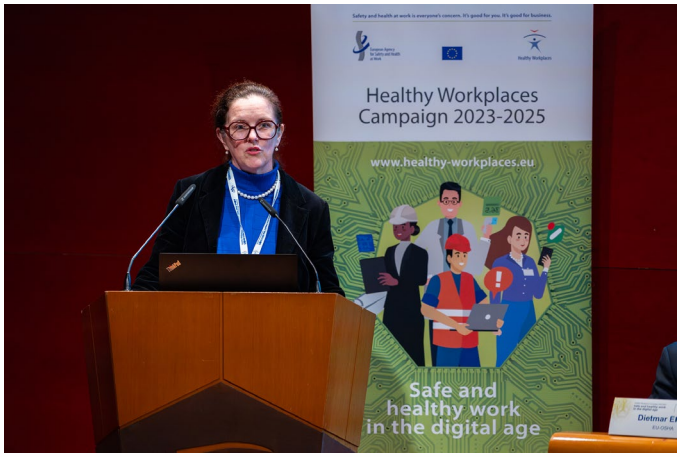
Organised by the network of official campaign partners and chaired by **Dietmar Elsler** and **Annick Starren**, Senior Research Project Managers at EU-OSHA, the session examined how OSH can actively drive the development and deployment of safe, trustworthy and human-centred digital technologies.

The session opened with insights from **Regine Mägerlein**, Head of Global Environment, Health and Safety at ZF Lifetec. As a manufacturer of automotive safety components such as seatbelts and airbags, ZF places safety at the core of both its products and its workplaces. *'If safety is our business, our safety is also important - to our factories and to our employees,'* she noted.



Ms Mägerlein outlined **ZF's Path to Safety Excellence**, built on **three pillars**: safety leadership, employee involvement and continuous improvement through structured EHS (Environment, Health, Safety) management systems. She illustrated how AI is being applied as a technical and organisational safety driver across operations. Such examples were mentioned as smart LED gate systems using radar sensors to reduce pedestrian-forklift collision risks in warehouses, AI-supported ergonomic risk assessments using video analysis and internal AI assistants that make EHS information more accessible, freeing up time for prevention on the shop floor. Importantly, many of these **initiatives emerged bottom-up** from EHS communities and operational teams, reinforcing engagement and ownership. As she summarised, *'We are exploring how we can use AI to support our mission of keeping people safe, using it in a way that benefits all.'*

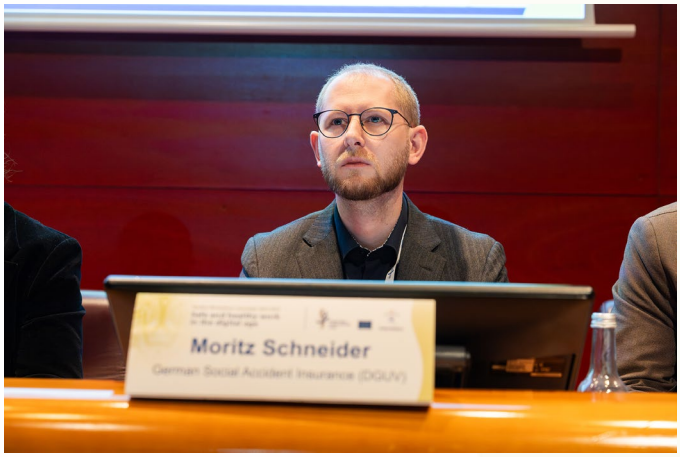
A strategic organisational perspective was provided by **Beatrice Aelterman**, Head of Global Occupational Health and Safety at Boehringer Ingelheim, who argued that **OSH must lead digitalisation efforts**. *'Digitalisation without OSH leadership risks creating unsafe, inequitable workplaces,'* she warned, adding that when OSH leads, technology becomes a tool for healthier and more productive work. Drawing on ISO 9241-210, she outlined a **user-centred design approach** based on participation, iteration and user control, supported by clear governance structures and transparency.



Ms Aelterman shared **practical examples** such as visual OSH technology roadmaps co-created with business functions, psychosocial "pulse checks" to identify stress trends, and early engagement with works councils. These approaches, she stressed, help shift organisations from reactive compliance to proactive design, ensuring trust and acceptance of digital tools.

From a research and prevention standpoint, **Moritz Schneider**, Senior Specialist AI and Software Architecture at the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV) and the Partnership for European Research in Occupational Safety and Health (PEROSH), presented work on **AI-based near-fall detection** to prevent slip, trip and fall accidents. Emphasising that one in five workplace accidents involves such events, he explained that in order to prevent slip, trip and fall accidents, we first need to understand where and when they happen.

The project combined highly **realistic experimental settings** with **strong ethical safeguards**, including voluntary participation, worker and works council involvement, and GDPR-compliant data protection. Using advanced sensor configurations, the team developed a large dataset on near-falls and demonstrated that **accurate detection is possible with minimal, wearable technology**. The goal is to support OSH professionals with actionable insights, such as risk heat maps, rather than individual surveillance.

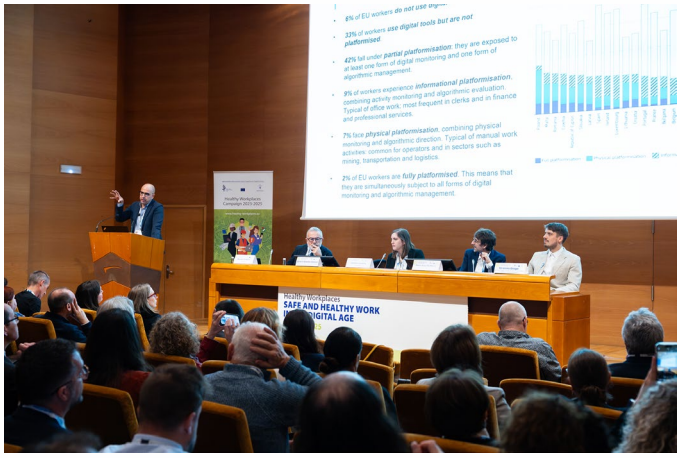


The session closed with a human factors perspective from **Gyula Szabó**, PhD, Professor at Óbuda University and the Federation of European Ergonomics Societies, who **linked AI design directly to classical ergonomics**. *'There is no big difference between preventing musculoskeletal disorders and preventing AI-related psychosocial risks - it is about fitting systems to humans,'* he observed. He noted that principles such as **human oversight, transparency** and **predictability**, now central to the **EU AI Act**, have long been embedded in ergonomic standards.

Professor Szabó cautioned that poorly designed AI can lead to stress, loss of control and emotional exhaustion, while human-centred design can unlock real benefits. *'We have plenty of opportunities to include AI in the workplace and keep humans in the loop,'* he concluded, underlining that ethical, safe and effective AI requires close collaboration between technology and OSH expertise.

Parallel Session 1 (Day 2): Psychosocial risks and mental health in the digital world of work

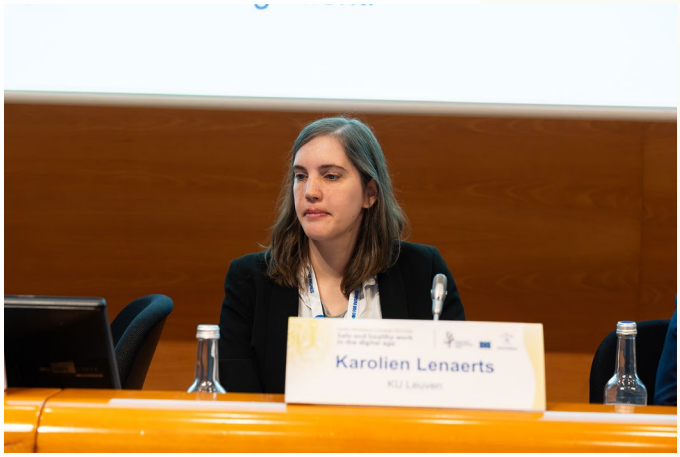
Chaired by **Maurizio Curtarelli**, Senior Research Project Manager at EU-OSHA, the session focused on psychosocial risks and mental health in an increasingly digitalised workplace.



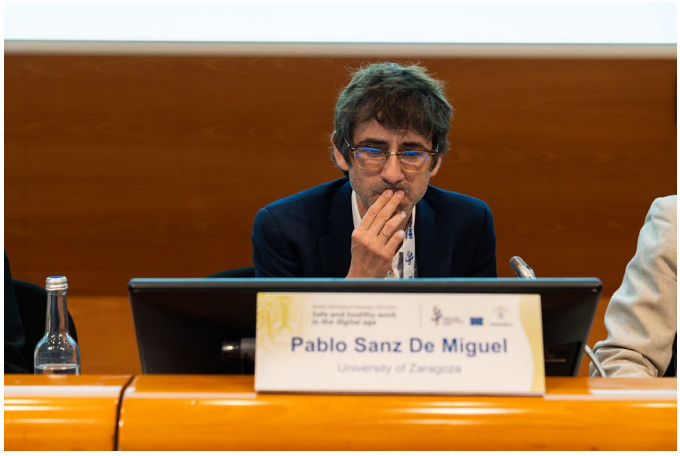
Ignacio González, Economic and Policy Analyst at the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, opened acknowledging the collaboration between the JRC and EU-OSHA in a number of research activities, including the **AIM-WORK survey**, whose findings he subsequently presented. He described **digitalisation as a structural transformation**: *'New forms of digitally enabled coordination, control and management are no longer limited to digital labour platforms, but increasingly shape regular workplaces.'* Survey data from over 70,000 workers showed that more than 90% of them use digital tools, and around 30% of European workers have used AI-powered tools in the past year, though exposure varies by education, sector and region.

Mr González distinguished between workers' digital tool use, workers' digital monitoring (time, physical, activity) and workers' algorithmic management (automated allocation of tasks and

evaluation of workers' performance). Time tracking is widespread, while more intrusive monitoring is less common but more concerning from a psychosocial perspective. Algorithmic management, less prevalent overall, is visible in automated shift planning and task allocation. A key contribution of the survey is the possibility to use its findings to identify **different models of work organisation based on the degree of "platformisation"**, that is the use of digital technologies to manage workers as in the platform economy. According to this taxonomy one-third of workers use digital tools but are not subject to platform-like management, while around 60% work in contexts where they are exposed to digital monitoring and algorithmic management to different degrees. *'Full and physical platformisation are clearly associated with higher stress and reduced autonomy,'* he noted, stressing that impacts of "platformisation" are highly context-specific and influenced by labour market institutions, industrial relations, and co-determination.

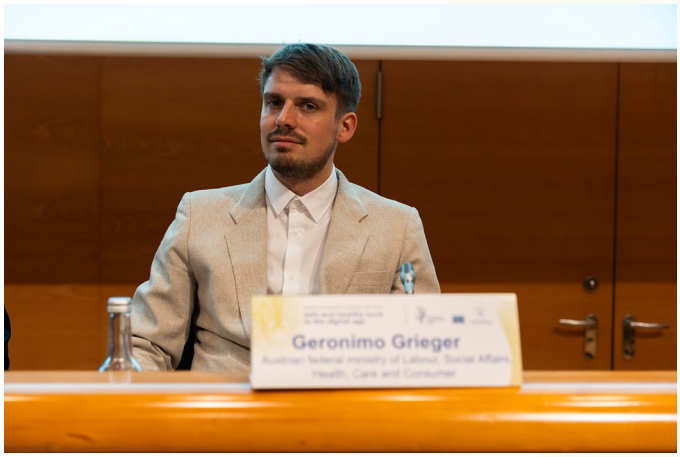


Karolien Lenaerts, Head of Research group HIVA at KU Leuven, presented findings from a comprehensive research report drafted for EU-OSHA on Digital platform work and occupational safety and health: overview of regulation, policies, practices and research. She noted **that platform work is defined not just by technology, but by algorithmic management, triangular relationships, and self-employment**, which shift OSH risks responsibilities onto workers. Platform workers face similar physical and psychosocial risks as others, but these are aggravated by isolation, algorithmic management and surveillance, and job insecurity. *'Algorithmic management shifts the power balance decisively towards platforms,'* she explained, linking opaque ratings, automated decisions, and constant monitoring to exhaustion, anxiety, and stress. Many platform workers, classified as self-employed, fall outside OSH legislation, inspections, and social dialogue, and are exposed to increased mental health risks. She emphasised the **importance of sharing good practices** where digital labour platforms support workers.



Pablo Sanz, Associate Professor at the University of Zaragoza, addressed telework and hybrid work post-COVID-19, drawing on the following research conducted on behalf of EU-OSHA: Telework and health risks in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; Regulating telework in a post-COVID-19 Europe: recent developments; Exploring the gender dimension of telework: implications for occupational safety and health. The speaker presented the **main features of telework** - which has become widespread also as a consequence of COVID-19 pandemic - and its implications for occupational safety and health. Work intensification, extended availability, and difficulty switching off are often driven by **implicit expectations**. Isolation and intense virtual collaboration contribute to information overload, fatigue, and loss of informal support. **Work-life conflict remains gendered**, particularly affecting women with care responsibilities. Women may report better work-life balance, but they are also more

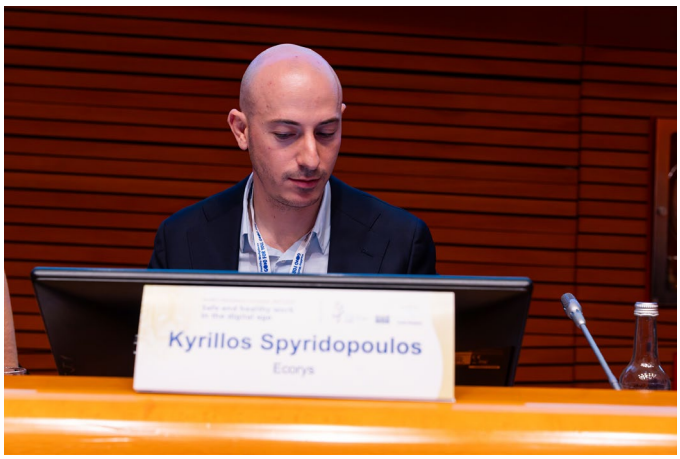
exposed to work-family conflict. Moderating factors such as autonomy, organisational support, social dialogue, and collective bargaining significantly reduce risks. Companies with prior telework experience or strong worker representation had more comprehensive measures, including the right to disconnect. **Regulatory responses are evolving**, though **gender aspects remain limited**.



The session concluded with **Geronimo Grieger**, Occupational Psychologist at the Central Labour Inspectorate Austria, presenting the **Digitalisation Risk Matrix**, designed to support psychosocial risk assessment in digitalised workplaces. The tool links EU-OSHA campaign priority areas with psychosocial risk dimensions, aiming to establish actionable steps. Using a logistics-sector scenario, he showed how digital tracking intended to improve efficiency can create competition and stress, and how targeted measures with OSH experts can mitigate these effects. *'The same digital system can be useful or harmful depending on how it's implemented, and staff participation plays a big role,'* he emphasised. Addressing the *'pandemic of loneliness'*, Mr Grieger warned that **isolation is a serious health risk**. *'Loneliness is associated with a higher risk of premature mortality than obesity and lack of exercise combined,'* highlighting the need for preventive action. **Proposed measures** include designated contact persons, joint activities, virtual and physical social spaces, and avoiding solitary workplaces wherever possible.

Parallel Session 2 (Day 2): Digital technologies, OSH management and risk prevention

Chaired by **Annick Starren** (EU-OSHA), the session explored new risks posed by digital technologies, as well as how these technologies can support OSH management.

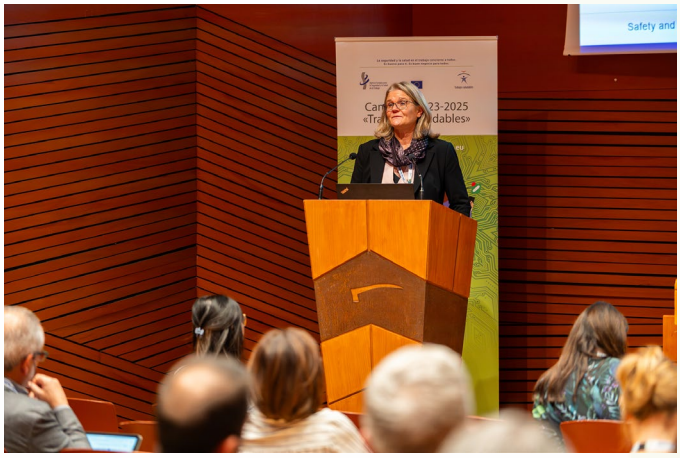


Kyrillos Spyridopoulos, Senior Research Manager, Policy and Research at Ecorys, presented EU-OSHA **research on smart digital systems**, drawing on a broad digitalisation and OSH research programme conducted between 2020 and 2023. The key question was put forward: *'What are the opportunities and challenges of smart digital systems in improving workers' safety and health?'* Based on over 150 resources, 20 interviews, 10 case studies, and workshops, smart digital systems were defined as technologies that collect and analyse data to identify risks, prevent harm, and promote OSH. A distinction is made between **proactive systems**, aimed at preventing risks, and **reactive systems**, responding to incidents.

Proactive systems include wearables monitoring exposure, cameras detecting unsafe movements, infrared sensors for collision avoidance, drones for inspections, and IoT-based training tools. Reactive systems support emergency detection, faster rescue operations, and accident

investigations. **Case studies** presented illustrate benefits, such as wrist-worn devices alerting workers to excessive vibration exposure and smart insoles protecting lone workers.

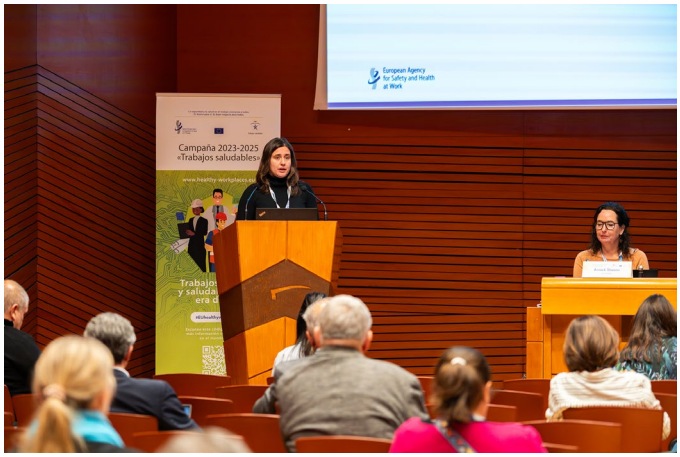
Mr Spyridopoulos emphasised that these technologies carry risks: physical and psychosocial side effects, work intensification, alienation, privacy concerns, and data overload. *'These systems are not the silver bullet for safety and health,'* he stressed. Indeed, the **new OSH monitoring systems are part of the solution but they are not the solution on their own**, therefore it is important to integrate them with existing OSH procedures. Workers should be involved at every stage, from testing to optimising, through knowledge sharing across companies or cross-sectoral dialogues, and peer-learning activities. *'The walks and the talks matter,'* he noted, highlighting the importance of OSH managers being present and maintaining dialogue with workers.



Hilde Færevik, Science and Technology Advisor at Innovation Norway, shared lessons from Norwegian initiatives, within strong regulation, tripartite cooperation, and national digitalisation goals: *'In Norway, digital OSH must be human-centred, co-designed and privacy-compliant, not merely technologically possible.'* **Wearables and smart monitoring must be justified and proportionate**: *'Before measuring anything, we must ask why, who will use the data, and whether it improves health and wellbeing or adds new stress.'* Drawing on **healthcare and petroleum projects**, she illustrated both risks and potential. For example, research on extended nursing shifts highlighted fatigue, sleep problems, and burnout, while the RISKOFF project linked emotional stress and disrupted sleep to sick leave and early exit from work. *'Employees carry the emotional weight of their work far beyond the workplace,'* she noted, concluding that digital technologies must address both physical and emotional burdens.

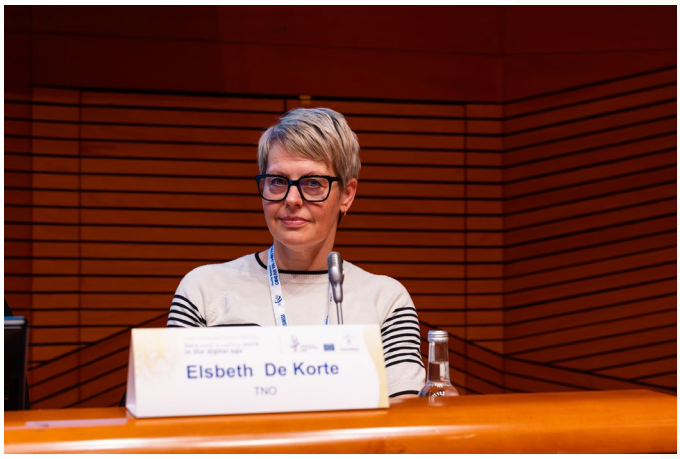
She also showed that modest productivity gains from smarter technology use can transform workforce needs in healthcare. *'Investing in technology is critical for a sustainable healthcare system,'* she concluded, while underlining the role of trust, ethics, and worker involvement. Technology can pose **ethical risks**, particularly for **vulnerable groups** who might benefit less and face greater challenges, leading to **"occupational health inequity."** Additionally, **"function creep"** can shift monitoring from safety to punitive management, raising ethical and trust concerns. In Norway, strong institutions, tech-industry, and tripartite collaboration provides a strong foundation to adopt new digital tools without compromising worker wellbeing ensuring technology enhances prevention while keeping people at the centre.

The regulatory dimension was addressed by **Stefania Marassi**, Senior Lecturer and Researcher at The Hague University of Applied Sciences, who examined **AI-driven OSH systems in light of the EU AI Act**. She explained that the Act seeks to balance innovation with the protection of health, safety and fundamental rights through a risk-based approach. Focusing on the **highest risk categories**, Ms Marassi highlighted that certain AI practices are explicitly prohibited, including emotion recognition systems in the workplace, except in narrowly interpreted cases for medical or safety reasons. This has significant implications for some AI-driven wellness and stress-monitoring tools.

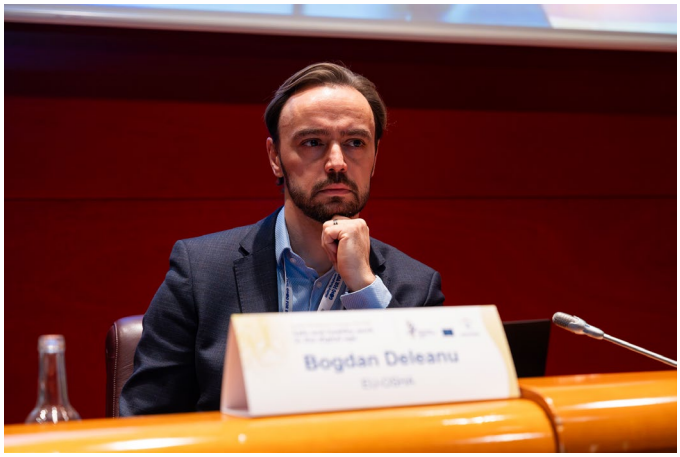


She also explored how AI-driven OSH systems may fall under the **high-risk category of employment and worker management**, triggering stringent requirements for risk assessment, transparency and human oversight. Emphasising the interplay between the AI Act, GDPR and EU OSH legislation, she underlined that there is **no shift in OSH responsibility**, AI-driven systems must be integrated into existing OSH management systems.

Elsbeth de Korte, Senior Scientist at The Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research, presented insights from the **ALMA-AI project** on OSH impacts of algorithmic management and AI in regular workplaces. Originally from platform work, algorithmic management now spreads into logistics, manufacturing, offices, and public services. *'This fundamentally changes how work is managed and experienced,'* she explained. The project shows that algorithmic management increases job demands and reduces resources, leading to higher stress, burnout, and fatigue. **OSH Pulse survey 2022** data indicate that **each increase in algorithmic management intensity raises OSH problems** by over 16.5%. Strong worker participation, transparency, and autonomy-enhancing practices, such as well-designed remote work, can halve the negative impact on stress and workload.

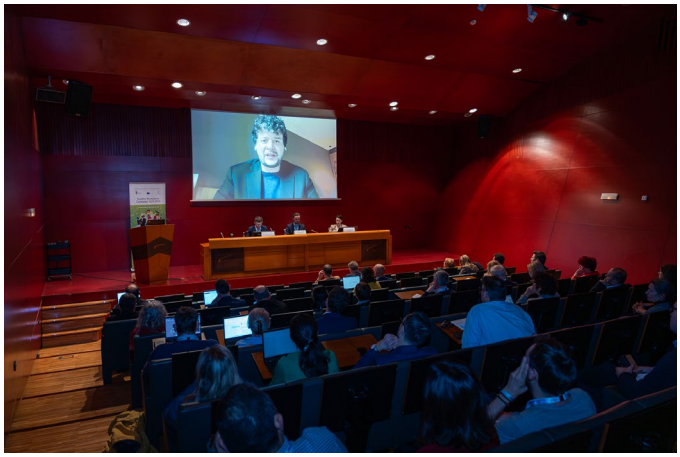


Parallel Session 3 (Day 2): Legislation, regulation and ethical considerations



Chaired by **Bogdan Deleanu**, Brussels Liaison Manager at EU-OSHA, this session examined how legislation, regulation and ethics can shape the use of digital technologies at work, with a particular focus on AI-driven systems, algorithmic management and platform work.

Brando Benifei, AI Act Co-rapporteur at the European Parliament (Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats), talking in a video recording, outlined the evolving European legislative landscape, highlighting the strong links between digitalisation and OSH. He stressed that AI is fundamentally reshaping work organisation through increased monitoring, data-driven hiring and firing, and algorithmic management- developments with profound implications for workers' safety and health. As he noted, *'technological changes are impacting an already complex situation and creating new layers of difficulties to be confronted with.'*

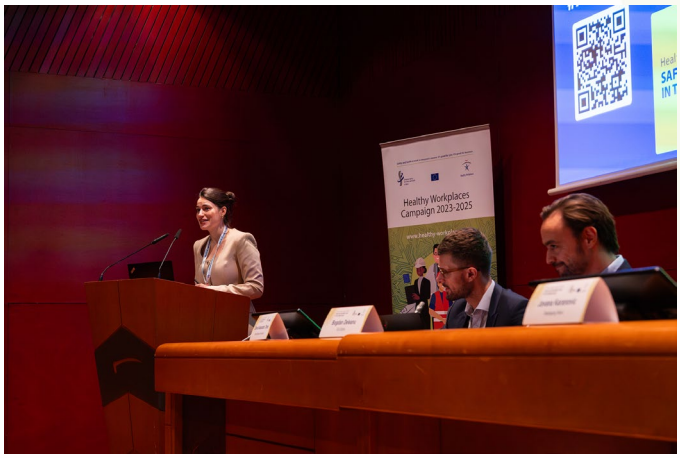


Mr Benifei explained that the **AI Act** explicitly recognises the **workplace as a high-risk use case for AI**, introducing obligations around data quality, cybersecurity, governance and human oversight. Certain practices, such as biometric categorisation and emotion recognition in the workplace, have been prohibited, as they represent illegitimate pressure and behavioural experiments without real advantage.

At the same time, he acknowledged AI's potential to improve accident prevention and workplace safety, emphasising that **risks must be addressed first to unlock opportunities** responsibly. Turning to platform work, he underlined the importance of the **Platform Work Directive** in tackling extreme algorithmic control, ensuring transparency and protecting workers from abuse. Implementation, however, remains critical: *'Without enforcement, we are talking only about paperwork.'*

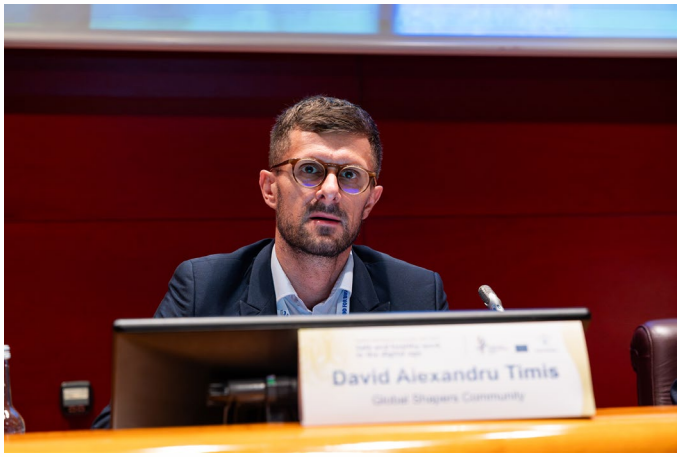
Looking ahead, Mr Benifei stressed that **Europe must pursue innovation without undermining its social model**: *'We want to gain productivity and stay competitive, but we want to do that without sacrificing our social model, including safety and health at work.'* He also called for reinvesting AI-driven productivity gains into **training and lifelong learning** to support transitioning workplaces.

Jovana Karanovic, Founder and Managing Director of Reshaping Work, focused on the ethical challenges of regulating digital work. She highlighted the **complexity of digital risks**, many of which, such as mental health impacts and digital overload, are largely invisible. While algorithmic transparency is often cited as a solution, she argued that **transparency alone is insufficient**: *'The real question is who has the practical power to understand, test, and challenge algorithmic decisions.'*



Ms Karanovic emphasised that transparency must be usable and meaningful for workers, calling for better onboarding, access to training data and visibility into continuously evolving algorithms. She raised concerns about governance, warning that algorithms are increasingly setting the rules of work, potentially **shifting power from democratic and social dialogue** processes to a small group of system designers.

On data ethics, she highlighted **deep power asymmetries**, questioning whether worker consent is truly meaningful when livelihoods depend on it. With companies holding vast amounts of aggregated behavioural data, these systems can not only predict but also shape behaviour, raising serious OSH concerns. As she concluded, digital technologies offer significant potential, but *'we must evaluate risks before fully letting these technologies penetrate our society.'*



David Timis, Co-Lead SHAPE Europa & Eurasia of the Global Shapers Community, reflected on the **gap between EU-level policymaking and real-world implementation**. He warned that the rapid pace of AI deployment has sidelined safety considerations, both societal and occupational. While AI is often framed as a productivity-enhancing tool, Mr Timis argued that this time is different due to the speed of change and the scale of digitalisation.

He highlighted growing pressures on job quality rather than just job quantity, citing increased stress, precariousness and competition between workers and machines, particularly in sectors such as programming, customer service and creative industries. **Positive examples of worker resistance**, such as actions by Hollywood screenwriters and dock workers in the United States, demonstrated that collective action can influence outcomes.

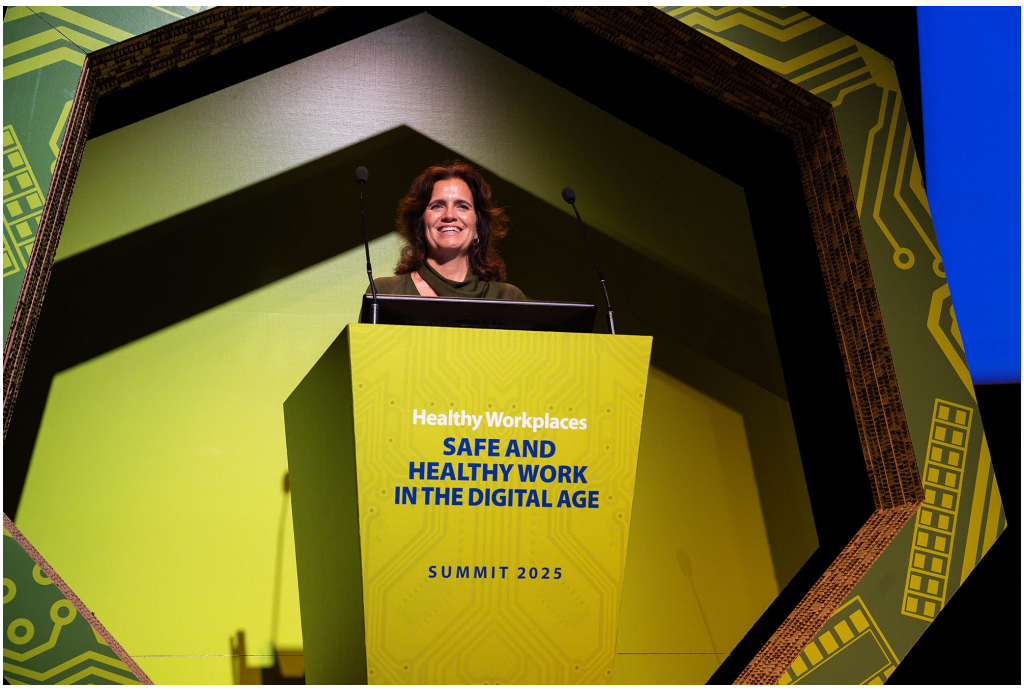
Mr Timis concluded with a **call for stronger worker representation**: *'We need a much stronger, collective voice for workers. There is still time to change the course and make AI work for us, not against us.'*

Networking event

EU-OSHA's networking event at the historic Sociedad Bilbaina, one of the city's oldest and emblematic institutions, was the perfect way to wrap up the first day of the summit. Guests enjoyed a vibrant atmosphere with music, local hospitality, and plenty of opportunities to connect. The evening provided a unique setting to meet new peers, share ideas, and strengthen collaborations, capturing the spirit of dialogue and partnership that defines the summit.

Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards ceremony

The Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards ceremony marked a celebratory milestone of the 'Safe and healthy work in the digital age' campaign, recognising organisations across Europe that have successfully harnessed digital technologies to improve OSH.

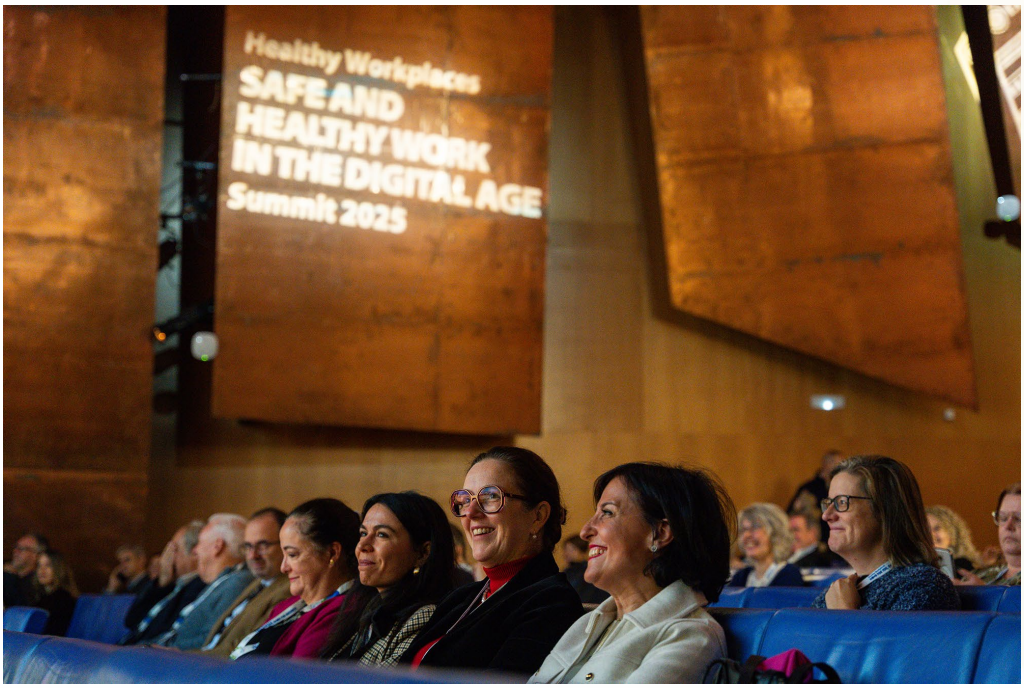


The ceremony was opened by **Maria Luisa Cabral**, Director for Quality Jobs, Working Conditions and Social Dialogue at the DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of European Commission, speaking on behalf of Executive Vice-President Mînzatu. She highlighted the symbolic importance of the moment, coinciding with the adoption of the Commission's Quality Jobs Roadmap and the launch of consultations on a future Quality Jobs Act.

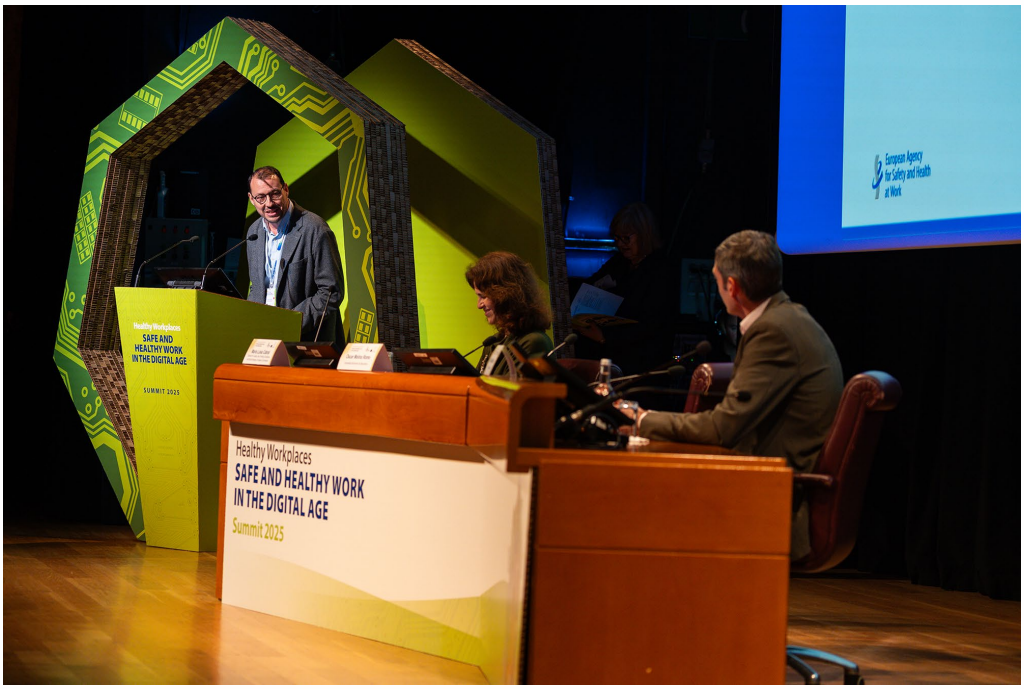
Ms Cabral emphasised that **competitiveness and worker protection must go hand in hand**, noting that *'when we talk about competitiveness, we also speak about people's jobs.*' For the European Commission, **quality jobs** mean adequate pay, good working conditions, work-life balance and, fundamentally, that you do not get sick or have accidents when you go to work.

She underlined that digitalisation is profoundly reshaping how, where and when people work. Technologies such as AI, robotics, data analytics and smart systems offer **significant opportunities** to make workplaces safer. At the same time, she acknowledged **emerging risks**, including digital monitoring, blurred boundaries between work and private life, and growing psychosocial pressures. As she stressed, *'technological progress cannot mean less protection.'*

Ms Cabral concluded by recognising the **collective effort behind the campaign**, praising EU-OSHA, social partners, national authorities, researchers, companies and workers for promoting practical tools, rigorous risk assessment and a human-centred approach to digital transition. Referring to the **award winners**, she noted that they are *'real-life examples that digitalisation can lead to better safety and health at work,'* reaffirming the Commission's commitment to continue working together to improve conditions for millions of workers across Europe.



The awards were presented by Professor **Oscar Molina**, Chair of the Awards Jury, who offered insights into the selection process and the diversity of approaches showcased. Reflecting on the jury's work, he highlighted the **creativity and variety of solutions**, noting that organisations used technology in *'very different ways to make workers safer and healthier.'*



The jury, comprising representatives of social partners, the European Commission and EU-OSHA, assessed applications against key criteria: a **holistic approach to OSH prevention, meaningful worker participation, strong management commitment, and a preference for collective preventive measures** over purely individual interventions. Professor Molina emphasised the importance of dissemination and learning, expressing the hope that these cases would inspire other organisations, while recognising that each company has its own requirements and needs.

From **34 applications** across Europe, covering a wide range of sectors and company sizes, the jury selected **6 award winners** and **11 commended organisations**. Particular attention was given to **small and medium-sized enterprises**, with Professor Molina noting that it was especially encouraging to see smaller companies overcoming cost and implementation challenges to use digital technologies to improve OSH.

The ceremony concluded with the **hand-over of certificates** to the following organisations.

Winning companies: Eni Cyprus Ltd (Cyprus), Organisation of Telecommunications of Greece (Greece), Midleton Distillery, Irish Distillers Pernod-Ricard (Ireland), Winery 'Perla del Garda' (Italy), Amarsul S.A. (Portugal), Jacar Montajes, S.L. (Spain).

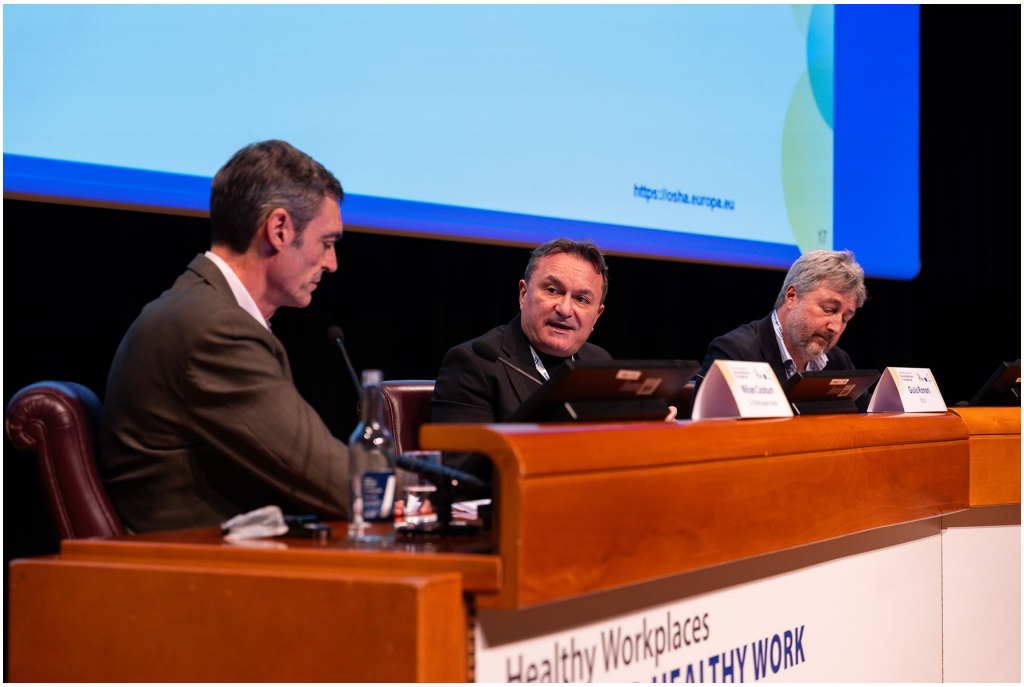
Commended: AGC Architectural Glass Europe (Belgium), Service Facilities for the Czech Ministry of the Interior (Czech Republic), Danish GSV Materieludlejning (Denmark), Focke & Co. (Germany), Stubbe (Germany), Hellas Gold (Greece), Intel Corporation (Ireland), Dinamica Generale S.p.A. (Italy), YIT LATVIJA Ltd (Latvia), Thuisbezorgd.nl (Netherlands), Volandis in collaboration with FIQAS (Netherlands), Gonvauto Iberia (Spain).

Panel discussion with social partners on work-related mental health – introducing the HWC 2026-2028

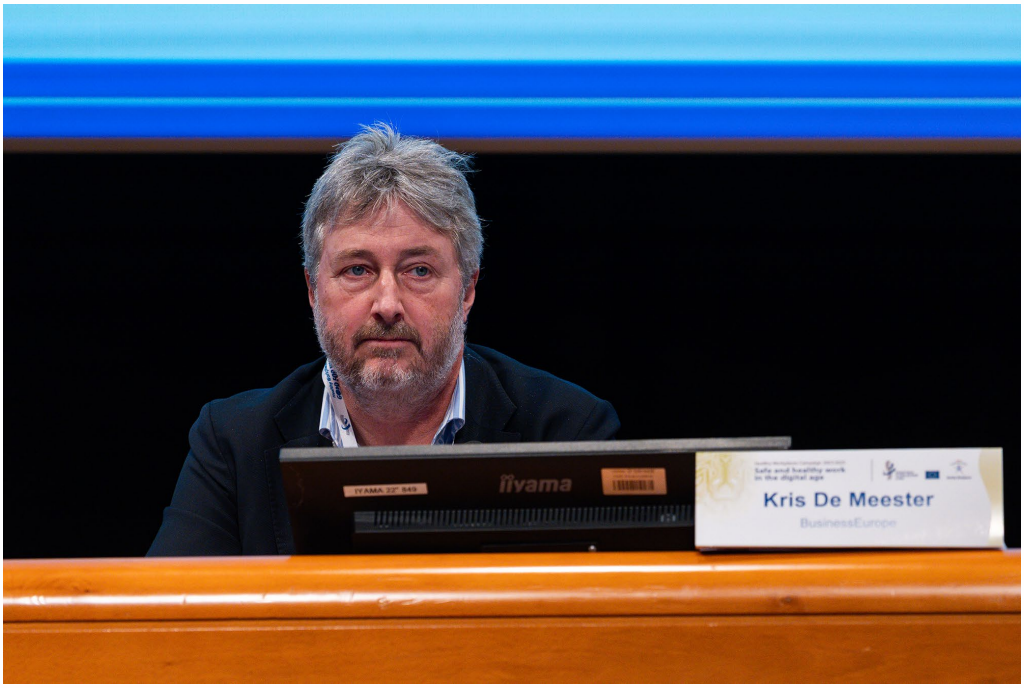
Mr Cockburn introduced the panel of social partners, including **Giulio Romani**, Confederal Secretary at the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), and **Kris De Meester**, Chair of the Health and Safety Group at BusinessEurope. The discussion focused on psychosocial risks and work-related mental health, a theme that will underpin the Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2026-28.

Mr Cockburn highlighted the relevance of mental health in all aspects of digitalisation and OSH: *'Mental health has become a major concern, particularly perhaps since the pandemic,'* he noted, emphasising research showing that **one in three workers report stress, anxiety, or depression** related to work (OSH Pulse 2025). Over 40% of workers also experience time pressure or overload, often exacerbated by digital ways of working. He stressed that *'decent work is essential for mental*

health' and pointed to the still-existing stigma when it comes to raising mental health issues in the workplace.

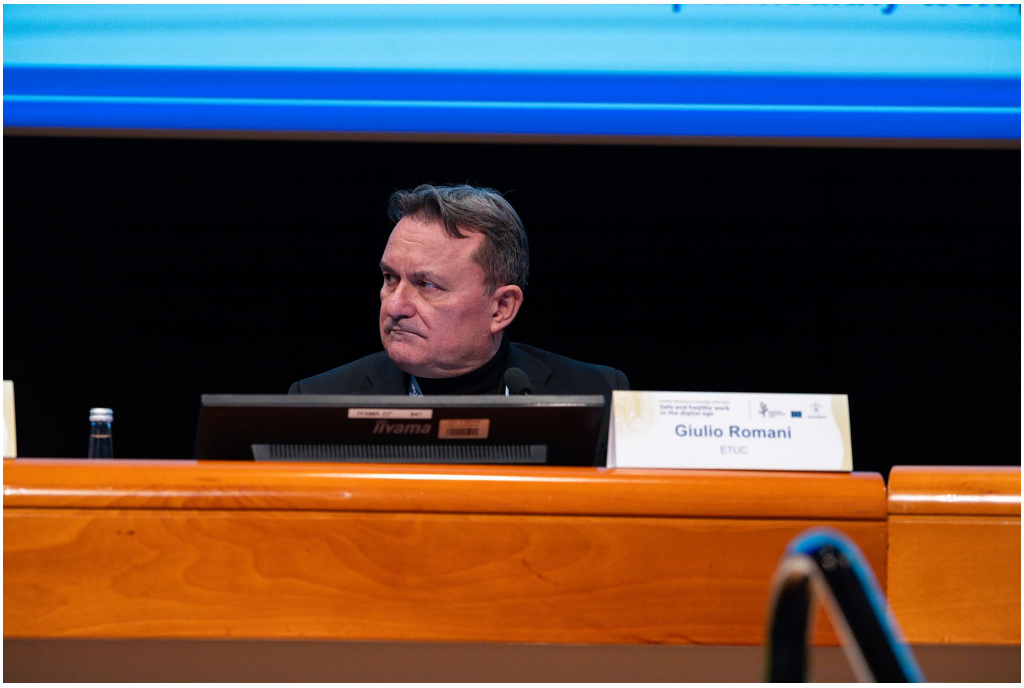


Mr De Meester reflected on his and employers'/Business Europe's long-standing commitment to the topic, recalling his early work on stress prevention: *'There is no absolute one employer view on this topic. We are all at different levels of maturity. But we are aligned: this is a priority issue for workplaces.'* He stressed that the campaign should convey that this concerns us all and **focus not just on risks, but also on the worker, the work, and the organisation, including HR**. *'A good job done means we have to be able to ensure good working conditions, including dealing with mental health and psychosocial risks aspects of a job.'* He underlined the **importance of social dialogue, trust, and respect** between the employer and workers.



Mr Romani outlined the campaign's target groups, workers, employers, and political institutions, and highlighted the **importance of clear legal norms**: *'Prevention is a right, not something extra.'* He stressed that healthy workplaces require cooperation and dialogue, warning against deregulation: *'Competitiveness and simplification does not mean deregulation. If Europe wants to stay competitive and democratic it must protect the mental health of its people.'* He underlined that **healthy workers are the best ambassadors a company** can have and that strong trade union involvement and social dialogue are essential pillars of a functioning democracy.

When asked about effective interventions, **Mr De Meester** emphasised the **need for a balanced approach**: *'A good job requires good working conditions. It's about balancing what employers can offer and what workers can bring to the table.'* **Mr Romani** added that current European policies only partially reflect the ETUC vision, calling for a binding EU directive on psychosocial risks to ensure protection for all workers and consistent standards across Member States.



Mr Cockburn concluded by underscoring the **importance of collaboration**: *'The Agency works hard to find examples of good practices and tools that help compliance and reduce risks,'* highlighting the value of input from diverse stakeholders. Both panellists offered closing reflections: **Mr De Meester** encouraged **broad participation**, noting that *'the bigger we can make the puzzle, the closer we come to the solution,'* while **Mr Romani** concluded, *'Preserving workers' mental health is the best investment. A directive on the prevention of psychosocial risks is needed now.'*

Closing session

Michael Gillen, Chair of the EU-OSHA Management Board, emphasised that *'our common goal is to make work a better place for all across the EU - even if we have different ways to reach that goal.'*

Mr Gillen underscored the **importance of communication tailored to the audience**, noting that while OSH experts understand psychosocial risks, *'workers may not understand that language.'* The campaign's relevance, he explained, lies in **addressing both individual and organisational challenges**, with a focus on open dialogue, leadership, and stigma reduction. He went on to

introduce the **priority areas of the next campaign**: psychosocial risk assessment and management; harassment, sexual harassment and violence; physical risks and mental health; psychosocial risks in the health and social care sector; and supporting mental health at work.

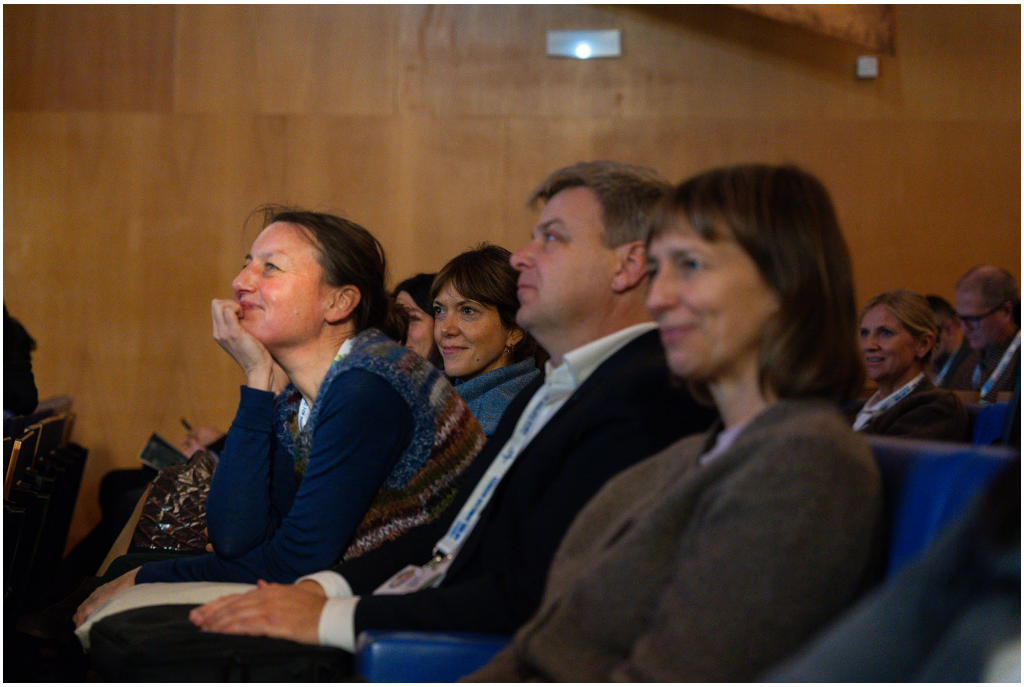
Sharing a personal perspective, he also highlighted that experiencing mental health struggles is inherently human. One simple yet powerful action, he suggested, can make a difference: asking a colleague *'are you ok?'* to encourage them to open up. His closing call to action resonated with the audience of OSH experts: *'Don't wait for others to become that leader. Be brave. Show leadership.'*

Mr Cockburn followed with a reflection on the Summit and the campaign's future. He thanked Mr Gillen and the social partners for their contributions, noting, *'It is so important that we work together for the success of the next campaign.'* He highlighted both the **opportunities and challenges of**

digitalisation in the workplace, emphasising that *'the worker has to be at the centre of the design, implementation, and use of technology.'*

He acknowledged the **critical role of supporters and partners in the campaign's success**. The Summit, he noted, provided clear evidence of this through the Good Practice Awards winners and the knowledge exchanged in the six parallel sessions. Special thanks were extended to national Focal Points, the collaborator who provided Virtual Reality experiences, EU-OSHA staff across research, communications, networking, and administration, as well as the Summit's moderator - Brenda O'Brien.

The Summit concluded on a note of inspiration and engagement, leaving participants with a strong sense of commitment to fostering safer, healthier, and more supportive workplaces across Europe.



Photos: Oier Rey Delika