Chapter XII

Good practices at health and safety at work

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I. WHAT ARE GOOD PRACTICES AND WHY ARE THEY USEFUL IN SAFETY AND HEALTH IN WORK?

Before analysing the good practices of a determined field, it is necessary to establish what we consider as such. Even if it is usual that they are related with quality[1], it is also agree that good practices could be defined as an innovative form of action which improve current solutions in terms of effectiveness or appropriateness and which could be transferred to others in order to cover the same aim expected by the ones who are generating them[2]. There is not a single definition, but broad options which include successful experiences with high-quality standards and which cause positive effects, whose demonstration could be based on evidence or depending of certain criterion[3]. Nevertheless, this concept is a dynamic one which could vary and evolve over time[4].

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1. Accordingto Cabré Castellví, M.T., «Terminología y buenas prácticas», Atti Convegno Assiterm 2009, Publifarumn. 12, 2010, consulted 16/04/2015, url: http://publifarum. farum.it/ezine_pdf.php?id=161, la noción de calidad es un precedente a la de buenas prácticas en distintos ámbitos.
2. Cultura preventiva y buenas prácticas, Foment de Treball Nacional, 2014, p. 12; Olivarri, R. (Coord.), Un análisis de evidencias y experiencias de gestión de la prevención para la identificación de buenas prácticas: informe bibliográfico, INSHT-Universidad de Cantabria, 2010, p. 6.
3. Boletín del observatorio de la exclusión social (edit.um.es/exclusionsocial/buenas-practicas-inclusivas). Rueda-Catry, M. y Vega Ruíz, M.J., Buenas prácticas de Relaciones Laborales en las Américas, Oficina Internacional del Trabajo, Oficina Regional para América Latina y el Caribe, 2005, p. 9.
4. In this regard, Rueda-Catry, M. y Vega Ruíz, M.J., Buenas prácticas..., ob. cit., p. 12

If we synthesize all the previous information, we can establish three main features of a best practice: relevance regarding to the expected objectives, proved utility and potentiality to be transferred or adapted to other situations.

Regarding the key aspects of the previous definitions, the most relevant ones in Health and Safety at work are the effectiveness and utility of good practices. Or, in other words, the progressive improvement of life and work conditions and its capacity to be transferred, that is, the possibility to be followed as examples by other business belonging either to the same sector of activity or to a different one.

Therefore, we could define good practices as the innovative actions or projects developed by enterprises which provide positive results regarding to the continuous improvement of Health and Safety work conditions The good practices depart from the existing regulatory framework and what is looked for is its efficient, participated and transparent application. Besides reducing workplaces accidents, the main goal is guaranteeing health in work, intended as a whole state of physical and mental welfare.

Once we have briefly defined the concept, it is relevant to highlight its relevance in the matter currently concerning us, which connect to one of the main problems that afflict the prevention of risk at work management in business, that is, the inefficiency and inefficacy of good practices along with the practices that stem from the merely formal compliance of legal standards, which affect SME and micro-enterprises in particular.

It seems advisable to highlight the importance of good practices in domains where decisions and modes of actions are not regulated by fixed options, but where a wide margin of manoeuvre is allowed and so they are the alternative means of compliance. Therefore, in this field we found a place to experiment with Safety and Health in work regulation.Security standards are flexible, they require the adaptation and adjustment to the needs of the organization, and can be applied in diverse ways. Therefore, it leads to a difficult compliance, erroneous interpretation or even malpractices or inappropriate or inefficient practices.

II.   MOMENTUM TO GOOD PRACTICES AT EU OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH (OSH) STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (2014-2020) AND SPANISH STRATEGY (2015-020)

The topic which currently concerns us has been given political impetus by the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions related to a Common

Strategic framework in the field of Health and Safety at work, 2014-2020[5], even if this field had been referred to in the European strategy 2002-2006[6].

The strategic framework is preceded by the Final Evaluation report about Strategy 2007-2012[7]. This report states a positive global valuation of its relevance and the role it plays in the establishment of clear political bases, in addition to a framework for coordination and a common sense of direction for national actors. Nevertheless, it also states that there are many aspects which need to be improved. To sum up, it emphasizes that even if many of the actions planned have been executed, such as the exchange of good practices or the preparation for the review of legislation, in practice the actualization and simplification of the legal framework has not experienced significant progress and important legal laps still exist.

One of the biggest problems good practices are confronted with is the lack of compliance of regulation by micro-enterprises and small enterprises, which is considered the first cause of failure of preventive politics. Therefore, it is relevant to improve the quality of the orientation and to provide practical tools which make easy the compliance with health and safety at work regulation. In order to achieve this goal, some measures which should be taken would be increase the financial and technical aids specially aimed to institute evaluative tools, develop guide lines and gather good practices examples, encourage their exchange and continue with awareness campaigns.

This kind of actions have been developed by the EU since time ago, some of them through the European Campaign "Healthy works" 2012-2013, "Working together for risk prevention". They also appear at the Luxemburg Declaration about promotion of health at the workplace in the EU (1997), which considers essential the increase awareness and compromise, the identification and diffusion of good practices, guidelines for the effective promotion of health at work and other similar[8].

Recently, The Spanish Strategy of Health and Safety at work (2015-2020) has been approved. Good practices have a relevant place in this strategy, and their objectives of continue improvement, efficiency, inventiveness, awareness, leadership and compromise are taken into account.

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5. Bruselas 6.6.2014, COM (2014) 332 final.
6. Cómo adaptarse a los cambios en la sociedad y en el mundo del trabajo: Una nueva estrategia comunitaria de salud y seguridad, Comisión de las Comunidades Europeas, Bruselas, 2002.
7. DG Employment, Social affairs and inclusion, Final Report: Evaluation of the European Strategy on safety and health at work 2007-2012, Denmark, 2013
8. «Los Gobiernos locales por la calidad en el empleo. Municipios andaluces y prevención de riesgos laborales. Buenas prácticas de Seguridad y Salud», Federación Andaluza de Municipios y Provincias, Junta de Andalucía, Prevenlo, 2007, p. 9.

This Strategy states that its aim is to reach a society where well-being at work will be perceived as a reality, not as a utopia in a way that the focus on well-being should be accompanied by a continuous improvement of work conditions, in addition to the constant and gradual reduction of work accidents and diseases. In order to achieve this goal, we need to work harder and better, in a proactive way, while we consolidate the achieve goals and we establish new reachable goals which go behind the strict compliance of legal obligations. In words of the same text (2C objective), it is fundamental to promote the action of exchange of good practices among enterprises, besides of stimulating the efforts made in favour of excellence at safety and health at work management by recognition, awards, or incentives among enterprises, in order to create better work environments which would be safer and healthier. The most important action that should be taken is encourage the excellence in health and safety at work management by the recognition, exchange and diffusion of good practices. In this field, the Spanish Network of Health and Safety at work would be the principal motor. Besides, more specific aspects are encouraged, being the most important ones the field of the SME and good practices related to concrete risks, such as the ones related to traffic accidents at the workplace, mental health or the ones aimed to improve the protection of determined groups of workers, such as temporary, young, older workers and women.

III.   OBJECTIVES: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF WORK AND LIFE CONDITIONS

As we have pointed, the implementation and diffusion of good practices have the objective of constantly improve the protection of Health and Safety at work levels, the increase of efficacy and effectiveness of the preventive polices and, even to some extent, the reach of an increment of enterprise productivity, being the latest a point in which the Strategic Framework and the ILO itself are interested in. Generally speaking, the aim of good practices is not only to reach "zero accidents", but other more ambitious objectives are being sought, such as to eliminate the unsafe situations and to reach of well-being at the workplace. It is obvious for some enterprises that the improvements obtained by this experience make the enterprise a more competitive one, the innovation on preventive field is encouraged and, as a result, the enterprise become a socially responsible and sustainable one. Cost-benefit appreciation of this kind of acts tend to be considered a very positive one in the work field, especially if we consider some aspects such as the observable improvement of satisfaction at the workplace, quality, work ambiance, compliance itself, the workers' implication and motivation

IV. BROAD LINES OF GOOD PRACTICES IN HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

By analysing different examples of good practices inducted in different enterprises we are able to establish some broad lines or series of main elements that are the key for the success. All of them belongs to organizations which have avoided to apply in a purely formal and standardized way the laws on prevention of occupational hazards, but which have transformed prevention in a reality and which have establish a real preventive system, adapted to the specific features of the enterprise, the staff and their work centre design. Usually, after achieving these goals, the next step is to face specific projects of implementation of good practices on prevention, either general ones or focused on concrete aspects, such as psychosocial risks, ergonomics or culture of safety.

Down Below, a set of common guidelines of good practices, which don't have to come together cumulatively, and without damaging other practices more exceptional or less frequent.

a) Leadership: In a huge amount of good practices analysed, leadership[9] is considered the more relevant guideline. The management of the enterprise in this field has to be solid, credible and easily visible. So that, the commitment with risk prevention and Health and Safety guarantee will be clear. The importance of leadership has its roots in the fact that workers are aware of the interest of their enterprise in providing a safest work and in constantly improving their working conditions.

The Spanish Strategy of Health and Safety at work (2015-2020) makes reference to this specific point by affirming that the increased sensitivity and awareness at all levels of the organization, is one of the ways that allows the improvement of attitudes and conduct. On one hand, entrepreneurs have to achieve a change in the way of leadership and an implication in the commitment of including

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9.   More extended, European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, Diverse cultures at work: ensuring safety and health through leadership and participation, Luxembourg, 2013. Following the same structure, the WHO establish that the essential aspect in order to create a safe workplace are the leadership, the inclusion of workers and their managers and the study of other's strategies.
World Health Organization, Entornos Laborales Saludables: Fundamentos y Modelo de la OMS. Contextualización, Prácticas y Literatura de Apoyo, OMS, Ginebra, 2010, en especial pp. 68 ss. Also Figueras Esgleas, J. «Liderazgo de la dirección y participación de los trabajadores en el ámbito de la seguridad y salud en el trabajo» y Ambroj Sancho, L. et altri, «Liderazgo en prevención de riesgos laborales», both at Revista de Medicina y Seguridad en el Trabajo, 59 (suplemento extraordinario), 2013, pp. 16 ss. y 22 y ss., respectively. Also, Olivarri, R. (Coord.), Un análisis de evidencias y experiencias..., ob. cit., pp. 76 ss.

Health and Safety in their decision-making, their work and their day-to-day operations. On the other hand, it is important to achieve the complete collaboration of workers with the company and the application of good practices in the day-to-day work. The guideline 4D is focused in the aspects related to business leadership and workers participation.

b) Implication and active participation: another key factor is the active participation of all the staff of an enterprise, especially from workers. The establishment of good practices has its origins in an individual compromise but also in a collective one, where everyone (staff, managers and middle managers, representatives, inspectors) has a commitment to safety, as well as formulae which would encourage the change of habits and behaviours of workers to safer ones[10].

Attending to the Spanish situation, without a doubt, besides the commitment of management, it is crucial the increase of the active participation of workers and their representatives, as well as the awareness-rising acts devoted to make workers accomplish their role which is even highlighted at the article 29 LPRL that in the cooperation with the entrepreneur in order to achieve him or her goals, in this issue have to be commons and be far from confrontation.

Regarding this aspect, it is also important the educational aspect, as long as training is a key factor in order to achieve awareness-raising, change of attitudes and the achievement of the workers' effective implication. We emphasize a training focused not only on the traditional and obligatory one imposed by the 19 article LRPL, but also based on the experience and the analysis and discussion

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10. In this regard, there are interesting examples of best practices developped by different ententerprises (ADIF, Asociación de Empresarios del Polígono Industrial San Cibrao de Viñas, Croda ibérica, SA-MevisaSite, Empresa Malagueña de Transportes SAM, FCC servicios ciudadanos, Iberdrola y Protón Electrónica), included in «Buenas prácticas en liderazgo y participación de los trabajadores en prevención de riesgos», at *http://www.insht.es/portal/site/Insht/menuitem.1fla3bc79ab34c574c2*. Also Moreno Ucelay, A. y Palacios Linaza, J.J., «Programa RADAR en Iberdrola: «Incremento del compromiso personal/grupal/organizacional para conseguir el éxito en prevención de riesgos Laborales», Revista de Medicina y Seguridad en el Trabajo, 59 (suplemento extraordinario), 2013, pp. 45 ss. More examples at prevenblog.com/buenas-practicas-en-cultura-preventiva-circulos-de-prevencion or at Cultura preventiva...,ob. cit., en especial pp. 19 ss. It is also possible to consult AA.VV., Buenas prácticas en el ámbito de la seguridad y salud laboral, a publication of the Technical Seminar hold in Zaragoza, 28 de abril de 2008, Asepeyo, 2008. Also, Models of good Practice, Health employees in Healthy Organisations, Good practice in Workplace Health Promotion (WHP) in Europe, Essen, 1999, consulted on *www.enwhp.org*.

of it, studying the detected deficiencies and establishing possible solutions, especially through work teams.

Workers become protagonists in this topic, and have to adopt a proactive role in health and safety. Their intervention would be as far more effective if it is developed in an ambiance where their opinions are certainly important, and they are conscious that they have relevance and are taken into account.

Actions that contribute to ease the assumption of measures by all the parts implicated in the prevention of occupational hazards are the complete participation of workers in the decision-making about Health and Safety, the debates about crucial topics or meetings aimed to discuss detected fails, health problems or accidents and incidents, among many others. It is important to take into account in this issue, given all the characteristics of the productive framework and the high rate of micro-enterprise, the direct implication and participation of workers belonging to enterprises with no representation became especially necessary, as well as the search for solutions both sectorial or territorial type. Additionally, it would be essential an encouragement of the collective negotiation in this sector which continue to produce results which are not up to expectations, with no innovative and effective solutions and, of course, faltous of good practices.

c) Direct and effective communication channels. Effectiveness at communication paths is achieve by an especial significance among managers, middle managers and workers. In order to detect deficiencies and propose improvement actions, it is essential to joint good practices with the achievement of direct and effective communication channels. This channels have to work properly in both direction from top to bottom, from management to the rest of staff, in order to reassure the leadership in prevention and transfer information in the inverted direction, where mechanisms of collection and notification of information from bottom to top which would transfer alerts, suggestions, and results valuations, among others. The information constitutes as it is well known, a key factor on prevention, but it is also important to avoid it exaggeration and the inefficacy when managing it. Quantitative excesses must be avoided, as long as too much information hinder discern between what is relevant and what is not and that could demotivate prevention actors. Information which would result essential must be provided in a synthesized and easily understandable way to their receptors.

d) Formation of interdisciplinar task forces. The development of good

practices is usually supported by a formation of interdisciplinary task forces, which could be more or less permanent, in order to establish adequate decision-making. In this kind of task forces use to be implicated the department of Health and Safety or de Prevention service, if any, different technical security (specialists in different preventive disciplines), the representative of the committee of health and safety or the prevention delegate, and other. This way, the interdisciplinary aspect of the task forces which characterize the LPRL is assured, as well as the participation and implication of different actors of prevention.

e) Integration of management systems. Besides the first obligation established on the regulation related to prevention, which has to be accomplished by all the enterprise and which consists on the integration of prevention in the set composed by the activities and decisions of the enterprise and its management system (16 article LPRL), there are various project which go further and implant integrated management systems.

This way, topics as quality, safety, workplace safety, environment, the social corporative responsibility and other related topics are addressed and very exigent standards are imposed on them. Obviously, problems which could be derivative from a merely formal integration are not ignored, and neither is the fact that once the scale of values of the enterprise is forced into a goal conflict, prevention would not lead the predominant place[11], something that should be avoided, as logical. Nevertheless, enterprises which voluntary pay effort to project and develop good practices on the preventive area, are not frequent.

f) Monitoring and improvement systems: Good practices must be focused on the monitoring of the correct running of the implanted system, which would guarantee high rates of success on the continuous improvement and which is fed back by the experience adopted thanks to the different started projects. Audits take a relevant place on this field, either the voluntary ones (33 article RPS) and the inner ones, as well as debate, share deficiencies and propose improvements. As it is known, Spanish regulation (16.3 article LPRL) also imposes obligations related to accidents investigation. This legal precept impose this fact as a useful preventive tool which contribute effectively to the detection of deficiencies, to their

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11. This problem was also studied by authors as Roy quoted by Olivarri, R. (Coord.), Un análisis de evidencias y experiencias..., ob. cit., p. 49.

correction and continuous improvement, as well as it is reflected on the evaluation of occupational risks. (6 article RPS)

g) Overcoming of blame culture. This essential step which tend to avoid the criminalization of the accident, would pretend as we can appreciate on some examples of good practices, overcome the search for a guilty of the accident and tend to management system based on solution-searching. They tend to stimulate the share of information about possible incidences, and they support who report them[12]. Therefore, in this field take precedence the search of endeavour of improvement actions as well as the relevance of learning from the detected accidents or fails.

V. GOOD PRACTICES: TOWARDS ITS DIFFUSION AND EXCHANGE

To sum up, it is necessary to go back to a key aspect of good practices, that is, its "exportability". It seems essential the diffusion and exchange among enterprises and countries, especially inside the Union. The European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP)[13] devote its effort to this primordial task, as well as the European Agency for Health and Safety at work shows its concern about this topic, and among other acts, gives each year the Good Practices Awards[14].

Logically, good practices came out from the implication of the enterprise and it which of improve the integration of prevention on the general management system and other quality systems, as well as search for high rates of health and well-being at work. Nevertheless, the good practices can multiply their effects if once imposed and being their good results determined, enterprise keep on working on this field and try to achieve their diffusion, their export to other field belonging to the same organization, close organization or, what is more, the extent to other enterprises of the sector which may have similar features. In order to achieve this, it is essential to create channels of communication, specialized web pages, single-topic courses and others focused on good practices. The European Union Strategic Framework and the Spanish Strategy, as we have said before, are focused on the development of this tools. The first of them even if it departs from the proven utility of legislation, especially on the field of providing to the Union a common body, accentuate the relevance that nowadays have non-legislative tools, especially the comparative evaluations, identification and exchange of good practices (which could

12. Cultura preventiva..., ob. cit., p. 15 (p.e. en BASF o Endesa).
13. *www.enwhp.org.*
14. http://osha.europa.eu/es/competions/good-practice-award_2014-2015.

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include the creation of a database), increase awareness, information and communication, the establishment of voluntary rules or IT tools easy to manage. This final aspect has an especial relevance if we relate it to challenges such as the improvement on the health of older or younger workers, workers with no experience, with some kind of disability and women, as well as prevent mental risks at the workplace. Nationally, the Spanish Network of Health and Safety at Work is the one who must have a relevant role on this course of action.