



No to privatization of occupational health and safety!

DRAFT INTERNATIONAL STANDARD (DIS) ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS ISO 45001 HAS BEEN REJECTED BY ISO MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Public Services International (PSI) welcomes the news that the draft ISO 45001 has been rejected by ISO Member Organizations, since the majority vote necessary for its adoption was not reached. PSI has campaigned for a NO-vote through its affiliates around the world and now calls for a genuine standard-setting process to be launched within the ILO!

In 2013, the ILO signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the International Standards Organization (ISO) to collaborate on an occupational health and safety management system (OHS-MS) on condition that an ISO standard should not conflict with international labour standards and that the ILO should be an effective participant in the process.

Since the beginning, PSI has held the view that the proposed standard elaborated by ISO tramples on the ILO's mandate, and for that reason it should be set aside. This draft standard would have been a *de facto* outsourcing and privatization of a standard on matters which should be agreed on by social partners and regulated and enforced by governments. The International Standards Organization is a private independent network of the national standards bodies of 163 countries. ISO is neither an inter-governmental organization nor part of the UN system (though it has general consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council - ECOSOC).

An ISO standard does not eliminate the need for a standard under public international law. The ILO needs to create a new international standard and its tripartite constituents have to share the responsibility to work to prevent the deaths of thousands of workers every year. Now that the draft has not been adopted by ISO member organizations, a new draft will have to be submitted. PSI will request the ILO to be part of the ILO-ISO working group, for its comments to be taken into account and for a discussion on a new international standard on occupational health and safety to be launched within the ILO.

More here:

<http://www.world-psi.org/en/regulation-private-enterprise-indulges-private-sector-and-obstructs-public-responsibility>

<http://www.world-psi.org/en/speech-rosa-pavanelli-ilc-2015>

Arguments against the draft ISO standard can be summarized as follows:

- Definitions are neither in line nor linked to ILO standards: therefore interpretation of and/or compliance with the standard may differ from our current understanding of OHS under international labour standards adopted within the ILO.
- Compliance with the standard will be assessed and certified by private entities (certification firms, private audit companies): this, together with the above, creates a parallel compliance system for OHS, weakening and setting aside national laws and regulations and the role of the State.
- The standard does not respect nor support the core ILS principle that requires an organization to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) at no cost to workers.
- The standard does not recognize right of workers to remove themselves from danger when they have reasonable justification to believe there is an imminent and serious risk to their safety or health.
- Workers, the main stakeholders in addressing workplace health and safety issues, have a back seat role; whereas the standard provides for a participation and consultation process (Section 5.4), other provisions seems to contradict or weaken this aim, for instance:

L'Internationale des services publics (PSI) est une fédération syndicale internationale représentant 20 millions de femmes et d'hommes qui travaillent dans les services publics de 150 pays à travers le monde. La PSI défend les droits humains et la justice sociale et promeut l'accès universel à des services publics de qualité. La PSI travaille avec les Nations Unies et en partenariat avec des organisations syndicales et de la société civile et d'autres organisations.

- Workers' safety delegates, workers' safety and health committees, and joint safety and health committees: the standard does not recognize the importance of these mechanisms as national laws and regulations usually do. The only references to these mechanisms are in Section 5.4, Note 2, and in the non-binding Guidance. The Note, for instance, reads: "*Participation can include, as applicable, engaging health and safety committees and workers' representatives*", making the participation optional, not required, under the standard;
- Scope of the OHS management system within the organization: it shall be determined by the organization and consultation is not required in this regard (Section 4.3);
- Workers' right to access information on matters related to OHS: the non-binding Guidance of the standard states that "[*the organization*] *should ensure that pertinent information is provided, received and understood by all relevant workers and interested parties*"; However, according to ISO definitions "should" indicates a recommendation (Section 0.5), and the standard itself (Section 7.4) refers that "*the organization shall determine the need for internal and external information and communication relevant to the OH&S management systems*" (here "shall" indicates a requirement (Section 0.5)). This discretion extends to the what, when, whom and how to inform and communicate.