

ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR SOZIALREFORM

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Call for Papers

“Occupational health in a post-pandemic world of work”

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Occupational safety and health (OSH) has been an important topic in the world of work for long. Pushed into the background – because standards are already high and other topics, such as digitalisation, have become dominant in the public, policy and academic discourses on work and employment – the COVID-19 pandemic has brought the importance of healthy and safe working conditions to the fore. OSH management has not only been important for the sake of workers and their health but also to keep the economy running throughout the pandemic.

The regulation underlining the importance of OSH has existed since the late 1980s. The so-called ‘Framework Directive’ 89/391/EEC defines the main principles for healthy and safe workplaces throughout the EU, encouraging “improvements, especially in the working environment, to guarantee a better level of protection of the safety and health of workers”. Moreover, Principle 10 of the European Pillar of Social Rights states that “workers have the right to a high level of protection of their health and safety at work”.

Despite such regulation, the pandemic has indicated unequal protection when it comes to different groups of workers. Moreover, it has underlined occupational stratification in rule enforcement and provision of personal protection and has demonstrated that manifold work-related risks have never been properly assessed before the outbreak of COVID-19.

Such experiences with OSH during the pandemic emphasize the need to (re-)engage broadly with the topic. Although the pandemic has involved many challenges for the world of work and its manifold actors, it could also be an opportunity to reinforce OSH in European workplaces, for the protection of all workers.

The special issue seeks both conceptual and (comparative) empirical articles engaging with the topic of OSH. We welcome contributions from different disciplines or interdisciplinary contributions applying qualitative and/or quantitative data and methods. Contributions may focus on different analytical levels, and they may investigate different workplaces and/or sectors and/or countries. We also welcome articles with strong implications for policy, which could contribute to a better protection of the workforce. We look for contributions that focus on but are not limited to the following broad thematic areas:

1) OSH policies and measures

- evaluation of OSH policies and measures adopted during the pandemic as well as lessons learnt and implications for the future;
- (innovative) actions and approaches regarding (future) prevention and protection related to physical and mental hazards at different levels;
- the promises and pitfalls of the practical implementation and use of risk assessments (including physical and mental hazards) especially against the background of experiences during the pandemic

2) Actors and institutions involved in OSH

- the multi-level regulatory framework of OSH and linked to it, the issue of (past and future) rule enactment and enforcement;
- the role and actions of various actors (e.g. employees and employers and their representatives, health and safety delegates) involved in OSH before, during and/or after the pandemic

3) Inequalities in occupational safety and health

- Inequality between different groups of workers with regard to exposure to potential (physical as well as mental) hazards as well as OSH policies and measures during the pandemic;
- Segmentation or dividing lines in terms of access to particular OSH provisions or different levels of protection;
- Initiatives and actions regarding advancing the protection of different groups of workers (or reducing inequalities between groups)

Schedule for Submissions

Abstract:

To publish an article in the special issue, please submit an extended abstract (including the names and affiliations of all authors) of no more than 1,000 words to the guest editors no later than **July 1st, 2022**. Authors of extended abstracts who are invited to submit a full paper in English (max. 8,000 words) will be notified later in July 2022.

Full Paper:

The full paper adhering to all standards of the journal are due no later than **January 9th, 2023**. All articles will undergo double-blind peer review.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with the guest editors in case of questions:

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Recent Articles (ZSR 1/2022):

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(Merita Mesiäislehto, Signe Jauhiainen, Tuija Korpela, Sami Tuori)

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