



**AIM reaction to the European Commission roadmap on
“Health & Safety at Work – EU Strategic Framework (2021-2027)”**

AIM welcomes the comprehensive roadmap published by the European Commission and underlines the importance of the following series of key elements to ensure that the upcoming strategy is fit for purpose and in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Preventing emerging risks in new labour realities

As stated in the European Pillar of Social Rights, “workers have the right to high level of protection of their health and safety at work. Workers have the right to a working environment adapted to their professional needs and which enables them to prolong their participation on the labour market”¹. Emerging forms of work with greater job insecurities are putting further pressure on workers’ wellbeing, putting their work-life balance at risk, thus potentially leading to poor working conditions. The development of Artificial Intelligence and technologies will undoubtedly have a tremendous impact on work. The pandemic has notably led to an increase in remote work. It also put further pressure on individuals’ work-life balance, often jeopardising their right to disconnect. Mutual’ societies are socially responsible employers, stakeholders of the social dialogue at national level and provide services in health and security at work.

From their experience, AIM:

- **AIM calls on the European Commission to ensure that employers and social partners properly assess and manage occupational health and safety risks**, taking into account new working realities like e.g. remote work.
- **AIM also highlights the importance of social partners and social dialogue as a sine-qua-non condition to workers health and well-being**. We therefore encourage all stakeholders and the European Commission, to work towards enabling that dialogue to take place even with representatives of non-standard forms of employment.
- **AIM encourages the European Commission to contribute, e.g. through the drafting of EU guidelines, to the adoption of steady occupational health strategies and programmes**, which take into account changing labour realities and which are in line with WHO and ILO recommendations.
- **AIM encourages the European Commission, together with social partners, to work towards ensuring workers’ right to disconnect**.
- **AIM calls on the European Commission to make sure that safety and consumer protection are safeguarded in emerging technologies and the use of AI at work**. Technological tools need a proper legal framework in order to ensure their safety and protect their users. High safety standards are needed and those should be put forward by the European Commission

¹ European Social Pillar, principle 10.

in order to guarantee high levels of consumer protection. When it comes to AI, an adequate legal framework built on ethical guidelines is necessary to regulate the use of sensitive data.²

- **AIM calls on the European Commission to include in its strategy, the safety needs of workers with disabilities.** According to the objective of the EU disability strategy 2010-2020, and as stated in the European Pillar of Social Rights, “people with disabilities have the right to participate in the labour market and in society, and to work in an environment adapted to their needs”³. In this spirit, all work players - employees, employers and in particular managers and Human Resources - shall be trained on how to ensure the working environment is fit for people with disabilities in their companies.

Ensuring life-long learning

The two big transitions of our century, namely the digitalisation and the climate change, have and will continue having an impact on work. New jobs are created as fast as others are disappearing. Those transitions have clear implications not only for employment but also for education. Individuals will need to have the right tools at hand to adapt to changes in order not to feel alienated and continue being active and healthy workers. Opportunities for life-long learning are currently often limited to people who are highly skilled. Given the fast pace of technological development, these should become a reality for all, especially if we are to reduce inequities.

- **AIM encourages the European Commission to make links between its strategy on Health and Safety at work and its Skills Agenda for Europe.** Improving skills and allowing life-long learning will be key in bridging the digital divide and making thus sure that technological development does not exacerbate inequities, while ensuring citizen’s “right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market.”⁴

Adapting to demographic changes

The working age population will include an increased number of older people. Many people are fit and willing to work longer. However, an important precondition to that is the setting of sound occupational health and safety rules throughout the career and the adaptation of workplaces. Moreover, stereotypical views of older people foster a climate of ageism in workplaces. Employers should value older people’s experience and contribution to productivity.

- **AIM calls on the European Commission to put old-age related concerns at the core of its New Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work.**

The framework would contribute to unleash the potential of work for better health. Such a framework should support measures enabling those with failing health or disabilities to participate and contribute, encourage employers to offer flexible working practices in order to help workers to remain in employment for longer and strengthen the knowledge of employers in supporting work ability and return to work after sick leave.⁵ The framework could

² AIM [position paper](#) on AI in healthcare.

³ European Pillar of Social Rights, principle 17.

⁴ [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), principle 1 .

⁵ [Council Conclusions](#) on a New Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work

contribute to achieving more comprehensive and coordinated policies both at EU and national level to implement the active inclusion of people affected by mental illness and chronic diseases in the labour market.

- **AIM encourages the European Commission to combat ageism at the workplace.** Ageism imposes barriers in labour policies and programmes, as it influences the way problems are framed, the questions asked and the solutions offered. Ageism therefore marginalizes older people within their communities, reducing their access to services and to the labour market. It has harmful effects on both the physical and mental health and well-being of older people. Changing the view of population on ageing is therefore a societal challenge but also an opportunity⁶ to make a whole generation contribute actively to the economic growth the European Union.



AIM Healthcare and social benefits for all

The International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies (AIM) is an international umbrella organisation of federations of health mutuals and other not-for-profit healthcare payers. It has 55 members from 28 countries in Europe, Latin America and Africa and the Middle East. 33 of its members, from 20 countries, are based in the European Union. AIM

members provide compulsory and/or supplementary health coverage to around 240 million people around the world, including close to 200 million people in Europe, on a not-for-profit basis. Some AIM members also manage health and social services. Collectively, they have a turnover of almost €300 billion. AIM members are either mutual or health insurance fund. They are: private or public legal entities; solidarity based; not-for-profit oriented organisations: surpluses are used to benefit the members; democratically-elected members play a role in the governance of the organisation.

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⁶ [WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing](#), p. 6.