

Best examples

Danish Railway Workers Union is grateful for the offer to give a presentation on the implementation of the Framework Agreement on harassment and violence at work from April 2007.

My name is Henrik Horup; Vice president of the Danish Railway Workers Union.

The aim of this speech is to give you an up-to-date briefing on our work with implementation of the Framework Agreement, which I hope may be to inspiration for the further work in Europe in order to reduce violence and threats against our members across Europe.

By way of introduction I will mention the implementation of the framework agreement between us and the Danish State Railways – in the speech pronounced DSB and DSB S-train.

The framework must be considered as a board agreement that deals with several aspects of bullying, harassment and violence.

It would be naive ***believing*** that the framework agreement can eliminate harassment, violence and threats, but the agreement ***will*** and must help ***us*** to ensure a safer workplace for our members on board and around trains.

We have no major problems with violence, harassment and threats between managers and employees or among employees in Denmark. But of course it may occur from time to time.

So at the Danish Railway Workers Union we have concentrated our work on that part of the framework agreement ***which deals with harassment, violence and threats from third parties, customers (passengers) and ***in connection*** to that we have been working with the framework agreement in Denmark's largest railway company.***

Several institutions and organizations in Denmark has been involved in the implementation of the agreement.

Ministry of Finance
Central organizations
Trade unions
Employers federations and
Companies

I will **now** talk about how the state sector has been working on the implementation. In Denmark there is an agreement between the Ministry of Finance and Central Organizations about cooperation in government enterprises and institutions.

The agreement sets *up* guidelines for the establishment of works committees and guidelines for the work of such cooperation works committees.

In Denmark the agreement is called "Cooperation Agreement".

The Cooperation Agreement and the state collective agreement were revised in May 2008 where it has been extended with regulations for legal treatment in case of offence against the regulations.

The *EU* Framework Agreement "Violence, harassment and threats" is *included* in the Cooperation Agreement, which has the sense that companies are obligated to work on the problem.

The Cooperation Agreement item.11 says:

"Work Committees should establish guidelines that ensure an environment where employees are not exposed to bullying, (sexual) harassment or violence from colleagues, managers or third people. The Work Committee must continuously be aware of whether the guidelines live up to their purpose "

In DSB the staff policies are carried *out* by the works committees. ***The committees are consisting*** of a main works committee and a number of underlying works committees.

For several years the union representatives in the main works committee have faced various problems with the working environment for the on board staff and in particular we have seen bad psychological working conditions.

With the implementation of the Framework Agreement of Cooperation, the company is now forced to focus on the issues.

It should be fair to say that the DSB *has taken* the issue of violence very seriously.

While revising the company's staff policy the unions have wanted violence and threats to be written into the policy.

The staff policy consists of a comprehensive policy and a wide range of guidance's explaining the elements of the policy.

The staff policy describes conditions concerning "Harassment, violence and bullying" both inside the company but also about conditions outside the company.

The staff policy says;

"Harassment (including sexual harassment), violence and bullying is not tolerated in the DSB.

If an employee is exposed to harassment, violence or bullying, it goes beyond the individual's psychological well-being and work environment. Everyone has a responsibility for a good working environment and a proper game of tone. Management and staff have a duty to act if violence or harassment occurs at work.

DSB does not tolerate harassment or violence perpetrated by persons outside of the DSB to employees and will report such situations to the police, whenever it is needed. To avoid unnecessary conflicts in the customer relationship DSB educates and trains employees with a large contact with customers in preventing and managing conflicts and crises.

If an employee is exposed to harassment, violence or bullying DSB offers professional help immediately.

Currently DSB and unions cooperates on a decidedly "Policy of violence" including a guideline to be approved in June 2009.

The guideline will be a part of the staff policy and will have to be followed in DSB. Among other things the guideline says:

There is a strong consensus between business and unions on the value of working extremely focused with the problems.

Sick-leave due to violence and threats will prospectively be increasing rapidly, if we don't make a purposeful effort creating preventive measures and equally provides assistance measures to ensure that employees don't develop stress symptoms and reactions which may harm them for the rest of their lives and ultimately may mean that they are not fit for the job any longer.

Unfortunately we have already seen examples of members being repeatedly subjected to violence and threats going affected mentally in a way which means that they cannot manager a customer-facing job any longer.

What can be done?

There are probably many good initiatives under *its* way across Europe, but I will try to highlight some of the actions being done in Denmark.

Within Danish State Railways Group a subsidiary, named DSB S-train, has been associated **Here**, the customer-facing function is performed by ticket *conductors*, who have to collect fares on all S-train lines in the metropolitan area - which is Copenhagen.

Some time ago DSB S-train asked the Labour Inspectorate, , to carry out a monitoring of the company to assess the working environment about ticketing and further providing advice and guidance to resolve problems. To your information the Labour Inspectorate is an authority to advise and its being in charge of the working environment at companies all over the country.

At the Danish Railway Workers Union we welcome the report **from** the Labour Inspectorate, **because it** has launched several initiatives to improve the ticket collectors working conditions.

The report states the following regarding staff ratio:

- They suffer daily verbal outbreaks and threats
- Regularly occurring incidents of violence and threats to staff
- Radio coverage is not optimal wide which creates insecurity
- The staff themselves must choose whether he / she will detain a customer by crime until the police arrive
- The staff feel conflicting demands of the enterprise on one hand to avoid physical and mental violence and on the other hand, require tax requirements observed.
- working alone daily is against their own free will
- Staff do not feel adequately informed about procedures and support options

In guidance to the company The Labour Inspectorate has specified the following to be considered:

- No employees working alone should collect fares
- Ticketing in areas where there is no radio coverage should be avoided
- Avoid physical restraint of clients as *it* constitutes an undue risk of violence
- Better information about procedures *to avoid* violence
- Better information about the colleagues' own networks *in order to* support after an assault
- All employees should know exactly what to do while being subjected to threats or **violence**

The report and the orders **given** to the company from the Labour Inspectorate to ensure the solution of problems of violence and threats has meant the development of action plans for the psychological working environment in the company.

The action plans includes driving alone and the detention of passengers and em-

phasizing:

- No S-train-employee can be forced to work alone and perform ticket control.
- If it is not possible to find a colleague for ticketing, the employee has to do alternative jobs until a colleague is available again
- It is entirely up to each ticket collector to decide when a passenger should be detained, **but it should never happen in connection with missing ticket, because** it may not justify the retention
- Prepare a leaflet which clearly sets out guidelines for staff about retention, while retention extremely can contribute to violence
- Focusing on training in conflict management

At the *mother* company DSB they are focused on the implementation of the Framework and prevention of harassment, violence and threats is a priority of the management.

In the Danish media DSB has clearly announced that the company has introduced a zero tolerance towards perpetrators and all assaults will be reported immediately to the police with a view to criminal repercussions.

DSB and the Danish Railway Workers Union have together initiated a series of initiatives to address violence and create more security for the employees and our members.

Security Manning

An agreement about security manning has been made between the union and DSB. At a starting point the agreement must ensure that at least there are always two ticket collectors in all trains on the most vulnerable times. The agreement is evaluated **at the moment**.

The purpose of this agreement is to provide security for both staff and customers.

Private security companies

DSB has a particular strain of line. As an attempt, DSB hired a security company and the impact of this **attempt is** to be evaluated at **the end 2009**. The **security** company **is not intended to** take over jobs from the on-board personnel, but only meant **to establish security**.

The security guards have in the experiment been onboard the trains, which the staff has experienced as a positive **element**.

The starting point is, if a permanent agreement should be established, the guards must work on platforms and ensure that the most unruly elements, won't be able to get onboard the trains.

Football teams

In Denmark we have a growing problem of **hooligans who are committing** physical

violence on both persons and carriages. ***They have a very intimidating behaviour, which largely creates insecurity among the staff and other customers.***

This growing problem has generated close dialogue between the company, police and football clubs and DSB works constantly to create greater security for customers and staff, especially ***concerning the*** transport of football fans.

DSB has begun the training of a Task Force consisting of 30 volunteers to work in ***the*** trains, where football ***cause trouble***. This project will run for 2 years and it is ***the*** Danish Railway Workers Unions position that if the project is successful, our union will require a special education to be extended to all crews. The training involves a large degree of ***coaching, which*** is not an element in the basic education.

Extended conflict management courses

The Danish Railway Workers Union is currently working on the possibility of offering all on-board personnel - including drivers - extended conflict management courses. The funding of such courses are discussed between the National Centre for developing competences, DSB and the Danish Railway Workers Union, because through the Collective Agreement, such projects can be financed.

Tetra radios or new cell phones

Tetra radios are designed to ensure that the staff ***is always*** assured contact with the central control, when they are in areas with low coverage on mobile phones. Among the Nordic Railway Workers Unions there is a debate about the opportunities to acquire mobile telephones, which can be used in areas with low coverage and with a built-in alarm in case of an assault.

Mobile video surveillance installations

The purpose of this project is to facilitate the identification of perpetrators, and to be able to make claims for compensation. We hope that these installations help reducing vandalism and create safer environments for employees and customers. ***The*** mobile videos are expected to be an inexpensive and preventive tool in the context of violence and vandalism. These facilities can be used by the train crew without much training.

"Natteravne" (which in English is a raven)

"Natteravnene" is an organization of volunteer adults with social surplus, ***which*** has been a great success in Denmark.

The primary purpose of this organization is to help create greater security and *to create* good role-models for young people, regardless of gender, education, relig-

ion, politics **and** ethnic background.

The Ravens **wear** very distinctive yellow jackets and are **thereby** visible to young people.

They **walk around in** the streets in teams of 3 and **talk to** young people about their problems.

The Ravens **have** no police- or professional social functions and have no special authority, but they have **a** great psychological impact.

DSB **started** a cooperation with The Ravens and after an evaluation of **the** cooperation, they **expand the cooperation**.

The Ravens **function** where groups of young people are, and therefore it was natural to extend cooperation so The Ravens **also** are visible at stations, platforms, and **on-board** the trains.

SSP-cooperation

SSP is a municipal cooperation between schools, social services and police and aims to prevent crime among children and adolescents.

The S-train and The Metro has acquired good experience **by** working with SSP staff, and **they** work on a more formal organization of cooperation.

This was a series of initiatives being undertaken in cooperation between DSB and the trade union. The cooperation strongly **indicated** that the DSB **took** problems with violence very seriously and thus made it possible to **launch good actions**.

The cooperation was just a preliminary list of initiatives, but the Danish Railway Workers Union and the DSB are working continuously to come up with new ideas that will be transformed into concrete actions in the company.

This requires a responsible company that wants to ensure their employees in their daily life and ensure retention of the workforce for many years. **DSB is fortunately a very constructive player in this area.**

Because unions cannot solve the problem alone. Violence and threats are a common problem, and we have the right to demand an active effort from the employers.

A preventing effort should be done in constructive cooperation between unions and employers.

A preventing effort is not without economic costs, but the future of our members must have a higher priority than the bottom line of the companies.

Do not doubt that all forms of violence, creates poor working conditions and may also result in a permanent stress situation for a large part of the staff.

In Denmark, we unfortunately also have examples of what happens if the company doesn't take problems seriously. This creates a poor working environment and large staffing conflicts.

We have companies, ***who*** unfortunately ***have very little interest in understanding the*** value of a good working environment.

These companies have been chosen to dismiss employees who have become ill after the ***incident***, rather than trying to prevent ***it*** and work with the problem of violence and intimidation.

The increasing departure of personnel and the increasing dismissal of employees who are mentally infected, indicate very clearly that the problem must be taken seriously.

This is certainly not a responsible policy and the company is currently building ***a bad image.***

As a conclusion, I will mention a folder, which is the latest initiative from Danish Railway Workers Union in the fight against violence.

The folder is called: "Assaults on staff - a growing problem" ***and*** is addressed to *company* managers, staff representatives, security organizations and especially members of the federation.

The target group is primarily on-board personnel but the content could be used by all categories that have direct customer contact.

The leaflet is intended as ***an*** inspiration for companies to prepare violence policies that describe prevention of violence and management of employees who have been exposed to violence or threats.

Topics in the booklet include:

- Consequences of violence
- Categorization of violence - verbal, threats and violence
- Prevention of violence
- Policy of violence
- What you can do to minimize the risk?
- When the violence is perpetrated
- Psychological first aid
- Registration and Compensation
- What can Danish Railway Workers Union offer.

Lastly, our members can read 9 tips if exposed to violence. These tips will ensure that our members are familiar with the right procedure in case of an act of violence.

Furthermore **it is** possible for our members to get in contact with Danish Railway Workers Union, **since** we always have one employee on a 24 hours-duty carrying a cell phone.

I will finish this **presentation** with an invitation to formalize cooperation. If cooperation is established, **it is subordinate whether it is established as a** working experience or through an electronic network. Our request is that the focus on this growing problem must be maintained. National initiatives to prevent violence have to be inspiration for other countries' trade unions.

In Denmark, we are ready to take part in such cooperation and I am sure we could benefit from being familiar with other trade union actions.

The purpose is **to continue** the struggle **and to** create healthy and safe workplaces for the benefit of union members across Europe.

And on this action day, I will conclude with the slogan.

Unions say no to violence

Thank you