

Getting back to work after a long sickness or injury (video)



Video

<https://www.europartv.europa.eu/en/programme/eu-affairs/helping-recovering-people-back-into-the-job-market>

An ageing workforce and new occupational health risks mean long-term sickness absence is on the rise and MEPs want action to get people back to work.

Long-term absence often leads to [unemployment](#) and to workers leaving the labour market permanently. More needs to be done to facilitate their return and to better include chronically sick and disabled people in the workforce, according to a [report](#) adopted by MEPs on 11 September.

Shaping the EU labour market

Due to Europe's ageing workforce and increasing retirement age, the [risk of developing health disorders](#) has become higher.

According to Eurostat figures, [32.5%](#) of the EU's population reported having a long-standing illness or health problem. In addition, [25% of workers](#) said they experience work-related stress, while [nearly 80% of managers](#) said it was a major health concern.

“We need to make our labour markets more inclusive and responsive to the needs of ageing and ailing society and less prone to the loss of skills a result of inactivity,” said report author [Jana Žitňanská](#), a Slovakian member of the ECR group.

The report focuses on a better transition from sick leave to work. It also looks at the benefits of reintegrating experienced workers, who have been absent for some time, as well as the introduction of new staff who need training, noting that this applies to the public sector as well as to companies.

Gradual return to work

Once someone who has been on long-term sick leave is ready to come back to work, the report proposes a number of steps to ease the process including coaching, access to a psychologist or therapist; flexible working conditions, such as part time work or teleworking; as well as the possibility of learning new skills.

Read our overview explaining [how the EU improves workers' rights and working conditions](#) and what the EU does for [public health](#).

Find out more

[Press release on the committee vote \(7 June 2018\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[Watch the plenary session live](#)