

Title	<b>Preventing Stress, Improving Productivity_ European Case Studies in the Workplace</b>
Author	Edited by Michiel Kompier and Cary Cooper
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Brief Introduction	<p>Stress at work was complained of by one in four employees according to a recent survey of working conditions across the Member States of the European Union: one in five complained of burn-out. Stress can have major consequences for both individuals and their households, for company productivity and morale and for society. In 1993, a European Conference 'Stress at Work: a call for action' discussed strategies to confront what appeared to be a growing phenomenon. Policymakers, employers' representatives, trade unionists and researchers from the different Member States of the European Union exchanged views on how best to tackle stress at work. At the end of the Conference the Belgian Minister of Labour, at that time the President of the Council of Ministers, invited the European Commission to take action.</p> <p>Analysis of the action necessary at European Union level to prevent stress at work was identified by the Commission to be a priority in its 1996–2000 Programme concerning safety, hygiene and health at work. To assist in this work, the Commission asked its tripartite Advisory Committee for Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work to investigate the issue. The Committee set up a working group that included among its recommendations the production of intervention and cost-benefit studies and the exchange of information on best practices as well as their evaluation.</p> <p>This book is indeed a contribution to the need for more and better examples of good practice at European level. The cases, all written by well known experts in the field, bring to the fore that stress prevention is not only possible, but is worthwhile for employees and companies alike. I hope managers, trade unionists and researchers will find plenty of food for thought in it and will answer the call for action first launched at that Conference in 1993.</p> <p>I particularly commend the editors, Professor Kompier and Professor Cooper, for their courage and dedication in producing a volume that so clearly demonstrates how, in spite of the variety of conditions in different European countries, we can learn from each other and achieve both a healthier and more productive workplace.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Clive Purkiss Director, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions</p>