

## Speaking Notes

### **Consultation with the OECD Health Committee 23 May 2007**

#### **Economics of prevention**

BIAC participated in the OECD expert meeting on 27 April. In line with the BIAC position submitted in October 2006, which had been developed with the help of both our employers and industry members, we strongly support the project focusing on the *economics* of prevention and recommend broadening the scope of the current OECD project (discussion paper attached).

Healthcare costs have been rising for decades at higher rates than GDP growth. They are expected to continue to do so mainly due to life style changes, increased life expectancy, and advances in health care. On the one hand, they pose an increasing burden for public, individual and company resources. On the other hand, the growing health market and investments in innovation have significant potential to improve quality of life which in turn benefits the overall economy. Prevention should therefore be considered as a broad challenge for both public and private actors.

An OECD Labour/Management Programme (LMP) meeting would offer an opportunity for an in-depth discussion with OECD and member governments on key topics of their programme of work. **We propose to organise a BIAC/OECD LMP meeting on the economics of prevention back-to-back with the May 2008 meeting of the Health Committee.** To prepare for the LMP meeting, BIAC is organising two preparatory workshops (3 or 7 September 2007 in The Hague and early 2008), which will bring together representatives of both small and big companies from a wide range of sectors<sup>1</sup>.

We recommend that the scope of the project be as broad as possible, based on the fact that we are living in aging societies, and everybody's participation is necessary in order to uphold our standard of welfare and well-being. It is critical that employers not be compelled to pay individually or collectively for ever enlarged preventive activities beyond the traditional workplace related diseases. Additional preventive measures, which are often beneficial for workers, employers and society, should be promoted on a voluntary basis and should allow employers to differentiate themselves from competitors.

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<sup>1</sup> Topics to be addressed will include: „healthy people, healthy workers“; experience with prevention at the company level: magnitude of investment in prevention by employers, success stories, lessons learnt; increased evaluation of new preventive measures from a cost-benefit point of view; prevention research for the development, marketing and export of innovative preventive products / the application of scientific results for marketable products; and the role of other stakeholders in the domain of economics of prevention (e.g. health insurers).