



Page 2: What is the interplay between climate protection, sustainable business practices and occupational safety and health? – Interview with Dr Stefan Hussy, Director General of the DGUV

Human vs. Machine

People's notions of artificial intelligence (AI) rank between fascination for the technology and fear of losing control. Even though a universally valid definition is still being sought, AI systems are already being used in many industries. Their application raises various questions. One important issue is the safety of the systems.



Artificial intelligence can help identify interconnections between data that assist people when making decisions.

The areas of application for artificial intelligence are diverse and growing steadily. For example, AI is already being used for image and speech recognition, automated driving and the analysis of large amounts of data. In the healthcare sector, the technology helps to combine various diagnostic data and detect diseases early on. AI frees up administrative staff from carrying out routine tasks so they can focus on individual decisions. With all the possible uses, however, one thing must always be considered from the perspective of Germany's social accident insurance: How can work be made safe, healthy and fair even when using AI?

Creating trust

To create trust in AI, its use must be made transparent. Furthermore, the decisions made by the system must be traceable and understandable. Issues relating to liability in the event of wrong decisions are also important to clarify. This requires common legal foundations, guidelines and values. The EU took an important step this year

when it put forward the world's first draft legal framework for AI. The aim is to regulate AI applications that pose potential risks to humans. Systems that threaten human safety, livelihoods and rights will be banned. High-risk AI systems will be subject to strict requirements before they are approved.

Can artificial intelligence make work safer?

The use of AI also has implications for the prevention work done by the German social accident insurance institutions. AI-based protection systems, control systems and assistance systems help to prevent accidents; for example, by providing a warning when driving in reverse. But new hazards also arise. For example, if one relies entirely on these systems, accidents can occur as soon as the AI system fails to clearly recognise a hazardous situation. 'AI-based systems can be valuable additions that improve safety. However, decisions are safest when they are checked by AI-based systems and additionally by non-AI-based systems', explained Dr André Steimers, Research Associate at

the DGUV Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and member of the DGUV Test Project Group on Artificial Intelligence. He elaborated: 'There are models that constantly evolve and we can't certify these, because we don't know how they will behave after testing. We can certify systems that don't constantly learn and evolve, but we need new guidelines to work with, because current legislation and standards contain virtually no criteria for assessing the safety of AI technologies.' These guidelines are currently being developed by various standardisation committees. In addition, the testing and certification system DGUV Test has published principles for assessing the safety of AI. These help to identify weaknesses in AI technologies and to prevent undesirable developments that endanger the safety and health of employees.

➔ www.dguv.de > Webcode dp1318525 d1182502 (German only), e1179334

➔ www.dguv-forum.de > 10/21 Edition (German only)



Talking with Dr Stefan Hussy, Director General of the DGUV

‘We need to do a better job of thinking about different areas as a whole.’

Dear Reader,

The pandemic has made it clear that exchange, networking and cooperation are essential for achieving common goals. A+A is the world’s leading trade fair for occupational safety and health and traditionally the meeting place for everyone who wants to make work even healthier and safer. This October, it will once again be the destination for everyone who wants to find out about innovations in occupational safety and health. The DGUV will also be represented at the event, together with the German social accident insurance institutions and the DGUV’s research institutes. We will be providing information – both in person and virtually – in numerous panels at the accompanying A+A Congress on topics such as dealing with asbestos, radiation, hazardous substances, agile work, and changes in occupational disease legislation. We will also be participating in the panel discussion on the return to the ‘new normal’ after the pandemic.

I would like to draw your attention to two particular highlights. During the opening of the congress, the German Occupational Safety and Health Award will be presented. The award is a joint initiative of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Commission for Occupational Safety and Safety Engineering of the Federal States, and the DGUV. The award is given for outstanding examples of technical, strategic, organisational and cultural solutions in occupational safety and health across all sectors. At the end of the congress, you can also look forward to another special award ceremony – the *kommitmentsch* Film & Media Festival at A+A 2021. Join us as the best media and ideas on occupational safety and health are awarded prizes in a livestreamed event. We’re looking forward to your visit at our booth, constructive discussions, as well as new ideas and expertise.

Dr Stefan Hussy
Director General of the DGUV

Climate change is confronting our society with major challenges. It also raises the question of how work can be made climate-neutral, sustainable, fair and safe in the future. There are no simple answers, but the concept of sustainability offers a key. In an interview with DGUV Kompakt, Dr Stefan Hussy, Chief Executive Officer of the DGUV, explains how climate protection, sustainable action and occupational safety and health interact.

Dr Hussy, in view of the flood disasters in Rhineland-Palatinate and North Rhine-Westphalia, many people are wondering what effects climate change will have on our lives and work. Has the German social accident insurance system already felt the effects?

Yes, we’re already seeing the effects. For example, the number of cases of skin cancer caused by UV radiation has been on the rise for years. Those affected are called outdoor workers – employees in agriculture, on construction sites, at sea or in waste management. The work and workload of emergency workers will also change significantly if the number of storms, floods or fires increase. Climate change influences work content, but also mental stress. We must respond with appropriate prevention.

Sustainable action is being called for in order to tackle climate change. To what extent does sustainability affect the social accident insurance system?

Sustainability is not just about ecology, but also about economic and social sustainability. Our core focus is on safety and health at work. We try to prevent accidents and illnesses, are committed to inclusion, and help people who have had accidents to return to work. These are social sustainability issues by any standard. But this issue also has an impact in-house. We have to ask ourselves: How do we use

resources? How much energy do we consume? How do we renovate buildings and how much waste do we generate? This is where we want to position ourselves as a leading body focused on the future. Within the DGUV, we are therefore committed to integrating the principles of ecological, social and economic sustainability into our processes.

It goes without saying, however, that companies and educational institutions increasingly need advice on sustainable procurement, energy saving, digitalisation and dealing with subcontractors. We have to be ready for this. Labour inspectors who provide on-site advice to companies have a central role to play in this. They will encounter these issues more frequently in the future and will need the relevant expertise.



With each new development in the world of work, we must find new solutions for safety and health.

What is the best way to raise companies’ awareness of sustainability?

Change processes are particularly challenging for management. They try out new forms of communication in their teams and act as role models for how to deal with change – the speed of which threatens to overwhelm some people. It has always been important for us to offer both workers and managers professional and practical support. Any company that earns the ‘Sicher mit System’ (Safe with a System) seal of approval or implements a certified management system for occupational safety and health also promotes sustainability. After all, this has a positive effect on the well-being of employees as well as the profitability of a company. Many companies have already embarked on this path, and we intend to continue our efforts in this area.



Source: 17ziele.de

The United Nations has outlined 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The majority are directly or indirectly related to safety and health.

The United Nations has outlined 17 goals in its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. How much do you align yourself with these?

Many of the goals are directly or indirectly related to our topics – prevention, rehabilitation, education, research, certification. This shows that we bear a particularly important social responsibility. With each new development, we strive to find and implement forward-looking, appropriate solutions for safe and healthy work. To identify potential hazards as early as possible, we monitor trends and examine their opportunities and risks; we then develop suitable measures to help companies manage change. This is also a means of gearing our work toward a sustainable future.

maintains an exchange with countries such as Bangladesh. Delegations from Bangladesh’s textile industry have visited us several times. They are now taking the knowledge of how work can be made safe and healthy back to their home countries and implementing appropriate measures there.

” Sustainability is based on shared values and processes that consider the future.

As a result of the Act on Corporate Due Diligence in Supply Chains and the European CSR Directive, large companies must document their dealings in social and environmental matters. Can the German social accident insurance also influence safe and healthy work outside Germany?

We welcome the new Supply Chain Act. Safe supply chains are an expression of appreciation for people at all points along the value chain. I find it saddening that it took the terrible disaster in Rana Plaza to draw attention to the poor working conditions in an industry that is internationally active. That’s why I’m glad that the DGUV

But the issue of supply chains also poses a completely different challenge for the social accident insurance system. A lot of the personal protective equipment on the market is manufactured in Asia. Do we know enough about the working conditions where this equipment is manufactured and the ecological costs? We need to focus more on these issues. And at the same time, supply chains show that sustainability is based on shared values and processes that consider the future. We need to think more strongly about different areas as a whole: environment, society, economy. Acting in isolation won’t get us far.

100 years of testing and certification

Safe work equipment and protective gear make a significant contribution to ensuring safe and healthy workplaces. That is why it is essential that they be tested and certified. The Council for Accident Prevention was founded 100 years ago. It evolved into DGUV Test. The testing and certification system is constantly evolving but its immense importance as an instrument of prevention remains unchanged.

The Corona crisis has clearly shown how important it is to have a well-functioning testing and certification procedure. Overnight, respiratory protection masks were produced on a massive scale. To assess their effectiveness as protective equipment, DGUV Test was one of two German respiratory protection testing bodies to develop a rapid test in a short period of time. This was made possible by decades of experience, good networking and wide-ranging expertise.

The DGUV Test procedure identifies weaknesses in products and systems. In 2020, for example, around 71% of the products submitted had to be improved before they were certified. This protects employees from health hazards and accidents. DGUV Test has already issued more than 125,000 certificates. However, it is not only products and quality management systems that are put to the test. Since 2012, people have also been certified. When certifying individuals, their skills and qualifications are tested and confirmed. This ensures that certified persons have a high level of competence, it strengthens in-house specialists and makes it easier to choose competent external service providers.

In its anniversary year, the network of 16 testing and certification bodies is re-aligning itself. The network is focusing more on testing innovative technologies in the world of work, such as artificial intelligence or security, as they are being developed in order to proactively prevent hazards. With newly developed test procedures and principles, DGUV Test is making a significant contribution to safe and healthy work, now and in the future.

➔ www.dguv.de › Webcode: dp1318507 (German only)

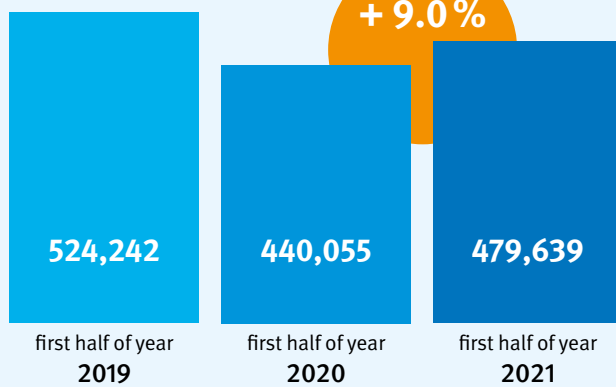
Work and commuting accidents on the rise again

The pandemic continues to affect the German social accident insurance system. According to preliminary figures for the first half of 2021, there were significantly more occupational illnesses than

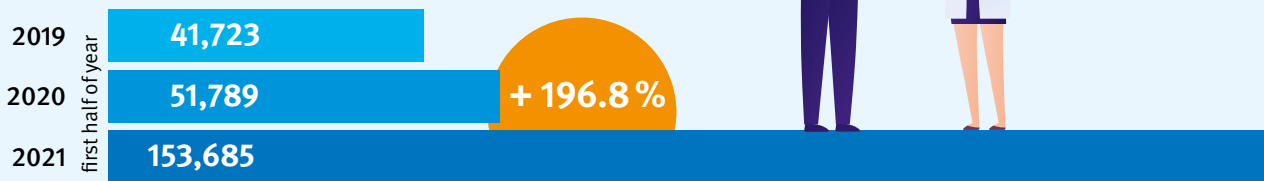
the corresponding period for 2020. Work and commuting accidents also rose again, but remain below the level of 2019.

→ www.dguv.de › Webcode: ep1201542

Work and commuting accidents



Reports of suspected occupational disease



Number of the Month

78,294

work-related infections with Covid-19 were identified in the first half of 2021.

Healthcare and welfare workers in particular were affected.



10 years of Rehabilitation in Poland

Recovering their health where their families live is what the German social accident insurance wants to make possible for its insured persons. This is because being close to a person's social environment promotes the healing process. For the past 10 years, Polish citizens who are employed in Germany and covered by social accident insurance contributions have benefited from the DGUV's *Rehabilitation in Poland* project following a work-related accident. After the introduction of freedom of movement for workers in 2011, the number of Polish-speaking accident victims increased. However, their rehabilitation was often not

successful. One reason for this was the language barrier. As a result, the *Rehabilitation in Poland* project came into being. Since then, Polish citizens covered by German social accident insurance have been given the option to receive further inpatient treatment at a Polish rehabilitation clinic. And this has proven its worth with the number of successful rehabilitations increasing and demand for the project growing. It is therefore being continued and further developed in order to provide even better services.

→ www.dguv.de › Webcode: d1086140 (German only)

→ www.forum.dguv.de › 9/2021 Edition



Illustration: DGUV

The bilingual flyer provides information about *Rehabilitation in Poland*.

Legal Information

Published by: Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung (DGUV), Dr Stefan Hussy (Director General). The DGUV is the umbrella association of the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions for the public sector and for trade and industry.

Publishing committee: Dr Renate Colella (Chair), Udo Diel, Dominique Dressler, Prof Dr med. Axel Ekkernkamp, Markus Hofmann, Gabriele Pappai, Dr Udo Schöpf, Karl-Sebastian Schulte

Editorship: Gregor Doepke, Kathrin Baltscheit, DGUV, Glinkastr. 40, 10117 Berlin

Editorial team: Kathrin Baltscheit, Arlén Buchholz, Katharina Braun, Katrin Wildt

Translation: Peter Love

Layout: Atelier Hauer & Dörfler GmbH, www.hauer-doeffler.de

Publisher: Quadriga Media Berlin GmbH, Werderscher Markt 13, 10117 Berlin

Printing: DCM Druckcenter Meckenheim

Contact: kompakt@dguv.de

Sources: p. 2 – Jan Röhl/DGUV