

## PRESS RELEASE

Promoting health and safety of Municipal Urban Cleaners (MUC) –  
Development of a modern, tailored made training program in the context of  
the MUC-Training for Health European project

### December 2021

Waste management helps to maintain cities clean and protects the environment as well as people from the spread of diseases. However, waste collecting, and municipal urban cleaning make employees in the municipality urban cleaning services susceptible to occupational diseases. Especially now more than ever, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic urban cleaners are considered front line in terms of exposure. However, although the health and safety needs of Municipality Urban Cleaners (MUC) are well defined in the international research, training for these employees is limited and not repetitive.

**The MUC training for health** project aims to improve the health and well-being of municipal urban cleaners by developing training on risk awareness and expand their knowledge on related occupational health and safety issues. MUC training for health is a three-year project (01/11/2020 - 31/10/2023) funded by the ERASMUS+ Programme of the European Union. The project consortium comprises municipalities and organizations from 5 European countries: Varna Economic Development Agency (Bulgaria), Center for Social Innovation (Cyprus), Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (Greece), Prolepsis Institute (Greece), Comune di Andrano (Italy), IKM Pro Sakowska, Michalowska, Lyszkiewicz spolka jawna (Poland).

In **October 2021**, the project consortium achieved a mapping of the occupational health and safety (OHS) needs and gaps of MUC, completed through an extensive desktop research that was performed at EU level. Focus group discussions with MUC, their representatives and supervisors, were also performed in the consortium countries. Completing this milestone is an important achievement for the consortium partners as it will contribute significantly to fulfilling the project objectives of increasing knowledge, skills, and competencies of MUC helping them



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to identify and control occupational hazards, motivate their involvement, and build ownership in safety culture.

*"The high-risk municipal urban cleaners face during their work in terms of exposure to infectious diseases such as various forms of hepatitis, combined with the lack of adequate training opportunities on occupational health and safety, make the MUC-training for health program of crucial importance.",* says Prof. Athena Linos, President of the Prolepsis Institute.

Research results showed that training on OHS issues for MUC is scarce. MUC seem to have little knowledge about correct OHS principles and practices although they are responsible for the cleaning of municipalities. Lack of awareness on OHS are associated with a high number of injuries and occupational accidents among MUC. As they reported during focus group discussions, OHS constitutes a major issue of concern for them. However, even when relevant training exists, low levels of motivation and interest to attend the training is observed among MUC, due to the training content which is usually theoretical and scientific, rather than practical.

The research findings highlighted a need across the consortium countries for organized OHS training of MUC workers. The delivery of innovative training on OHS tailor-made to MUC's needs will not only affect in a positive way their health and well-being, but it will also give a new perspective to the protection of public health.

To learn more about the research results produced so far by the project you can [click here](#) to access the first Newsletter of the project, along with other updates.

The MUC Training for health partner organizations are currently working towards the development of educational material that will fill the aforementioned gaps and contribute to improving OHS of MUC during their work. The material developed within the project will be available for free through the project's e-learning platform accessible from the [Project's Website](#).

For more information, please visit our [Website](#) and [Facebook Page](#) .

