

## **The Finnish Metalworkers' Union, the Federation of Finnish Technology Industries and Ruoka-Saarioinen awarded for achievements in wellbeing at work**

The 2010 National Prize for Innovative Practices in Employment and Social Policy awarded to two projects

**The National Prize for Innovative Practices in Employment and Social Policy in 2010 was awarded jointly to Ruoka-Saarioinen Oy's Sahalahti factory and the Federation of Finnish Technology Industries and the Finnish Metalworkers' Union. The winners have spread the good practices either through setting an example or their own efforts resulting in aging employees having chosen to remain in employment longer. The prizes were presented by the President of the Republic Tarja Halonen at a ceremony organised by the Fund for a National Prize for Innovative Practices in Employment and Social Policy on 7 October 2010. The prize sum for Ruoka-Saarioinen was 30,000 euro and the Federation of Finnish Technology Industries and the Finnish Metalworkers' Union shared the same sum between themselves.**

Saarioinen's Sahalahti factory eased the workload for over 55s

Saarioinen's Sahalahti factory rose to be this year's winner for its senior programme launched in 2004 with the aim of extending the careers of over 55-year-old employees. The measures adopted include lighter workloads for over 55s if they so wish without decrease in pay. If an employee has health-related or other special reasons, every attempt is made to exempt him or her from working three shifts. In addition, over 55s are not required to participate in job rotation unless they wish to be included.

Since 2004, the senior programme has been implemented in other parts of the group. The programme has changed the employee age structure, resulting in an increase of the share of over 60-year-olds from 3.5 to 6.3 per cent in the course of the programme. The average age of retirement during the senior programme has been approximately 61.5 years.

The Ruoka-Saarioinen model is currently being replicated. A decision has been made regarding the collective bargaining agreement for the food industries to implement a similar senior programme in the entire sector. The only difference is that in the agreements in the food industries the programme is accessible to all over 50-year-old employees. The encouraging example of Saarioinen has inspired the entire field to join in the campaign of extending working careers.

The Finnish Federation for Technology Industries and the Finnish Metalworkers' Union were awarded for longstanding collaboration in altering the age structure in the sector

The other two prize-winners have also engaged in longstanding, commendable efforts, only on a broader scale. The Finnish Federation for Technology Industries and the Finnish Metalworkers' Union were awarded for their persistent and successful co-operation in promoting health and safety at work. The unions have jointly implemented several projects of varying scope on occupational accident prevention, change security, working hour models and productivity.

Thanks to the co-operation, the age distribution for workers and salaried employees in the sector has changed in the course of a decade so that the share of over 60 year olds has increased from approximately one per cent to more than five per cent. At the same time, the median age of workers has increased from 39 to 43 years.

The two unions have launched a *Hyvä työ – pidempi työura* (Good job – longer career) project. Its aim is to establish more widely the best practices in use in the sector to extend the careers of aging employees. The cornerstones of the project are the promotion of wellbeing at work and maintenance of working capacity, reduction in the amount of sick leaves, development of working life, extension of careers and the development of best practices, tools and co-operation through practical and concrete action programmes and methods. In addition to the two award winners, the project is also being participated in by the Federation of Professional and Managerial Staff YTN, the Union of Salaried Employees TU and the Federation of Special Service and Clerical Employees ERTO. This ensures that the collaboration between the Finnish Federation for Technology Industries and the Finnish Metalworkers' Union will serve as a model for other sectors as well.

#### Further information

[www.tyoelamapalkinto.fi](http://www.tyoelamapalkinto.fi)

Introductions on the awarded projects (multimedia presentation) can be downloaded over the Internet:

[http://193.64.220.92/TEP\\_2010/index.html](http://193.64.220.92/TEP_2010/index.html)

Tapio Anttila, Vice President, Sitra, Strategic Processes  
Tel. (09) 6189 9283, [firstname.lastname@sitra.fi](mailto:firstname.lastname@sitra.fi)

Ismo Suksi, Senior Officer, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health  
Tel. (09) 1607 3134, [firstname.lastname@stm.fi](mailto:firstname.lastname@stm.fi)

Kirsi Suomalainen, Specialist, Sitra Communications, media services  
Tel. 050 369 9975, [firstname.lastname@sitra.fi](mailto:firstname.lastname@sitra.fi)

#### ***The National Prize for Innovative Practices in Employment and Social Policy***

*The National Prize for Innovative Practices in Employment and Social Policy has been awarded every year since 2008 to a work community or an individual who has successfully contributed to the well-being at work of an ageing workforce. The prize can be awarded for an activity or innovation that has greatly promoted the well-being at work of older employees, supported their ability to cope with and stay on at work, or improved their working conditions or employment opportunities.*

*The award is presented by the Fund for the National Prize for Innovative Practices in Employment and Social Policy. The Fund for the National Prize for Innovative Practices in Employment and Social Policy has been jointly established by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Sitra. The initial capital of the fund is 300,000 €. It consists of equal investments by Sitra and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, which has allocated the 150,000 € prize presented to Finland by the Carl Bertelsmann Foundation for this purpose. The fund is managed by Sitra. The funds are to be used by 2017. The founders of the fund will make a decision on the recipient after consulting the Finnish Work Environment Fund. The patron of the prize is the President of the Republic of Finland.*