

**EG on SIHLWA  
Fifth Meeting  
Oslo, Norway  
06-07 March 2008**



*Northern Dimension*  
Partnership in Public Health  
and Social Well-being  
[www.ndphs.org](http://www.ndphs.org)

<b>Title</b>	SIHLWA OSH Group Meeting Minutes
<b>Submitted by</b>	Suvi Lehtinen
<b>Summary / Note</b>	This paper provides the summary of discussions of the OSH group during the 5 <sup>th</sup> SIHLWA meeting

## **Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being: Expert Group on Social Inclusion, Healthy Lifestyles and Work Ability (SIHLWA), Oslo, 6–7 March 2008**

SIHLWA 5

### **Summary Report of the OSH Sub-Group meeting**

Dates	6 March 2008, 15.00–17.30 7 March 2008, 9.00–13.00
Venue	Hotel Holmenkollen Park Rica
Participants	Wiking Husberg, ILO, Moscow, Chair Trygve Eklund, STAMI, Norway Nikolai Izmerov, RAMS Research IOH, Russian Federation Evgeny Kovalevsky, RAMS Research IOH, Russian Federation Remigijus Jankauskas, Institute of Hygiene, Lithuania, Co-chair, Rapporteur Rokho Kim, WHO, Regional Office for Europe Kari Kurppa, FIOH, Finland Suvi Lehtinen, FIOH, Finland, Co-rapporteur Timo Leino, FIOH, Finland Irma Nool, Health Care Board, Estonia Niels Kr. Rasmussen, National Institute of Public Health, Denmark Bernd Treichel, NDPHS Secretariat Axel Wannag, State Labour Inspection, Norway Mona Bondevik, Labour Inspection, Norway

#### **1. Opening of the meeting**

Wiking Husberg, Chair of the SIHLWA Sub-group on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), opened the meeting and bid all participants welcome. He stated that 5 out of 13 Partnership countries, as well as 3 international organizations were represented in the meeting.

The work plan of the OSH Sub-group was agreed upon as follows:

- NDPHS Strategy on Health at Work
- Project plan to implement the Strategy: status report
- WHO-EURO activities
- Country reports on OSH
- Preparation of a national OSH profile: Lithuania as an example
- Future plans

#### **2. Review of the NDPHS Strategy on Health at Work**

Wiking Husberg recalled the establishment of the SIHLWA/OSH group of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS). This happened at the same time as the Baltic Sea Network on Occupational Health and Safety (BSN) was invited as an associate member of the NDPHS. SIHLWA consists of three sub-groups: adolescents, alcohol, and occupational safety and health. BSN and SIHLWA/OSH Group work closely together. The expert base of the BSN is crucial for the OSH Group.

He also recalled the work carried out in 2007 aiming at having a NDPHS Strategy on Health at Work. The Strategy was drafted within the working groups of the Baltic Sea Network on Occupational Health and Safety, and the SIHLWA OSH-group. The Strategy was endorsed by

the Partnership Annual Conference on 16 November 2007. It is accessible at: [http://www.ndphs.org//documents/779/NDPHS\\_Strategy\\_on\\_Health\\_at\\_Work.pdf](http://www.ndphs.org//documents/779/NDPHS_Strategy_on_Health_at_Work.pdf) [http://www.ndphs.org//documents/837/NDPHS\\_Strategy\\_on\\_Health\\_at\\_Work\\_\(RUS\).pdf](http://www.ndphs.org//documents/837/NDPHS_Strategy_on_Health_at_Work_(RUS).pdf) and also at Barents Newsletter issue 3 of 2007 both in English and in Russian ([www.ttl.fi/BarentsNewsletter](http://www.ttl.fi/BarentsNewsletter)).

### **3. Project plan to implement the Strategy: status report**

Suvi Lehtinen reported on the current status of the framework project plan that was prepared after the discussions in the BSN Annual Meeting, held in Bonn on 30–31 October 2007. The draft Project Plan was prepared before the Pre-PAC Forum and PAC, held on 15 and 16 November 2007 in Vilnius. The reason for preparing the project plan was to demonstrate the need for practical implementation plan and the need for receiving funding for specific activities. A framework project plan with 5 modules was drafted. The modules follow the core contents of the NDPHS Strategy on Health at Work: National and regional profiles, National OSH programme, Development of Basic Occupational Health Services, Reducing risks and preventing accidents through training and interventions; and Information support.

At the end of 2007, a possibility appeared to apply funding for the project activities, and by mid-February 2008 a decision on funding was received for project activities in North-West Russia.

In order to involve the Baltic States, the Nordic countries, as well as Poland and Germany in the project activities, there is a need to identify the most important modules in each country for further project planning and for applying necessary funds. The discussion on these elements can be carried out separately between the countries and it may also continue in the BSN Annual meeting. It should be taken into account that if money will be applied from the Nordic Council of Ministers funds, the deadline for applications is 1 September 2008.

### **4. WHO-EURO activities**

Rokho Kim described the WHO-EURO activities. He mentioned the Global Plan of Action on Workers' Health, which was endorsed in May 2007 by the World Health Assembly. In order to plan the coordination and implementation of various occupational health and safety activities, a joint meeting of WHO, ILO and EU was organized on 14 November 2007 in Vilnius immediately before the Pre-PAC Forum. The aim of the meeting was to inform about and coordinate the activities of the three international organizations, based on their recently revised OSH strategies. He also described the WHO biennial collaborative agreements with three countries that have already been approved (Croatia, FYROMacedonia, and Serbia), and one that is under discussion (Russian Federation). The NDPHS and BSN networks could work together with the SEE Network on OSH. The collaboration of WHO and ILO concerning the national OSH profiles was also mentioned – the profile template will combine the information aspects of both ILO and WHO. Several activities have been planned, both at national, regional, and pan-European levels.

### **5. Country reports on OSH**

Timo Leino reported on the results of the ongoing questionnaire survey on OSH situation in the countries. He mentioned that the decision of carrying out such a survey was made in the 2nd SIHLWA meeting, in November 2006. A questionnaire was sent to the countries at the end of January 2007, surveying the status of OSH in the country, covering information on economy, OHS system, resources, organizations, and major problems in OSH, to mention a few. The country OSH profiles that are now available are: Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and the Russian Federation. This information will be inserted to the NDPHS data base and BSN website in due course. The preparation of a complete national OSH profile needs tripartite discussion at the country level.

*Recommendations:*

- WHO and ILO will work together to have a common outline for the national and regional OSH profile (health and safety issues combined).
- A national profile is an inventory of the OSH situation in the country, revealing the needs for development (SWOT analysis). National profiles are important, but it was agreed that a summary be prepared focusing on regional (European level) profiling. One issue that is important from the regional point of view is occupational health and safety of migrant workers.

## **6. National OSH profile, Lithuania as an example**

Remigijus Jankauskas described how the work on a national OSH profile was carried out in Lithuania. In addition, he described how the comparisons between the objectives of the NDPHS Strategy on Health at Work were carried out with the national objectives. The national recommendations were compared with the recommendations of the NDPHS Strategy. He also presented the organizational structure of Lithuania in the field of OH&S. He deemed that the NDPHS Strategy can facilitate the development of activities for filling the gaps recognized in the two previous National OSH Programmes. He emphasized that for OSH audits, international networks are needed. It was stated that also EU has a guideline and an outline for OSH audits. These should be utilized. He mentioned that it is important that the National OSH profile and programme receive funding from the Government budget.

## **7. Future plans**

The five modules of the Project Plan were discussed in detail in light of the North-West Russia project.

### **National and regional profiles**

The activities included in the North-West Russia project were briefly described. The ILO Moscow has collaborated with Murmansk and Vologda regions to prepare a regional profile. As soon as the profile is ready, a tripartite meeting will be organized in order to discuss it among the representatives of work life. The profile includes a SWOT analysis, covering recommendations for all actors. When the Murmansk profile is ready, a regional meeting of the oblasts will be convened to share the information in the NW Russia Okrug and to find out whether other oblasts find it a challenge to start preparing their own regional profile. It was also mentioned that the SEE country profiles and information on their contents and the process of preparation should be utilized.

The auditing procedure of the OSH system and occupational health service system needs to be further discussed within SIHLWA and BSN meetings.

In Norway two ministries are responsible for OSH work. The National Institute of Occupational Health and the State Labour Inspectorate are responsible for assistance and inspections at the enterprise level. All these seem ready to work on the national OSH problems. However, there is a lack of coordination between the responsible bodies. Thus there is no overall National Plan on Occupational Health even if the last years have seen encouraging progress towards organising more resources for the OHS fields. Awareness and political will need still to be further raised to organise a national body to overlook the total OHS situation. This is most needed.

In Estonia, a development plan on OSH is currently under preparation.

*Recommendations*

It was proposed that the Partnership send the NDPHS Strategy on Health at Work to the relevant Ministers and other counterparts asking for information on what each country is planning to do to implement the NDPHS Strategy. It was agreed that addresses of relevant organizations be sent to the NDPHS Secretariat.

## **Occupational health services (OHS)**

The elements of the OHS-module of the North-West Russia project were briefly described. WHO, ILO, ICOH, and FIOH are committed to support the development of OHS in the Russian Federation through the 'FIOH-North-West Russia project'. It was agreed that in order to involve the high policy-level decision making, the Ministry of Health and Social Development needs to be approached. A 1,5-day policy level meeting (27–28 May 2008) has been planned to provide a systematic approach to all industries in organizing occupational health services. In addition, different relevant partners need to be involved at the federal level; some experts will also be invited to take part in the meetings from the regions in order to facilitate the further piloting of the Basic Occupational Health Services approach. The specific problems of industrial sectors will be discussed in more technical meetings. WHO-EURO is focusing on non-communicable diseases using workplace as an arena in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation. These activities will also be utilized in the development of OHS.

## **Reducing risks and preventing accidents**

Within the North-West Russia project, there is a plan to organize a 2,5-day seminar among occupational health and public health experts in November 2008. A common understanding of health promotion approaches and ways to carry out interventions is the aim of the seminar. On the basis of the common understanding, the next step aims at planning an intervention project to reduce cardiovascular disorders in the transport sector through health protection and promotion. It is important to take advantage of linkages to WHO-EURO activities. In addition, it is possible to continue the work to creating a sectoral profile – e.g. in transport where it is possible to describe the specific problems of a specific industry and sector, and recognize the needs for development. This learning process may also provide a basis for creating indicators which in due course could be included on the NDPHS Secretariat website.

## **Information activities**

The information activities aim at supporting the implementation of all other activities within the Project. A High-level Policy Forum to be organized by WHO, ILO, and the EU is expected to be organized in 2009.

The Barents Newsletter on Occupational Health and Safety will be continuously published, and the themes of 2008 issues are 1/2008 National OSH profiles; 2/2008 Occupational Health and Safety in the Transport Sector; 3/2008 Women and Work.

Campaigns such as 28 April (ILO World Safety and Health Day) and 7 April (WHO World Health Day) will be taken into account in all information activities.

Websites of the BSN, NDPHS, WHO, ILO, and other relevant organizations will be interlinked as much as possible in order to ensure that all relevant information is widely available and accessible.

## **8. Other issues**

Updating of the brief agricultural profile was put forward by Kari Kurppa. It was agreed that it will be taken up on the agenda of the BSN in October 2008.

As there were no other issues, the Chair thanked all participants of the Sub-group for their active contributions and inputs to the success of the meeting.

Report prepared by

Suvi Lehtinen