



Contents

Is Health and Safety Cost-Effective?	1
Achieving Work-Life Balance	2
Baltic Sea Network on Occupational Health and Safety	3
OSH Task Group and Health at Work	3
ILO OSH Project in NW Russia – Results of “Results-Based Management”	4
Striving to Improve Well-Being at Work – WASI Project	5
Analysis of Occupational Health Services in NDPHS Countries	5
Updating Course on Occupational Diseases in Riga	6
eHealth Acceptance Matters: A Transnational Conference 2012	7
Transnationality is more important than ever!	8

Dear Reader...

The focus of this issue is on the occupational safety and health. As life expectancy increases across Europe and pension ages are rising, protection of workers' health and the improvement of working conditions are very important for maximising the potential of the European workforce. In his opening article, the Chairman of the NDPHS Task Group on Occupational Safety and Health, Mr Wiking Husberg, argues that health and safety should be looked upon as, *inter alia*, a long term investment which can save a portion of the GDP by helping avoid work related accidents and diseases as well as poor working conditions. Further articles discuss the importance of introducing new thinking to address the challenges of the changing world of work and present examples of strategies, policies and regional networks' activities aimed to help achieve this in our region.

NDPHS Secretariat

Is Health and Safety Cost-Effective?

This is not a question one would expect to have to address in a partnership for health and well-being.

However, today when the search for a quick profit has caused the financial crisis and speculation is based on rumours; we need to show the impact of safe and healthy working conditions for the general public, enterprises, decision-makers and the media.

Health and safety is a long term serious investment; it does not provide a speculator with quick profit. The worst examples of that we have seen in the transition countries in the 1990, where everything that did not give a profit in 6 months was eliminated. Now these countries and their enterprises are rebuilding their OSH systems, because, as Mr Putin said last year: “It is easier and less costly to invest in occupational safety and health than to deal with the consequences of occupational accidents that may happen or happen as a result of negligent attitude to these problems.”

The ILO estimates that the world is losing 4% of the GDP due to work related accidents and diseases and poor work-

ing conditions. Every year, workers in the EU suffer from 4.9 million accidents each causing more than 3 days of absence from work.

The International Social Security Association calculates that for every Euro invested in OSH, the company can on average expect 2.2 euro in return.

Why are some decision-makers and companies still hesitating to put into practice effective OSH and occupational health systems? It may be that these facts are lost in the daily stream of financial crisis news. And because company account do not display savings due to good working conditions.

We, OSH experts, are working on a daily basis to improve working conditions, make OSH systems and occupational health more effective. However, we may need to become better in making the business case: health and safety at work is a good business.

It is not an uphill struggle anymore – a multitude of enterprises have already realised this. We have several cases of



NDPHS Continues Efforts to Have Health Prioritised on the Regional Agenda

1 ▶

enterprises and organisations showing good results both in safety and finance. We have enterprises in all NDPHS countries implementing the Zero Accident approach.

In the EU OSH Conference in June 2012 in Denmark there was a tri-partite consensus on the benefits arising from OSH and the good return to society; the fundamental question is "how best to illustrate this to the decision-makers."

This edition of the NDPHS contains information on the activities of the Partnership and its OSH Task Group. However, we will need to reach outside the OSH community and make the case for OSH: Yes, health and safety at work is cost-effective. And it saves human lives.

Wiking Husberg

NDPHS OSH Task Group Chair

Achieving Work-Life Balance

Changes in society and work mean that work-life conflict is prevalent in Europe, with an estimated quarter of Europeans suffering from some form of work-family conflict (1). Such conflict may be viewed as a stressor for individuals (2), being associated with a range of indicators of poor health and impaired well-being. This in turn can have a negative impact on the employer organisations, through decreased worker job satisfaction, increased staff turnover, and lower job performance (3).



Avoiding these costs to employer, worker, and society requires employees to have a work-life balance in which there are three core components:

-  Time balance - equal time being given to both work and family roles;
-  Involvement balance - equal levels of psychological involvement in both work and family roles; and
-  Satisfaction balance - equal levels of satisfaction in both work and family roles (4).

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) has published an information sheet that takes a practical look at the issue and offers information on the options

available to both employers and workers (5).

Formal policies on work-life balance may include organisation practices such as flexible working hour policies or teleworking, procedures for finding out workers' needs and consulting and informing them of options, and measures to develop a culture of flexibility and innovation. To achieve this, there is a strong need for management "buy-in."

Addressing issues such as work-life balance takes occupational safety and health outside its traditional boundaries, requiring new thinking to address the challenges of the changing world of work.

References:

1. Kotowska, E.I., Matysiak, A., Styrz, M., Paillhe, A., Solaz, A., Vignoli, D., Vermeylen, G. & Anderson, R., Second European Quality of Life Survey: Family life and work, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 2010, pp.1-96.
2. Frone, R.M., Russell, M. & Barnes M.G., 'Work-family conflict, gender, and health-related outcomes: A study of employed parents in two community samples', *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol. 1, No 1, 1996, pp. 57-69.
3. Rose, S., Hunt, T., Ayers, B. (2007). *Adjust the Balance: Literature Review Life Cycles and Work Life Balance*, 2007. Retrieved 28 April 2011, from: <http://www.equalworks.co.uk/resources/contentfiles/4912.pdf>.
4. Greenhaus, H.J., Collins, M.K. & Shaw, D.J., 'The relation between work-family balance and quality of life', *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, Vol. 63, 2003, pp. 510-531.
5. E-fact 57: Family issues and work-life balance <http://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/e-facts/e-fact-57-family-issues-work-life-balance/view>.

Zinta Podniece, Tim Tregenza

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work



Baltic Sea Network on Occupational Health and Safety

Network collaboration since 1995

The Baltic Sea Network on Occupational Health and Safety (BSN), established in 1995, has representatives from the occupational health and safety (OH&S) institutions of the ten Baltic Sea Region countries (www.balticseaosh.net). This expert network holds annual meetings and collaborates on various topics, the aim being to implement the national OH&S strategies as well as those of international organisations. The transport sector and health care workers are two important sectors in every society. In the past few years, these two worker groups have been and are still in focus of activities in the Baltic Sea Region.

Strategies

Over the past few years, key international organisations have renewed their strategies on occupational health and safety: the International Labour Office (ILO) in 2003, the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2007, the European Union in 2007, and the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS) in 2007 (http://www.ndphs.org///documents/779/NDPHS_Strategy_on_Health_at_Work.pdf). The strategies provide a strong basis for implementing occupational health and safety activities.

Networks

Several networks – global, regional and sub-regional and national, sectoral and subject-oriented – help in putting the

strategies into practice. The Baltic Sea Network on Occupational Health and Safety has also created contacts with its sister network, the South-East European Network on Workers' Health, with the aim of learning from each other.

Information

In 1997, the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, together with several other institutions from Norway, Sweden and the Russian Federation, established the Barents Newsletter on Occupational Health and Safety to serve as a joint information channel and forum for occupational health and safety experts in the Barents Region. Published three times a year in Russian and English, the newsletter has been used to inform of on-going activities in, e.g., OSH Profiles, Basic Occupational Health Services, and OSH in the

Transport Sector (www.ttl.fi/BarentsNewsletter). The information disseminated is aimed at widely informing occupational health and safety professionals, researchers and institutions, as well as at raising awareness among the public at large.



In 2010, one of the topics on the agenda of the BSN Annual Meeting was occupational health of the health care workers. Proceedings of the presentations made during this Special Session have been published and are available from the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. If you are interested in receiving them please send a request to bsn@ttl.fi.

Suvi Lehtinen

Chief, International Affairs,

Finnish Institute of Occupational Health

OSH Task Group and Health at Work

The work of the NDPHS Task Group on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH TG) is closely integrated with the Baltic Sea Network on Occupational Health and Safety (BSN OSH), a professional body and associate expert group of the Partnership. BSN is providing a voluntary network of occupational health professionals in the Baltic Sea Region (<http://www.balticseaosh.net/index.php>).

Since the creation of the OSH group within the NDPHS in Stockholm in 2005, it has lived a hectic life. The Finnish funded

ILO project on OSH in North-West Russia was one of the first projects operating under the umbrella of the Partnership. The ILO project is still sharing experience inside the Northern Dimension in a very efficient manner.

The next major task for the group was to prepare the "Health at Work" Strategy (http://www.ndphs.org/?ndphs_docs), which was approved during the ministerial-level Partnership Annual Conference (PAC) in Vilnius, in 2007. The Strategy is one of its kind merging the ILO, WHO and EU OSH



OSH Task Group and Health at Work

3 ▶

strategies into one regional strategy adapted for the region. The annual monitoring of the indicators, done by the BSN OSH professionals, is showing stable progress.

In the monitoring of the overall OSH situation in the region, the members of the OSH TG have identified new pressing issues, in addressing which the OSH network of professionals can assist each other.

Lithuania has taken the initiative to review the occupational health systems in selected member countries, with the objective to learn from their neighbours while considering the upgrading of their own national occupational health system. The survey, the working party will produce, will be of interest to the whole Partnership.

Estonia expressed concern about the aging of occupational health physicians and other countries stressed the need for

sharing of occupational health experience. Latvia has organised the first joint course on the subject in January 2012, other events being planned for St. Petersburg and Vilnius.

A new collaboration was started in the ministerial-level Partnership Annual Conference in November 2011 in St. Petersburg, where the preparation of a Position Paper on “Healthy Lifestyles in Healthy Working Conditions” was initiated. WHO/EURO is taking the lead of this working party of the OSH TG.

The practically oriented work items of the OSH TG are based on initiatives of the members of the Partnership. It is a good example of voluntary cooperation between OSH professionals in the member states of the Partnership, WHO, ILO and the EU OSH Agency.

Wiking Husberg

NDPHS OSH Task Group Chair

ILO OSH Project in NW Russia – Results of “Results-Based Management”

The ILO Project “Developing and implementing Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) system in the North-West region of the Russian Federation to provide Decent and Safe work” is being executed under the umbrella of the NDPHS OSH Task Group (OSH TG). Project goals, activities, outputs and outcomes are defined to achieve the Goal 10 (The NDPHS Strategy on Health at Work is implemented in the ND area) of the NDPHS Strategy. In 2011 the Project was awarded the “NDPHS labelled project” status.

The Project is funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

The development objectives of the 3rd phase of the Project, which was commenced in January 2010, are the following:

-  Introduction of decent and safe work systems, through international harmonisation and good governance, in the North-West region of the Russian Federation as a pilot area;
-  Reducing the level of occupational accidents and diseases due to poor working conditions by implementing OSH management and risk assessment systems in NW Russia.

The project attempts to achieve these ambitious objectives by means of “results-based management” (RBM). The

most important features of RBM are: accountability for results, focused planning and rigorous measurement. The description of the project and the technical progress report are available on the following pages of the NDPHS website: <http://www.ndphs.org/?database,view,project,1430> and <http://www.ndphs.org/?database,view,paper,63>, respectively.

The project contributes to broader, short- and long term impacts in six regions of North-West Russia. Some of the results gained are the following: in every region promotional campaigns devoted to the World OSH day are organised annually; approx. 70 ‘pilot’ enterprises implement OSH management system according to ILO-OSH 2001 Guidelines; three training modules have been prepared by the project (the fourth is in progress); more than 30 regional OSH centres have altered their curricula in line with ILO training material; seven OSH profiles have been compiled; five OSH programmes have been developed; four legal acts have been issued. The main results achieved are listed in the table below.

Marat Rudakov

*ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and
Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia*

Indicator	Target	Achieved
The number of ILO training modules prepared and launched	4	3 (+1 in progress)
The number of OSH centres using ILO training material	10	34
The number of “pilot” enterprises implementing ILO-OSH-2001 Guidelines	60	69
The number of regional OSH profiles compiled	5	7
The number of regional OSH programmes/work plans developed and launched	5	5



Striving to Improve Well-Being at Work – WASI Project

The well-being of the employees has in many studies shown to be crucial for the productivity of an organisation and is closely linked with health condition of the workers. The rapid changes in working life during last decades with the development of new technologies and an increasing amount of employees working with computers and information technology have brought down the borderline between the workplace and home and led to higher work demands and increased insecurity regarding changes. All this together with physical inactivity has serious impact on health and well-being of millions of people across the industries and the countries. Latest reports confirm that problems related to the neck, back, hands and arms, stress and depression are among the most important occupational health concerns.

work environment together with leadership and management significantly affect work ability and occupational well-being.



In order to explore the situation across the Baltic Sea region more in detail and try to provide some solutions, a project called WASI (Work ability and social inclusion) was developed by a partnership involving Arcada University of Applied Sciences (Finland), Tallinn University of Technology (Estonia) and Riga Stradins University (Latvia), financially supported by the Central Baltic INTERREG IV A Programme 2007-2013. The focus of the project is to improve occupational well-being among persons working with the so-called information communication technology (ICT) in Finland, Estonia and



During recent years, more attention has been paid to the positive effects of improving well-being on productivity, sickness absence (or presenteeism) and early retirement. In a global world with increased competition, improving productivity only by developing new technology is not enough – one has to concentrate on development of organisations that are able to employ and keep skilled and enthusiastic employees. So it is important to concentrate not only on physical but also psycho-social work environment that has in several studies shown to have a positive effect on employees' health.

Latvia. Evaluation of workplaces, interviews with workers (using specially adopted questionnaire), and measurements of stress level indicators (cortisol in saliva) will be followed by intervention in workplaces and work organisation (using the so-called Metal Age method that is aiming at workers' inclusion in organisational changes and stress reduction measures). Repeated evaluation of the changes in employees' feelings, stress levels and productivity effects will be made after one year.

The population of the Baltic Sea region struggles with similar problems concerning insufficient stress management and lacking internal communication. Poor physical and social

More information on the project and well-being at work can be found at <http://info.arcada.fi/wasi>.

Ivars Vanadzins, Jukka Surakka, Kalju Meigas

WASI project team

Analysis of Occupational Health Services in NDPHS Countries

The NDPHS countries, when drafting national occupational health and safety strategies, must accept challenges imposed on them by the WHO Global Plan of Action on Workers' Health 2008–2017. One of those challenges is that a national system of occupational health services (OHS) should be established.

Lithuania is one of the EU countries that currently do not take leadership position in provision of OHS. There is a need to make a comparative analysis of existing policy documents, infrastructures and human resources in OHS in the NDPHS countries. For this reason the following survey was planned.

6 ▶





Analysis of Occupational Health Services in NDPHS Countries

5 ▶

Objective: the aim of the survey was to analyse the practical set-up of OHS, describing their structure, content and professionals engaged in selected NDPHS countries.

Type of the research: descriptive – comparative analysis.

Methodology of the research: the survey was based on a questionnaire elaborated at the Institute of Hygiene in Lithuania, and all the NDPHS countries were requested to reply to it. The questionnaire (Model-I) was prepared after analyses of the international and national occupational safety and health legislation, OHS services establishment policy and main functions of OHS specialists. The survey started in June 2011 and the feedback reports from the countries (Model-II) were collected at the end of 2011. The following countries responded: Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and the Russian Federation.

Results of the research: it was of utmost importance to gather information from the countries, although it was clear that not much comparative analysis can be done because the OHS structures in the countries are so different and based on the historical and cultural differences. The main activities, listed in the ILO Convention 161 on Occupational Health Services, such as identification and assessment of the risks from health hazards in the workplace, surveillance of workers' health in

relation to work, organisation of the first aid and emergency treatment, participation in analysis of occupational accidents and occupational diseases, etc. were provided by OHS in the NDPHS countries. Taking into account the recommendations of International standards (BOHS, Occupational Medicine in Europe: Scope and Competencies; The Role of the Occupational Health Nurse in Workplace Health Management), the team of OHS should be multidisciplinary. But the survey results showed that monodisciplinary team is still dominant in such NDPHS countries as Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia and Germany where occupational health physician is seen as the main OHS specialist.

The analysis of the results is still on-going. An expected result is a thematic report, based on a document-based survey, describing the organisation, coverage, content and resources of OHS in NDPHS countries in 2011. The study results will be published in a paper and will be presented at national and international conferences.

Remigijus Jankauskas

Vice-Chair, OSH Task Group

Raimonda Eičinė-Lingienė

Institute of Hygiene (Lithuania)

Updating Course on Occupational Diseases

Work-related ill health and occupational diseases are major concerns among the European employees as, according to the latest statistics, 8.6% of the EU workforce thinks that their health has been negatively influenced by their work conditions. Unfortunately, not all of these suffering people receive necessary support as there are great differences in how occupational health systems are organised across the Baltic Sea countries combined with lack of OSH professionals in some of the countries and different registration, notification and compensation systems. Of course, various efforts are being taken at national and EU levels to improve the existing systems and knowledge level in this area.

As one such effort, the "Updating course on occupational diseases" was carried out in Riga in January 2012, co-financed with a DG REGIO technical assistance grant and supported by the NDPHS Task Group on Occupational Safety and Health. It

brought together 60 occupational health professionals from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia working in the area of occupational health. The course concentrated both on latest diagnostic achievements with regard to occupational diseases as well as on learning more about registration and recognition of occupational diseases in Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Lithuania and, finally, exchanging professional opinions on various topics.



Well-recognised professionals on occupational diseases, among them Prof. M. Eglite (Latvia), Prof. E. Merisalu (Estonia) and Prof. H.Taskinen (Finland) together with other lecturers from Latvia, took part in the course and shared their knowledge and experience. Several demonstrations of occupational patients were provided (e.g. a patient with neuropathies due to chemical intoxication, a patient with noise induced hearing loss as well as others)

7 ▶



Updating Course on Occupational Diseases

6 ▶

to demonstrate the link between work conditions and clinical findings. The audience of the course was a perfect testimony to the interdisciplinary nature of occupational health as there were occupational doctors, occupational health experts, governmental representatives as well as labour inspectors among the participants. The course was also partly supported by the ERDF Project "Promotion of international cooperation activities of Riga Stradins University in Science and Technologies."

To further improve the knowledge and information ex-



IEGULDĪJUMS TAVĀ NĀKOTNĒ



change on occupational health an international workshop on occupational health is planned to be or-

ganised in St. Petersburg in conjunction with the meeting of the Baltic Sea Network on Occupational Health and Safety in autumn 2012. A similar course will also be organized in Vilnius in the near future.

Ivars Vanadziņš

RSU Institute of Occupational Safety and Environmental Health, Latvia

eHealth Acceptance Matters: A Transnational Conference 2012

The ICT for Health project is aiming to improve the social capacities of citizens and medical professionals to utilise eHealth technologies in prevention and treatment of chronic diseases. In order to put the issue of acceptance on the political agenda the project partners will organise an expert conference "eHealth Acceptance Conference 2012." This international event will take place on 5-6 November 2012 in Brussels, Belgium.



Policy makers, health care professionals, patient associations, universities and relevant industries are invited to discuss how to enhance the utilization of eHealth technology in the Baltic Sea Region. The results achieved during the project period are already pointing to solutions for the future. One outcome of the project activities will be a paper presenting strategic recom-



mendations which, it is planned, will be adopted by the participants of the conference.

The eLearning programme called "SALUDA" developed by the project partners will be presented during the conference. The programme in six languages for patients with chronic heart diseases empowers patients how to deal better with their disease. Also presented will be a test version of the web-based multilingual health portal "VivaPort." This portal enables citizens making their personal health data accessible to medical professionals abroad via providing relevant information in the native language of the respective destination.

Thematic sessions:

1. eHealth in the regions: strategies and good practices.
2. Patient empowerment through lifelong learning and self-monitoring.
3. From ICT-Skills towards eHealth-Practice!
4. Access to multilingual personal health summary around the Baltic Sea Region.

For more information please visit www.ictforhealth.net.

Gesine Stück

Project communication



Transnationality is more important than ever!

Transnationality and transnational cooperation is one of the cornerstones of the European Union project. Transnational cooperation involves working with a range of actors in other Member States to develop and improve methods, systems and policies across different policy areas. Awareness of transnational cooperation and its importance have increased. Yet sufficient reliable, up-to-date information on the subject can be hard to find in just one place.

This is why Arbetsmiljöforum received a grant from the European Social Fund to start a project on transnationality with a focus on the Baltic Sea Region. The project is called Inclusive Europe and aims to offer information on how to launch a successful transnational cooperation, as well as trainings, exchange programs and transnational networking for the partners in the Stockholm Region.

Baltic Sea Arena – WorkingLife 16-17 October

Welcome to participate in a transnational conference on implementation of the Baltic Sea Strategy!

For the second time the Inclusive Europe project offers a European meeting point where you will have an opportunity to create, enhance and develop a transnational partnership focusing on the Baltic Sea Region with partners from several



countries. This is a unique opportunity for debating pressing issues such as youth unemployment, ageing population, green jobs, the grey market, education, trafficking, and gender equality. It is also a good opportunity for networking and inspiration for future cross-border collaborations and transnational projects. The NDPHS, which has agreed to support the organisation of the event and contribute to it, is a good example of how common regional challenges can be addressed through a concerted action of partners coming from the countries in the region.



WorkingLife 2012

16th Oct – Baltic Sea Arena – a project development day on three themes; Youth Drop-out, Age, and Disability

17th Oct – WorkingLife seminars on Welfare regime, Safety and health in a mobile market, Better workplaces with EU, Best practice to prevent youth unemployment, A welfare system rehabilitates the disabled to the labour market, and more.

Go to our web page to sign up: www.inclusiveeurope.se.

*Anna-Lena Carlsson
Project Manager
Inclusive Europe*

International Conference on Occupational Health and Safety

Recent 10 years have brought many changes in Occupational Health and Safety systems and policies around the Baltic Sea. These and other related issues will be discussed during an International Conference on Occupational Health and Safety: From Policies to Practice, which will be held in Riga, Latvia, on 6-7 December 2012. The conference will look back whether the changing policies have also brought about changes in workers' health and safety or, in other words,

whether the respective policies been put into practice. The conference will combine plenary sessions with parallel sessions on several topics. For more information visit the conference web page www.rsu.lv/OHSconferenceRiga.



*RSU Institute of Occupational Safety
and Environmental Health
Latvia*

The NDPHS e-Newsletter is published by the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS) Secretariat in Stockholm, Sweden.

It is published bi-annually and is available in electronic format through direct mailing to subscribers, and on the NDPHS website, where you can also subscribe to it (www.ndphs.org).

The newsletter may be freely reproduced and reprinted, provided that the source is cited.

While the contributions received for this issue are highly appreciated, it should be noted that the views and opinions expressed by the contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.

We plan to publish the next issue in winter 2013.

Contributions are encouraged and welcome. If you are interested, please contact us at the NDPHS Secretariat.

NDPHS Secretariat
Slussplan 9
P.O. Box 2010
SE-103 11 Stockholm, Sweden
Tel: +46 8 440 1920
Fax: +46 8 440 1944
E-mail: secretariat@ndphs.org
Website: www.ndphs.org