



HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEES & GROUPS: COMPOSITION, ACTIVITIES AND PROBLEMS

Survey data analysis in the health care sector

1. Background

1.1. Legislative framework

In the process of negotiations for the Bulgaria's EU accession and later on when Bulgaria became a full member of the EU, a significant step towards an alignment of the health and safety at work legislation through transposition of the *aquis communautaire* provisions was undertaken. Health and Safety at Work Law (HSWL) was adopted in 1997 and came into force on 1 January 1998. Through the years the Law has been subject to several amendments, the last adopted in late 2008. This law sought to complete transposition of the EU 'framework' health and safety Directive (89/391/EEC) and all related to it Directives. The reform of health and safety legislation was launched and implemented with wide participation and consensus among the social partners.

In December 2008, the government undertook a series of legislative initiatives aiming to improve the regulatory framework for health and safety at work and social dialogue. Such initiatives included amendments to the Working conditions law and Labour Code, and a new Law for labour inspection. National Strategy for Health and Safety at Work 2008–2013 and a National Programme for Health and Safety for 2009 were adopted in line with the Community strategy 2007–2012 on health and safety at work.

The new framework targets better working conditions, improved well-being and quality of work of employees rendering an account of the changes at workplace and newly emerging occupational risks. The national strategy aims to reduce accidents at work with 25% by 2013 while it is expected that the implementation of the Health and Safety Programme for 2009 will lead to an 8% decrease in the number of workplace accidents. This objective becomes all the more necessary as the incidence of occupational accidents and diseases, although diminishing in recent years, is still high.

1.2. Institutional framework for social dialogue on health and safety and workers' participation

One of the main factors contributing to the improvement of the working conditions is the social partnership and the expansion of the workers' participation at the workplace. The new OSH framework is based on the concept that the social dialogue is a valuable resource for the implementation of the policy aims and better protection of the workers rights.

The institutional framework for social dialogue and workers participation related to OSH issues is established at all levels of the industrial relations system – from the workplace to the national level with the formation of the National Working Conditions Council (NWCC), branch and regional working conditions councils and Working Conditions Committees and Groups in the enterprises.



However, in the practice there are a range of shortcomings. Even the best legislation is not enough for providing good working conditions, it is rather merely an important and necessary first step. The challenge that both the government and the social partners face is its effective enforcement. An additional challenge poses the ineffective activity of some of the established social partnership bodies. This also refers vastly to Working Conditions Committees&Groups as there are a range of shortcomings in their formation and functioning. In many enterprises they exist merely 'on paper'.

1.3. The reasons behind the Survey of the WCC&WCG

The experience of many European countries shows that the well organised and backed up by resources and tools activity of unions and workers O&H representatives is essential for the implementation of the OSH policy goals and for the sustainable enterprise development.

In Bulgaria there is a lack of research and reliable statistics both on the number of the WCC and WCG and on their activities, efficiency and challenges they face as a body for workers representation and participation in the enterprises.

At this background the survey conducted in the framework of the LO-CITUB project aims at studying the role and functioning of WCC&WCG in the six pilot sectors and at outlining the possible areas for trade union intervention for the capacity building of the WCC&WCG and supporting the social dialogue development in the field of health and safety at work.

Further argument for the need for trade unions to pay more attention to the WCC& WCG and to support their activities provides the European Agency for Health and Safety at Work Pan-European opinion poll on OSH containing representative results for the 27 Member States of the European Union.

The poll results show that Bulgaria (just Greece displays worse results) is the country with one of the highest share of the population (56%) which considers that the working conditions worsened in the last five years with each tenth stating that the working conditions have got much worse. Just 15% are of the opposite opinion.

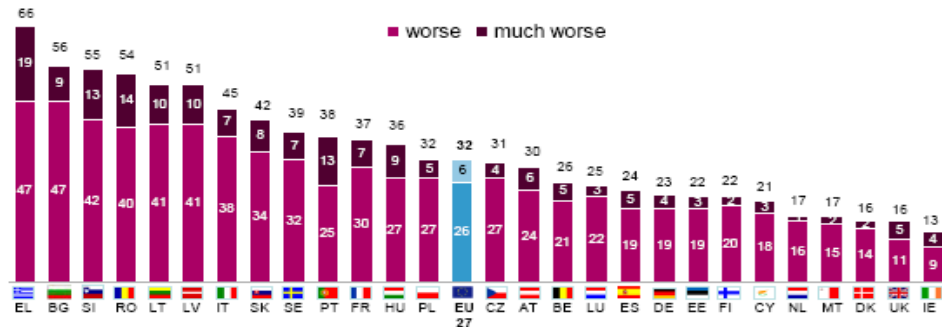


Project 2008/108471 HSE Health - safety and environment in the work place



Development of safety and health at work – EU27

Do you think that over the last 5 years health and safety at work in (YOUR COUNTRY) has got ...?



Pan-European opinion poll on occupational safety and health – June 2009

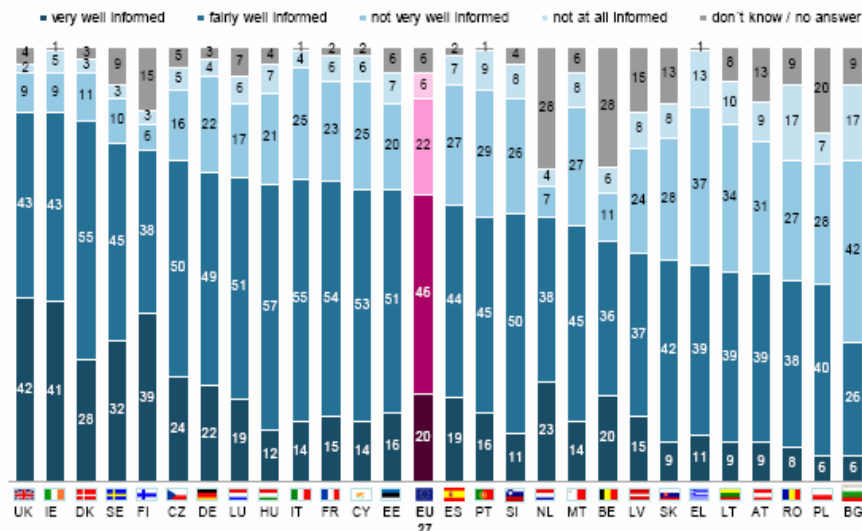
Percent

Difference to 100 percent: better / much better / don't know / no answer; Universe: population aged 18+

The poll suggests also that the Bulgarians are less informed about the risks at the workplace. Just 1/3 of the respondents are very well (6%) or fairly well (26%) informed regarding the H&S risks at the workplace.

Level of information – EU27

Regarding safety and health risks at the workplace, do you consider yourself...?



Pan-European opinion poll on occupational safety and health – June 2009

Percent
Universe: population aged 18+

The findings show that the H&S are not between the most important values when one is seeking for a job. The decision of a Bulgarian to take a new job is mainly



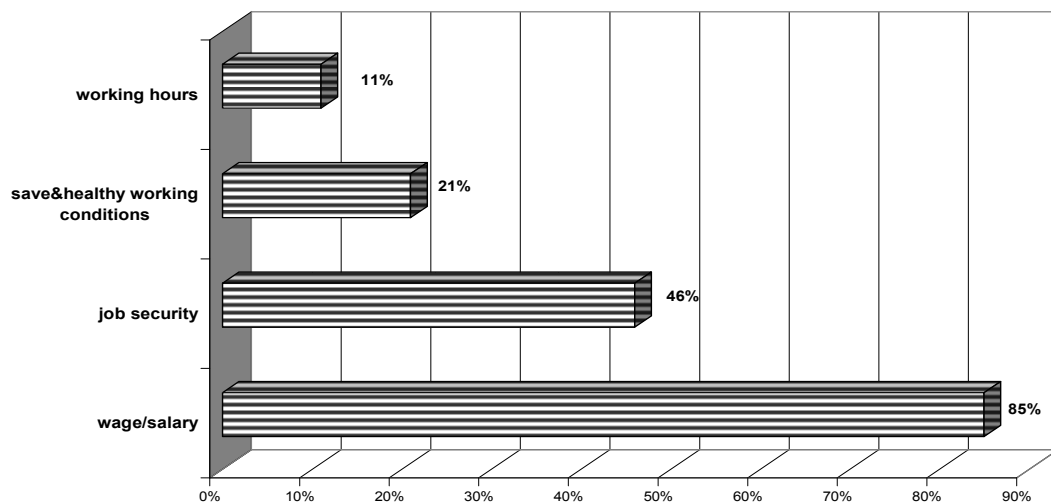
The Project is supported by a grant from Norway through the Norwegian Cooperation Programme for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development with Bulgaria





influenced by the wage (85%), followed by the job security (48%). Save and healthy working conditions will influence the decision only of 21% of the Bulgarians. While these responses are understandable at the background of the economic situation in the country – low income level and increasing unemployment in the times of crisis, it is a warning that the employees are prone to compromise with the health and safety at work.

If you were deciding whether to take a new job, which factor would most influence your decision?



As a whole the context related to H&S in the country may be presented as follows:

There are laws and strategies, but they are not enforced effectively

There are social dialogue bodies established at all levels, but some of them do not function effectively.

There are statutory workers rights, but the workers are not aware of them or consciously decline to fight for their implementation.

2. SURVEY AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

Specific aims of the survey conducted in the framework of the CITUB- LO project are as follows:

- To study the establishment, functioning and main directions of activity of the WCC&WCG in the enterprises in the six pilot sectors;
- To identify the main supporting or hindering factors;
- To identify the training needs and the need for institutional support; and
- On this basis to outline the necessary activities of the relevant institutions, able to support the effectiveness of the WCC&WCG; as well to
- Propose general framework for the establishment of the WCC&WCG network.



The research methods, used by ISTUR team include various research instruments as follows:

- Review of the legislation and documents of related institutions, e.g., Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, General Labour Inspectorate, National Social Security Institute, etc.
- Secondary analysis of the available research in the field of working conditions and social dialogue.
- Questionnaire based survey in the six pilot branches. The Questionnaire contains 34 questions aiming to obtain information on: the type of enterprise – size, ownership; working conditions- occupational hazards and accidents; composition and activity of the WCC&WCG; hindering and supporting the activity of WCC&WCG factors; profile of the workers representative in WCC&WCG
- SWOT analysis of the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and treats related to the social dialogue on H&S and the activity of WCC&WCG, as a base for the working out training modules and the framework of the WCC&WCG network

3. MAIN SURVEY FINDINGS

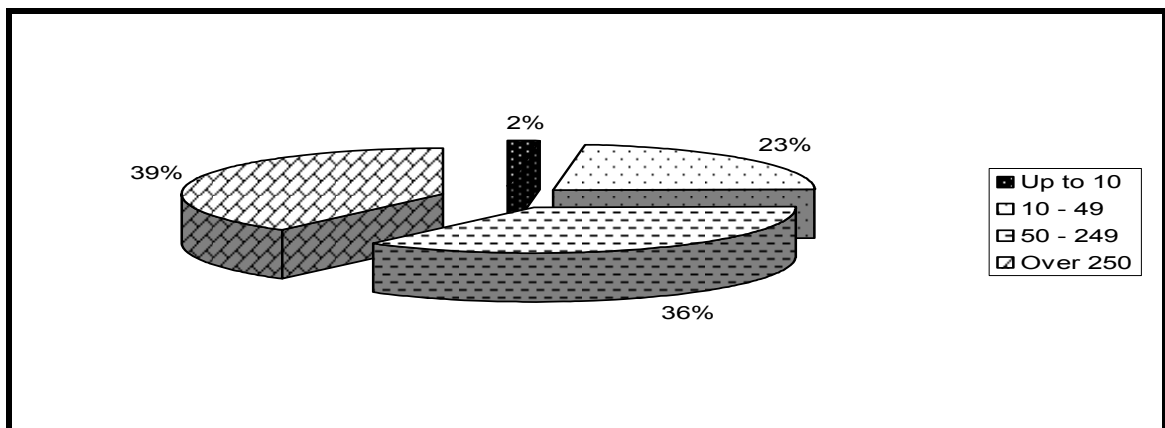
3.1. Sample

In the Survey participated 202 employee representatives in WCC&WCG from different health establishments throughout the country, including: Multi - profile, specialized and university hospitals, dispensaries, centers for urgent medical aid, homes for social and medical care for children, and regional inspectorates for public health prevention and control

3.2. Health establishments' characteristics

The respondents to the Survey work in small, medium-sized and large health establishments. There are representatives in micro health establishments as well. 2/3 of the respondents represent medium-sized (36%) and large health establishments, while about 1/4 work in small health establishments.

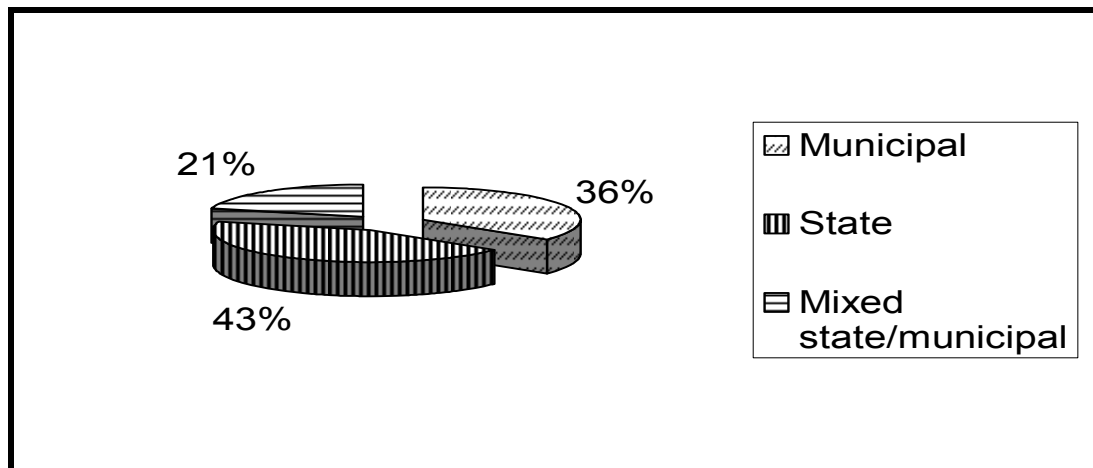
BREAKDOWN OF ENTERPRISES BY THE SIZE OF THE LABOUR FORCE





Most of the participants in the Survey work in public (43%) and municipal health establishments - 36%, while each fifth work in health establishment with mixed public-municipal ownership.

BREAKDOWN OF ENTERPRISES BY THE TYPE OF OWNERSHIP



3.3. Working conditions in the health establishments

According to the largest part of the respondents the three main occupational risk factors in the health care include: stress due to work overload (65,4%), shift and night work (60,4%), and high risk for the health (44,2%). Other most frequently cited hazards are: working with biological substances (43,7 %) and stress due to the lack of time (40,5%). About 1/3 of the respondents mentioned also tiring or painful working positions (33,5 %), noise (32,5%) and harmful radiation (28,9%), while each fourth stressed also on such hazards as:

- repetitive movements - 25,9 %;
- working with chemicals – 25,4 %;
- violence or treat of violence - 23,4%;
- bullying, harassment - 22,8%.

Relatively small is the share of the respondents indicating such risk factors as: high risk for the life (9,3%); carrying heavy loads (12,7%); high temperatures (11,2%), and vibrations (3,6%).

An H&S issue of concern for the respondents in the health care sector is the still relatively high **level of accidents at the workplace**. According to half of the respondents (49,2%) in their establishment there were no accidents. However according to 38,2% of them in the last three years there were accidents. Most of them (30%) stated that there were between one to five accidents, while 3% reported more than five accidents. There are also nine fatal accidents. However each 8th of the respondents is not informed about the accidents in the company. This suggests that the rights for information of the WCC&WCG members about the accidents have not been observed.

The most alarming is however the fact that at the background of decreasing total number of occupational accidents in the country, the number of accidents in the health care and social activities increased in the last years. According to the official



statistical data accidents in health care and social activities in 2007 were 144 (3,5% of the total for the country), of which fatal accidents were 4 (2,7% of the total). In 2008 the accidents increased to 190 (5% of the total) and fatal accidents were 6 (3,2% of the total). 2009 - first half - 6,7% of the total. This trend continues also in 2009 – data for the first half of the year show that the accidents in the health care represented 6,7% of the total accidents.

Employers' policy related to H&S

Part of the questions in the Questionnaire aimed at receiving information on how the employer complies with the statutory obligations related to ensuring health and safety at the workplaces and favourable conditions for effective workers representations through the Working conditions councils.

The analysis of the data, related to the **assessment of employer's OSH policy** shows that according to over 70% of the respondents their employer has:

- Programme for improvement of the working conditions (71,1%) and
- Programme for workers health (64%);
- 2/3 pointed that the employer makes risk assessment, but only 53% consider that he has Programme for risk reduction and elimination

However, the employer policy on H&S in the health care is not enough active as just about 60% of the respondents mentioned that the employer:

- Introduces clear and transparent OSH policy (60,1%);
- Is fully committed to the working conditions improvement (60,7%) and invests in the working conditions improvement (57%).

Assessment of employer's OSH policy

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|--|------|------|------------|
| Introduces clear and transparent OSH policy | 60,1 | 9,0 | 30,9 |
| Programme for workers health | 71,1 | 8,3 | 20,6 |
| Programme for risk reduction and elimination | 53,2 | 23,7 | 23,1 |
| Programme for workers health | 63,9 | 17,8 | 18,3 |
| Invests in the working conditions improvement | 57,0 | 15,2 | 27,9 |
| Makes risk assessment | 75,2 | 14,3 | 13,2 |
| Ensures the necessary conditions for workers participation in WCC&WCG | 68,0 | 5,1 | 27,0 |
| Supports the trade union demands for working environment improvement | 60,1 | 10,7 | 29,2 |
| informs on a regular basis the personnel about the foreseen restructuring, changes in the technology | 48,3 | 20,9 | 30,8 |
| Takes seriously the WCC&WCG activity | 64,0 | 8,1 | 27,9 |
| Informs on a regular basis the WCC&WCG about the foreseen restructuring, changes in the technology | 41,6 | 27,7 | 30,7 |
| Is fully committed to the working conditions improvement | 60,7 | 8,2 | 31,1 |

Despite the relatively high share of the respondents considering that the employer ensures the necessary conditions for employee participation in WCC&WCG (68,0); takes seriously the WCC&WCG activity (64,0%) and supports the trade union demands for working environment improvement (60,1%), less than



half of them said that the employer is informing on a regular basis the personnel (48,3%) and the WCC&WCG (41,6%) about the foreseen restructuring, changes in the technology, work organisation and workplaces.

It is worth mentioning also that the share of respondents that did not answer or don't have opinion is high. This indicates that the members of the WCC are not well informed or are not very active.

3.4. Working Conditions Councils and Groups – establishment, composition and activity

Most of the WCC&WCG have been established in the period after 2001, including 36,4% between 2001-2004 and 27% - are newly established (since 2005). Up to 2000 were established 36% of them.

Composition: According to 6,1% of the respondents the working conditions body comprises 2 persons (i.e., WCG). The prevailing case is WCC comprising from 4 to 8 persons (71,4%). 16% said that their WCC comprises 10 persons.

Trade union members are well represented in the WCC&WCG. According to more than half of the respondents (56%) there are from 3 to 5 trade union members in the WCC, while 30% said that the trade union members are one or two. Interestingly, about 17% stated that trade union members are more than 5, which suggests that some of the employers' representatives are also trade union members. (According to the legislation the WCC comprises no more than 10 members of which 5 – workers representatives and 5 - employers' representatives).

One of the indicators of the effectiveness of the WCC&WCG activity is the **number of the meetings held in the last year**. According to more than 70% of the respondents, the WCC&WCG did not held meeting (5,6%) or held from 1 to 3 meetings (65,2%), which means that the statutory requirement to hold meeting each quarter is breached. The rest (18,5%) stated that the WCC&WCG have held four meetings (as statutory required) or over four (8,2%), which indicates more active and engaged attitude towards the H&S issues.

The proof for the commitment to the responsibility of workers' H&S representative is the **time devoted to this responsibility** by each WCC member. The prevailing part of the respondents spent up to 5 hours monthly (73%), 15% - between 6 to 10 hours, while 5% spent over 20 hours monthly for their H&S responsibilities. However, about 7% did not spend any time for her/his responsibility of workers' representative in the WCC&WCG.

As a whole, according to 70,9% of the respondents the prevailing **working climate in WCC&WCG** is one of cooperation. The share of respondents indicating confrontation or mixed climate of cooperation and confrontation is significantly lower - 2,5% and 20% correspondingly.

Among the issues more frequently discussed by the WCC&WCG are as follows:

- Measures related to H&S of the employees – 83,7%
- Planning and organization of the employees' training on OSH – 51,0%
- Results of the risk assessment – 44,9%.

Rarely have been discussed such issues as:

- Planning and organization of the WCC&WCG activity - 40,8 %
- Analyses of the employees' health - 35,2%



- The foreseen changes of the technology, work organization and workplace – 29,6%.

Along with this just 25% stated that the WCC&WCG discussed the results of the inspections and recommendations of the control bodies and 21,9% - the occupational accidents.

3.5. Conditions for the realization of the WCC&WCG activity provided by the employer

The Questionnaire contains a part, aiming to study to what extend the employer comply with the statutory requirements for providing **conditions for the realization of the WCC&WCG activity**.

As a whole, between 50% and 70% of the respondents consider that **the employer is providing the necessary technical infrastructure for the WCC&WCG activity**, including: premises (71,2%); telephone/ fax (63,2%), stationery and equipment (62,2 %). However just half of the respondents (49,7%) have Internet access.

About 2/3 of the respondents (74%) stated that the employer is providing initial training. However significantly lower is the share of respondents who said that the employer is providing the necessary **conditions for the realization of the WCC&WCG members' rights as far as the** access to obligatory annual training (50,5%), access to information about: the working conditions (56,5%); analyses of the occupational accidents and diseases (48,4%); inspection reports and recommendations (51,6%) and the risk assessment (45,7%). More than 1/3 said that the employer provided conditions for the realisation of their rights only to some extend (See Table below).

Conditions for the realization of the rights of the WCC&WCG members provided by the employer

| Access to: | Provided | To some extend | Do not provided |
|--|----------|----------------|-----------------|
| Initial training | 74,0 | 21,4 | 4,7 |
| Further annual training | 50,5 | 32,1 | 17,4 |
| Existing information concerning working conditions | 56,5 | 33,5 | 9,9 |
| Analyses of work accidents and occupational morbidity | 48,4 | 34,8 | 16,8 |
| Inspection reports and recommendations | 51,6 | 34,4 | 14,0 |
| Risk assessment | 45,7 | 39,7 | 14,7 |
| Other rights | | | |
| To require of the employer to undertake the appropriate measures | 50,0 | 39,4 | 10,6 |
| To make suggestions for mitigating hazards and temporally removing sources of danger to employees' safety and health | 57,2 | 32,4 | 10,3 |
| To appeal to the control authorities if they consider that the measures undertaken by the employer are inadequate for ensuring safety and health at work | 49,7 | 32,4 | 17,9 |
| To participate in the inspections visits of the control authorities | 50,5 | 29,3 | 20,1 |



It is important however to mention that about half of the workers representatives consider that the employer does not provide the necessary conditions for the realization of such rights, as: to require of the employer to undertake the appropriate measures; to appeal to the control authorities; to make suggestions for mitigating hazards and temporarily removing sources of danger to employees' safety and health, and to participate in the inspections visits of the control authorities.

In our opinion, these responses reveal rather insufficient activity on the part of the employees' representatives than employer policy hindering the execution of the right to which they are entitled.

The workers representatives are much more critical to the employer, especially as far as **provisions for the realization of some WCC&WCG functions** are considered. According to 40% of them, the employer provided only to some extend conditions for: discussing at quarterly basis the whole range of activities, related to OSH; taking part in the elaboration of information and training programmes on OSH issues, for carrying out inspections on the implementation of OSH requirements; discussing the planning and introduction of new technologies, work organization and fitting-out of work places and for proposing solutions ensuring that the safety and health protection of employees are respected; and for keeping watch on accidents and occupational morbidity .

Along with that, 27,1% said that the employer does not provide conditions for WCC to take part in the elaboration of information and training programmes on OSH issues, 22,8% - to discuss the planning and introduction of new technologies, work organization and fitting-out of work places and to propose solutions, ensuring that the safety and health protection of employees are respected, and 19,6% - to carry out inspections on the implementation of OSH requirements.

Conditions for the realization of the WCC&WCG functions provided by the employer

| Functions | Provided | To some extend | Do not provided |
|---|----------|----------------|-----------------|
| To discuss at quarterly basis the whole range of activities related to the safety and health of employees | 43,3 | 42,1 | 14,9 |
| To propose and adopt measures to improve the activities related to the safety and health of employees | 35,1 | 48,4 | 16,5 |
| To take part in the elaboration of information and training programmes on OSH issues | 29,8 | 43,1 | 27,1 |
| To carry out inspections on the implementation of OSH requirements | 34,8 | 45,7 | 19,6 |
| To discuss the planning and introduction of new technologies, work organization and fitting-out of work places and to propose solutions ensuring that the safety and health protection of employees are respected | 36,1 | 41,1 | 22,8 |
| To keep watch on accidents and occupational morbidity | 40,0 | 44,9 | 15,1 |



Despite the outlined deficiencies related to the WCC&WCG activity, more than half of the respondents stressed on the **significant impact these bodies have**, especially on timely resolving of the problems related to OSH issues - 69,0%; decreasing number of disputes related to OSH - 55,1 %; improvement of the working conditions - 50,5 %. Some of the respondents mentioned also: decreased number of accidents at the workplace - 37,2 %; better observation of the workers' labour rights - 34,7 %; better compliance of the employers' policy with the legislation - 29,6 %; decreasing absence from work due to sickness - 17,9%; creating possibility for better environment protection - 13,3 %.

The **main difficulties the workers representatives face** according to the respondents are as follows: lack of resources for the WCC activity - 65,5%, lack of the necessary knowledge and experience - 53,0%, lack of time - 47,6%. Each third (31,5%) also mentioned the underestimation of the WCC&WCG activity by the employer, and each fourth (24,4%) - the underestimation of the WCC&WCG activity by the employees. Despite a few, some of the respondents indicate as hindering factors difficulties caused by the employer - 13,7% and the lack of support on the part of the trade unions in the enterprise – 3,0%.

The effectiveness of the WCC&WCG activity depends to a high degree on the **support received from various bodies and institutions**, especially from the trade unions and the social partners' bodies on OSH at different levels. According to the Survey results, the employees' representatives in WCC&WCG receive the largest support from the leadership of the trade union organizations in the company (94,4%) and colleagues (81,8%), followed by the employer (78,8%) and from the branch trade union federation(67,6%). More than half of the respondents (56,7%) have received support from the functionaries responsible for OSH in the company and 47% - from the occupational health offices in the enterprises.

Institutional support for the WCC&WCG activity

| Do you receive support from: | Yes | No | Did not ask for support |
|--|------|------|-------------------------|
| The leadership of the trade union organization | 94,4 | 2,0 | 3,5 |
| The employer | 76,0 | 12,0 | 12,0 |
| Colleagues | 81,2 | 11,0 | 7,7 |
| Occupational health offices | 47,4 | 22,3 | 29,7 |
| Other functionaries responsible for OSH in the company | 56,7 | 19,5 | 23,8 |
| General Labour Inspection and its regional branches | 36,1 | 16,9 | 47,0 |
| Branch trade union federation | 67,6 | 1,7 | 30,7 |
| Sector/branch Working Conditions Council | 41,3 | 4,4 | 54,4 |
| Regional Working Conditions Council | 25,2 | 22,0 | 52,8 |



Significantly smaller (about 36%) is the share of those receiving support from the control authorities – General Labour Inspectorate and its branches. While 41% of the respondents indicated that they have received support from the Branch Working Conditions Council, just 25% are those that receive support from the Regional Working Conditions Council. However, frankly speaking, most of the respondents did not ask the latter bodies for support.

3.6. Training needs assessment

The Survey results indicate that the workers representatives in WCC&WCG have a serious **need for training**. Even those that have attended the statutory training stressed on the need for further education. Five priority areas have been identified:

- ① Best European practices on H&S – 69,2%
- ② Best national/branch practices on H&S - 57,6 %
- ③ Legislation on H&S - 56,6%
- ④ Labour legislation - 47,5 %
- ⑤ Types of occupational risks and risk assessment – 42,9

Each third pointed also:

- ⑥ Specific workplace hazards - 31,8 %
- ⑦ Nature and measures for stress and violence at the workplace prevention - 29,8 %

Each tenth needs training on:

- ⑧ Skills for team working - 12,1 % and
- ⑨ Communication skills - 9,1 %

The network of WCC&WCG to be established in the framework of the project is also considered as an opportunity for increasing the knowledge and experience of the members of WCC. **Willingness to participate in the network** expressed 93,7%,,, mainly because they expect:

- To receive actual and useful information (54,9%)
- To exchange experience and best practices (26,2%)
- To increase their own capacity and to be more effective in their work as workers representatives (26,2%)
- To receive quality methodological support

Just 6,3% said they are not willing to participate in the network because they do not have time for full and engaged participation (77,8%); do not have Internet access or due to other reasons (22,2%).

3.7. Factors supporting the improvement of the activity of the WCC&WCG

As the **most important factor contributing to the improvement of the EWC&EWG activity** is seen the provision of as much as possible training (65,7%).

Among the other factors the respondents indicated:

- Overcoming the formal character of the activity of the WCC&WCG - 64,1 %
- Better implementation and enforcement of the legislation - 41,9%
- Making use of the best national and European practices - 35,9%
- Development of comprehensive programme for improvement of the working conditions with clearly assigned responsibilities of all stakeholders - 34,8 %



According to 1/3 of the respondents the contributing factors include also such measures as:

- Closer link with and support from the General Labour Inspectorate - 31,8 %
- Increasing workers awareness and initiative - 30,3%
- Provision of better conditions for the realization of the WCC&WCG activity - 29,3%

Each fourth indicates also:

- Elaboration of concrete measures for risk prevention - 26,8%
 - Wider opportunities for participation in the decision making - 26,8 %
 - Better opportunities for voicing the workers interests in H&S - 23,7 %
- 18,7% consider the stronger support by trade unions at all levels for resolving the emerging problems as an important factor contributing to the improvement of the WCC&WCG activity.

3.8. Profile of the workers representative in the WCC&WCG

The demographic characteristics of the participants in the survey provide an opportunity to outline the profile of the workers representative in the WCC&WCG.

The results show that a good gender balance in the composition of the WCC&WCG was achieved. Considering the fact that the health care is highly feminised sector with female labour force representing more than 80% it is not surprising that 73,7% of the employees representatives in WCC&WCG are women.

Prevail the people in active working age with the people in the age brackets between 41 and 50 years most presented - 39,5%. Followed the respondents aged 51-60 years (30,0%). However, the most alarming is that the young people are not well represented in the WCC – the representatives aged below 30 years are just 1,5% and those aged 31 - 40 years are 22%.

The educational structure in the sector impacted the educational distribution of the employee's representatives in WCC&WCG. The largest is the share of representatives with university degree - 76,0%, with secondary general and secondary vocational are 23% of the respondents.

In the survey participated medical workers with different **length of service in the establishment, but prevail representatives with the length of service over 20 years** (29,6%). The respondents in other groups are almost equally distributed: from 4 to 10 years are 22,6%; from 11 to 15 years are 21,1% and from 16 to 20 years are 22,6%. With up to three years length of service are 4% of the respondents.

The workers representatives hold different **occupational positions** – at executive positions are 72,0%, while 12,8% are at auxiliary – technical and 15,2% - are at managerial positions.

Most of the workers representatives in the WCC&WCG are trade union members (91,9%). Over ¼ of them (26,2%) have longer experience as workers representatives (over 3 years), but the prevailing part of the respondents (73,8%) are newly elected representatives with experience from 1 to 3 years. Despite the length of experience as workers representatives, most of them are very active. By the initiative of 60% of them were introduced measures for the improvement of the working conditions.



Summarizing, the typical workers representative in WCC&WCG in the health care is:
Women, aged between 41 and 50 years, with university education, with length of service in the company over 20 years, represented mainly at executive positions. She is trade union member, and displays high level of initiative leading to working conditions improvements.

4. SWOT- ANALYSIS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTIONING OF THE WORKING CONDITIONS COMMITTEES AND GROUPS AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE ON OSH

A critical review of the conclusions and recommendations in the different chapters of the survey through the SWOT analysis contributes to outline the strengths and weaknesses of the WCC&WCG activity in the transport sector as far as the interest representation and social dialogue on H&S issues are considered; to identify the priority areas for the project objectives implementation, as well as to propose some initial ideas for the future successful development of the WCC&WCG network.

The main aim is to achieve improved results of the WCC&WCG activity through training seminars, exchange of experience with the Norwegian trade unions and the establishment of the network.

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legislation aligned with the European legislative H&S framework ▪ Established institutional framework of social dialogue at all levels ▪ Created possibilities for social partners to influence the elaboration of the H&S legislation ▪ Institutionalisation of the workers participation in H&S in the enterprises through WCC&WCG ▪ Social partners commitment to the H&S, including awareness of the need for increasing the effectiveness of WCC&WCG ▪ Skilled expert trade union potential at all levels, able to provide support and training to the workers representatives in WCC&WCG | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The implementation of the legislation and strategy ▪ Insufficient coordination between the H&S bodies at different levels ▪ The established social partnership bodies in some branches do not work enough effectively ▪ WCC, and especially WCG in many enterprises, mainly in SMEs, are formally established and do not function effectively (exist 'only on paper') ▪ The statutory training is not sufficient to include the legislative amendments, related to the obligations of the EU membership and the rapidly changing technologies and work organization leading to new risks ▪ Lack of initiative and insistence on the part of WCC&WCG for the implementation the legislative |



| | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Committed and motivated workers representatives in WCC&WCG ▪ Relatively well developed skills and knowledge of the workers representatives | <p>provisions and labour rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of reliable information on the number of the established WCC&WCG, its composition and challenges that hinder their effective functioning |
| <p>Opportunities</p> | <p>Treats</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In the companies without trade union organizations, the WCC&WCG are the only bodies able to represent and defend the employees' interests in the field of H&S ▪ Establishment of the data base for the elected workers' representatives as a sub-system of the Common system of reserve cadres of CITUB ▪ Provision of information and access to successful H&S European and national practices ▪ Increased cooperation, exchange of experience and best practices with the Norwegian trade unions ▪ Web-site of the project ▪ Training seminars and expert support for the capacity building of the members of the national network ▪ Elaboration of training and information materials in the priority areas identified in the survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of financial and human resources ▪ Low level of the employees' awareness about the H&S issues and of the link between the quality of work environment and the quality of life ▪ Lack of employees' support for the WCC&WCG activity ▪ Insufficient activity and commitment of the trade unions at different levels with the WCC&WCG ▪ Newly emerging risks ▪ Flexible forms of employment might be introduced without the necessary security, thus undermining the observation of the H&S requirements and the monitoring of the OSH regulations ▪ Lack of interest and motivation of young employees both for trade union membership and for taking responsibility for H&S at work through participation in WCC&WCG ▪ the prolongation of the crisis might undermine the already achieved partnership on H&S due to the lack of financial resources for risk prevention and working conditions improvement |

5. SOME CONCLUSIONS

The survey findings reveal the relevance and actuality of the implementation of this project, as the need for training in different areas is clearly expressed, and the establishment of the WCC&WCG network is strongly supported by the participants in the survey and the branch trade union leadership. It is viewed as an opportunity for awareness rising and for expanding the knowledge and skills, and ultimately for the increased efficiency of the employees representatives in the WCC&WCG and improved working conditions in the companies.





The analysis of the survey findings reveals the need for:

- Improved horizontal and vertical coordination in the CITUB system aiming at more effective formation, development and utilization of the expert and organizational CITUB's potential for supporting the development of the H&S bodies at all levels and providing synergy of their activities.
- Improved access of workers representatives in WCC&WCG to information, training and methodological support, based on an in-dept need assessment and research.
- Elaboration of training modules and information materials on the basis of the identified needs.
- Exchange of experience and introduction of best national and European practices related to the development and institutionalization of the social dialogue in the field of health and safety at work.
- Development of the targeted data bases in few directions, as follows: methodological documents, legislation, statistical information, informational and training materials, research results, best practices, etc. to be used by the network.

Main trade union priorities

- Awareness rising of employees about the role and significance of the WCC&WCG activities related to health and safety and about how important is their support for the workers representatives in the WCC&WCG.
- Active social dialogue at all levels
- Capacity building of the workers representatives based on information, training, and sharing experience and best European and national practices.
- Extension of the institutional support for WCC&WCG, especially that of the trade union organizations and social partnership bodies in the OSH area.

As a final product of the project implementation we expect to achieve improved activity of the WCC& WCG and a value added in the field of health and safety at work for the employees and employers and for the national economy as a whole.

