PROJECT 2008/108471 “HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT IN THE WORK PLACE”

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

Survey data analysis in the health care

17 December 2009

D-r Nadezhda Daskalova,
Institute for Social and Trade Union Research

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

- Legislative framework – aligned with EU legislation
- Established Institutional framework for social dialogue and workers’ participation on H&S.
- However, in the practice there are a range of shortcomings
- The experience of many European countries shows that the activity of WCC&WCG is essential for the implementation of the OSH policy goals and for the sustainable enterprise development.
- Lack of research and reliable statistics on the number of the WCC & WCG and their activities, efficiency and challenges they face
- This motivated the conducting of the survey in the framework of the project
- Further argument for the need for trade unions to pay more attention to the WCC & WCG provides the EAHSW Pan-European opinion poll on OSH
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

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

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If you were deciding whether to take a new job, which two of the following would most influence your decision?

- Wage/salary: 85%
- Job security: 46%
- Save & healthy working conditions: 21%
- Working hours: 11%
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.
METHODOLOGY
Specific aims of the survey

To study the establishment, functioning and main activities of the WCC&WCG in enterprises in the six pilot sectors, including health care;
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 as to
Propose general framework for the establishment of the WCC&WCG network.
Research methods

- **Review of the legislation and documents of related institutions**
- **Secondary analysis of the available research in the field of working conditions and social dialogue.**
- **Questionnaire based survey** in the six pilot branches.
- **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.
MAIN SURVEY FINDINGS

Sample

202 employees’ representatives in WCC&WCG in 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.
Size of the health establishments

- 39% Up to 10
- 23% 10 - 49
- 36% 50 - 249
- 2% Over 250

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TYPE OF OWNERSHIP

- Municipal: 21%
- State: 36%
- Mixed state/municipal: 43%
### Main occupational hazards at the workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hazard</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stress due to work overload</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift and night work</td>
<td>60.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High risk for health</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with biological substances</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress due to the lack of time</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiring or painful working positions</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmful radiation</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Main occupational hazards at the workplace - 2

- repetitive movements – 25.9%
- working with chemicals – 25.4%
- violence or treat of violence - 23.4%
- bullying, harassment - 22.8%
- high risk for the life - 19.3%
- carrying heavy loads - 12.7%
- high temperatures - 11.2%
- vibrations - 3.6%
Accidents at the workplace

Accidents in the last 3 years
- yes - 38.2%
- no - 49.7%
- do not know - 12.1%

Number
- From 1 to 5 – 30.3%
- Over 5 – 3.0%

Fatal accidents
- yes - 2.5%
- no - 87.9%
- don’t know - 9.5%

Number of fatal accidents - 9

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.
Assessment of the Employer OSH policy

- **According to 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%).
Employer OSH policy - 2

More are the respondents which consider that the employer:

- ensures the necessary conditions for workers 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%),

BUT

- Less than half of the respondents 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

- High is the share of respondents that did not answer or don't' have opinion
WCC&WCG
establishment and composition

Year of establishment

- 1997 – 10,5%
- 1998 - 2000 – 26,0 %
- 2001 - 2004 – 36,4%
- After 2005 - 27,1%

Composition

- 2 persons (WCG) – 6,1%
- From 4 to 8 persons – 74,1%
- 10 persons – 16,2%

Number of trade union members in WCC&WCG

0 – 1,0%   ↑ ↑ - 6,1%   ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ - 24,2%,

From ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ to ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ - 56,1%

Over ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ - 8,2% !!!
### Activity of WCC&WCG

(meetings held in the last 12 months)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number of the meetings</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No one</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From one to three</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over four</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity of WCC&WCG – 2

- **Time devoted** (monthly) to the responsibility of being representative in WCC&WCG
  - does not spend any time – 7.6%
  - Up to five hours – 73.2%
  - Six-ten hours – 14.5%
  - Over 10 hours – 4.7%

- **working climate in WCC&WCG**: 
  - cooperation – 70.9%
  - confrontation - 2.5%
  - mixed climate of cooperation and confrontation – 20.6%
Activity of WCC&WCG – 3
main issues discussed

- 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:
- 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%
- Results of the inspections and recommendations of the control bodies – 25.0%
- Occupational accidents – 21.9%
- Other issues – 1.5%
- WCC had not held meetings – 4.1%
Conditions for the realization of the WCC&WCG activity

between 50 and 70% consider that the employer is providing conditions for the activity of WCC&WCG including:

- premises – 71,2%
- ☑ telephone/ fax – 63,2%
- ☑ Internet access – 49,7%
- ☑ stationery and equipment – 62,2%
- ☑ Other - 2,5%
# Conditions for the realisation of the WCC&WCG members’ rights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to:</th>
<th>Provided</th>
<th>To some extend</th>
<th>Do not provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial training</td>
<td>74,0</td>
<td>21,4</td>
<td>4,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further annual training</td>
<td>50,5</td>
<td>32,1</td>
<td>17,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing information concerning working conditions</td>
<td>56,5</td>
<td>33,5</td>
<td>9,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyses of work accidents and occupational morbidity</td>
<td>48,4</td>
<td>34,8</td>
<td>16,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspection reports and recommendations</td>
<td>51,6</td>
<td>34,4</td>
<td>14,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk assessment</td>
<td>45,7</td>
<td>39,7</td>
<td>14,7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Conditions for the realisation of the WCC&WCG members’ rights - 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Provided</th>
<th>To some extend</th>
<th>Do not provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To require of the employer to undertake the appropriate measures</td>
<td>50,0</td>
<td>39,4</td>
<td>10,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make suggestions for mitigating hazards and temporarily removing sources of danger to employees’ safety and health</td>
<td>57,2</td>
<td>32,4</td>
<td>10,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To appeal to the control authorities if they consider that the measures are inadequate for ensuring safety and health at work</td>
<td>49,7</td>
<td>32,4</td>
<td>17,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To participate in the inspections visits of the control authorities</td>
<td>50,5</td>
<td>29,3</td>
<td>20,1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Conditions for the realization of the WCC&WCG functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Provided</th>
<th>To some extend</th>
<th>Do not provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To discuss quarterly the whole range of activities related to H&amp;S of employees</td>
<td>43,3</td>
<td>42,1</td>
<td>14,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To propose and adopt measures to improve the activities related to the S&amp;H of employees</td>
<td>35,1</td>
<td>48,4</td>
<td>16,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To take part in the elaboration of information and training programmes on OSH issues</td>
<td>29,8</td>
<td>43,1</td>
<td>27,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To carry out inspections on the implementation of OSH requirements</td>
<td>34,8</td>
<td>45,7</td>
<td>19,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To discuss the planned introduction of new technologies, work organization and to propose solutions H&amp;S</td>
<td>36,1</td>
<td>41,1</td>
<td>22,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To keep watch on accidents and occupational morbidity</td>
<td>40,0</td>
<td>44,9</td>
<td>15,1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Impact of the WCC&WCG activity

- timely settlement of the problems related to OSH issues – 68,9%
- decreasing number of disputes related to OSH - 55,1 %
- improvement of the working conditions – 50,5 %
- decreased number of accidents at the workplace - 37,2 %
- better observation of the workers’ labour rights - 34,7 %
Impact of the WCC&WCG activity - 2

- increased employees’ awareness and information about OSH - 30,1%
- 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 %
Main difficulties in the realisation of the representatives activity

- lack of resources - 65,5%
- lack of the necessary knowledge and experience - 53,0%
- lack of time - 47,6%
- the WCC&WCG activity is underestimated by the employer - 31,5%
- the WCC&WCG activity is underestimated by the employees - 24,4%
- difficulties caused by the employer - 13,7%
- lack of support on the part of the trade unions in the enterprise – 3,0
## Institutional support of the WCC&WCG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Did not ask for support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trade union organization in the company</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational medicine offices</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functionaries responsible for OSH in the company</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Labour Inspectorate &amp; branches</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch trade union federation</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral Working Conditions Council</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>54.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Working Conditions Council</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Training needs

Five priority areas are outlined:
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 %
Willingness to participate in the network

- Willingness to participate in the network expressed - 93, 7%, mainly because they expect:
  - to receive actual and useful information for the improvement of the work (54,9%)
  - to exchange experience and best practices (26,2%)
  - to increase the capacity and to be more effective in their work as workers representatives (26,2%)
  - to receive quality methodological support

- 6,3% do not willing to participate, because: do not have time for full engagement (77,8%) or Internet access and due to other causes (22,2%)
Factors supporting the improvement of WCC&WCG activity

- Provision of as much as possible training for the WCC&WCG members - 65,7%
- 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%
- Closer link with and support from the General Labour Inspectorate - 31,8%
Factors supporting the improvement of WCC&WCG activity - 2

- Increasing workers awareness and initiative - 30,3%
- Provision of better conditions for the realization of the WCC&WCG activity - 29,3%
- 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 on H&S - 23,7%
- Stronger support by trade unions at all levels for resolving the emerging problems - 18,7%
Profile of the employees representative in the WCC&WCG

**Gender**
- 26.3%
- 73.7%

**Education**
- Lower secondary: 1%
- Secondary general: 5.5%
- Secondary professional: 17.5%
- Tertiary: 76.0%

(!! In the branch the women represent 80%)
Profile of the employees representative in the WCC&WCG - 2

Age
- up to 30 years – 1,5% !!
- 31- 40 years – 22,0%
- 41- 50 years – 39,5%
- 51- 60 years – 30,0%
- over 60 years – 7,0%

Length of service in the establishment
- Up to 1 year - 1,0%
- 1 - 3 years - 3,0%
- 4 - 10 years - 22,6%
- 11 - 15 years - 21,1%
- 16 - 20 years – 22,6%
- over 20 years – 29,6%
Profile of the employees representative in the WCC - 3

Occupational position
♦ Managerial – 15,2%
♦ Executive – 72,0%
♦ auxiliary - technical – 12,8%

Trade union membership
▷ Yes – 91,9%
▷ No – 8, 1%
Profile of the employees representative in the WCC&WCG - 4

Length of service as a member of WCC&WCG
- from 1 to 3 years – 73.8%
- Over 3 years - 26.2%

Initiatives
introduced measures for improvement of the working conditions by the employee representative initiative
- yes - 62.4% (improvement of the labour environment, personal protective equipment and cloths, measuring the working environment parameters, inspections on the observance of the legislation)
- No - 37.6%
Profile of the employees representative in WCC&WCG – 5

Participation in training on H&S

♦ yes, organised by employer - 62,2%
♦ yes, organised by trade unions - 55,5%
♦ other - 4,2%
♦ did not participated - 0,8%

Internet access

53,8% - in the office
59,0% - at home
13,3% - do not have
Profile of the employees representative in WCC&WCG

Summarizing, the typical employees 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 in executive positions. She is trade union member, and displays high level of initiative leading to working conditions improvements.
SWOT- ANALYSIS

Strengths
- Legislation aligned with the European H&S framework
- Established institutional framework of social dialogue at all levels
- Created possibilities for social partners to influence the elaboration of 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

Weaknesses
- 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’)

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SWOT- ANALYSIS - 2

Strengths

- Skilled expert trade union potential at all levels, able to provide support and training to the workers representatives in WCC&WCG
- Committed and motivated workers representatives in WCC&WCG
- Relatively well developed skills and knowledge of the workers representatives

Weaknesses

- 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 of the legislative provisions and labour rights
- Lack of reliable information on the number of the established WCC&WCG, its composition and challenges that hinder their functioning
SWOT- ANALYSIS - 3

**Opportunities**

- 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.

**Treats**

- Lack of financial and human resources.
- Low level of the employees’ awareness about the H&S issues and of the link between the work environment quality 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.
2008/108471 project: Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) in the Work place, Bulgaria

**SWOT- ANALYSIS - 4**

**Opportunities**
- 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

**Treats**
- Flexible forms of employment might be introduced without necessary security, thus undermining the observation of the H&S requirements and 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

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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 increasing the efficiency of the employees representatives in the WCC&WCG and improved working conditions in the companies.
MAIN CONCLUSIONS - 2

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 potential of CITUB 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.
MAIN CONCLUSIONS - 3

- 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 H&S 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 by 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.